

12-9-1944

## Letter Written by Edith Speert to Victor A. Speert Dated December 9, 1944

Edith Speert

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Saturday night  
12/9/44

My darling,

Although it is 10 p.m. and I am ready to go to bed since I'm very tired and sleepy; I can't seem to get to sleep without writing you a letter. It seems I haven't given you my nightly kiss through mail!

Since I've taken on this new job, it seems I haven't got a minute to myself. Well, guess this is as good a time as any to give you the full details.

The Landham Act appropriated more funds to the county gov't, Cleve. Bd. of Educ. to set-up a nursery school at 2936 Mayfield Rd. That is, the state of Ohio refused to give this private nursery at the above address a license. It recommended that Landham Act give county (since it is Cleve. Hts--it has to be county) full charge of this nursery. So, Fed'l bought out this private person operating this nursery without a license and "we" took over.

Just about this time True Sister # 30 discovered a \$7,000 surplus in their treasury and voted to invest it in a welfare organization, and therefore, decided that this nursery on Mayfield should be their project. However, they cannot do anything except ask us to use their trained volunteers, and offer their services and money to us. Federal, state and county takes care of everything until after the war, when this nursery will be turned over to be run by True Sisters. Therefore, our nursery is called True Sister Day Care Center. All nurseries after the war will be taken over by other organizations, unless Cleveland (by taxes) can afford to keep them up, or raise the fees!

This, I'm sure, is not too clear a picture, but it should give you some idea of how my job came about.

Well, Mrs. Bennett had given me such a beautiful monthly evaluation letter, that they asked me to be head teacher, director, or whatever you want to call it. I am now the youngest head teacher on the payroll! *\$160<sup>00</sup> every 4 wks. plus \$5 raise every 6 mos.*

So I took the job knowing I was getting into a tremendous project, but not quite realizing how tremendous. The house was absolutely, positively the dirtiest, filthiest place I have ever been in. The people living there moved out a day after we took over. They used to live on the second floor and run a disgusting, ill-equipped nursery on the first floor. You can imagine how dirty it is if the place had to be fumigated, and then, there was so damn much trash in the attic, the Fed'l didn't even think it could be cleaned, so the attic was merely bolted! The basement, with the help of two men, 4 colored girls, we finally got cleaned out!

I had to wash and sterilize all the toys and equipment, supervise the going over of the lights, gas, furnace, telephone, plumbing, etc. Had to order food, and equipment, and had to supervise all the housecleaning and keep track of all the bills and the time sheet. Well, honey, I've been working 9 and 10 hrs. a day. You can see, it is really a job!



Monday morning we open up with merely 4 children. We will have no more than 10 children for the next 2 or 3 weeks, since there is alot of work to be down. They are scraping and sanding the floors, so that linoleum can be put from corner to corner on the first floor. Enclosed is a diagram of the house, and what the rooms shall be used for as far as we can see now.

The quota of children for this nursery is 35. Although it is considered a large house, it is not a large nursery school except for the yard. That's tremendous.

Mike, the handy man for the Cleve. Bd. will tend my furnace and do my odd jobs. He's a wonderful person, very accomodating and deserves every penny he makes. He makes \$1.25 an hr. and lunch.

My cook, Mrs. Kramer, is German, and still believes the Germans are not as bad as the Japs. However, I don't plan to keep her long, as she hates to work <sup>and</sup> is always making coffee and eating *all the* herself. However, cooks are hard to get, so I'll hang on until another one shows up. She makes 70 cents an hr. and lunch.

My housekeeper, Mrs. Holley, a colored woman, who is deaf, is a gem! She's a hard worker, and I know it so I'm willing to be very accomodating to her. She makes 60 cents an hr. plus lunch. Monday, she can chose one of the colored girls who have been coming in as her ass't housekeeper!

The colored girls who came into work are, as a whole, pretty good workers, but darn, if they don't try to get everything they can out of you, and always act meek and bow before you. However, remember, I'm dealing with quite a low-type colored girl!

Miss Ingram, my ass't, who is a student at Reserve, is from Alabama, 24 yrs. old, but she's been up north for quite awhile. So far, she seems very very nice, but doesn't know a whole lot about nursery technique.

Next week, a Mrs. Hornung, aged 40, former kindergarten teacher will start to work. She's suppose to know her stuff!

The hardest part of my job so far is learning how to manage all this help, start a nursery school from scratch, and keep those damnable books!

Today, I was suppose to get a  $\frac{1}{2}$  day off, but couldn't do it. I merely ran down and got my hair set, and took some books back to the library. Then, I went right back to the nursery. When I got home, 6:30, I had planned to eat, wrap a package to mail to you, and write letters, but I had so much bookkeeping to do that I only wrapped a package for you, did my bookkeeping and now, I'm writing this letter to you. Honey, I'm really worn out!

Heard from Helen Curley today and also from Melnikoff. Nothing real new. I'll put their letters in an envelope and mail them to you for three cents after I answer them. Have you been receiving all the other letters I send you from friends?

I wrapped you a package (it can't be over 5 lbs.) and I'll try and mail it Monday. I enclosed another roll of film (127) some stationary, soap, tuna fish, prunes and nuts. That's all we had



around the house, and I haven't had the time to shop to send you anything else. All the stuff is wrapped in the front page of the Cleve P.D. and you'll find something about the 9th Army in every paper! Oh yes, I also sent you some Marlin razor blades.

Mort's letters must have been tied up in the Xmas mailing. We finally got two letters from him. Last one was dated 12/6 and he is still here and having fun with USC gals! He's lucky and I hope his luck holds!

I just weighed myself. You might be interested to know that I've been off the diet about 3 to 4 weeks now and my weight is 125 lbs. tonight, and it hasn't seemed to go over 128 lbs. in ages!

Everyone is angry with me that I don't call and visit with them, but honestly, sweetheart, I just can't seem to find the time. The thing that "galls" me is when some of my mothers' friends say to me "take it easy, the war will soon be over and your husband will soon be home". And when I asked Mrs. Hecht to do some volunteer work at the nursery, she said "I'm doing enough for the war effort running my home without a maid". Nuts+++++++!!!!!!!

Personally, I don't even feel I'm doing enough for the war effort!! If I had more time I'd like to do lots more things!

The above is the one thing I hold against both yours and my family. And that is the hardest adjustment I've had to make to both families now---they don't really understand the seriousness of this war, and how each person must do their part! We are so complacent in this country. Now, your family just cries because they have one son overseas, and yet, rarely ~~doing~~ if ever do anything to make the war end sooner! But that's the way it ~~was~~ goes--in Am. we haven't felt the war as yet-- only a few handful of families have!

My darling, I love you so much. Tonight I don't feel I could go on if I knew you weren't somewhere so that at least I could pour out my heart to you. Honey, if you did not exist, I couldn't either. Your everything I have--and more!! No matter what I do I feel you at my side discouraging or encouraging me on an enterprise. I adore you, my beloved! Sometimes our love seems so mighty that I think we two could catch the world on our hands, and tell them, love thy neighbor and you shall be mighty too! Love is the most wonderful thing in the world--and the love of me for you and you for me is heaven itself!

I'm thinking of you every hour, every minute, every second of the day and night!

*Faith*

*Midnite - just ready to get into bed - was talking to Mom + Dad & wasting time - an old friend! So I'll get up early tomorrow to get things down.*