

Subject/Background Info re: the J. Flagg Correspondence Collection, RPL Archives

The letters from the **J. Flagg Correspondence Collection** were written by James S. (Jim) Flagg in the summer of 1930. They are addressed to Jean Smith, an eighteen-year-old incoming student at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) from which Flagg had graduated that spring.

While at UI, Flagg had been on the staff of the student newspaper, *The Illini*, which no doubt reinforced his interest in a newspaper job. In late June 1930, Flagg was hired as a reporter for the *Rockford Daily Republic*.

Each of these letters contains at least brief references to the city of Rockford, Illinois and/or the *Republic*.

- *The physical items in this collection are kept in the Historical Section of The Rockford Public Library (RPL) Archives, 215 N. Wyman Street, Rockford, Illinois 61101.*

June 18, 1930

Jean, dearest –

Tonight it'll be a rather short letter because I want to get to bed so I can get up at 5:15 o'clock in the morning. Among other things, I'm going to Springfield tomorrow to bring my Dad home and see about a job for myself. Got a card from the Senator today and he said there was a guy in the Legislature from Marion, Ill. who might need me on his daily paper, so if I can't get anything else maybe I'll take that job for a while. It probably hasn't got more than 15,000 people, maybe less. However, it would be nice if I could get on the Journal at Springfield because I could see you a lot oftener next year. Also, they just moved into a new building on 6th Street.

That is a fine idea of yours about coming to St. Louis, that is, if it materializes and if I am still at home. Sure, I will run down and meet you there if you want me to, but are you sure your Dad isn't kidding like he was Easter time when you also wanted to go to St. L?

Jean, your last letter was the best yet, and I am really glad and think it's the best thing that you told Elbert about the pin. When I got home for lunch yesterday noon, I was so full of paint it wasn't even funny, but I read your letter before cleaning up anyway, thus getting a certain amount of red paint on it. Tomorrow I'll be gone to Springfield when the mail comes, but I expect to find a nice letter from my Jean when I return at night.

It is possible that I may mail this in Spfld so you'll get it quicker. It wouldn't even leave Moro till about 5 in the afternoon the other way.

Good night, dearest, and remember, I love you,

Jim

[Envelope postmarked June 21, 1930 from Moro, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, Tobias, Nebraska; 2 cents postage]

Friday night

Dearest Jean –

Enclosed you will find, revealed to you at last, the secret of my success in growing extra-long eyelashes. [A column by Edna Kent Forbes titled “Beauty Chats” from the *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, Wednesday, June 18, 1930, regarding “Long Lashes”; scanned article included.] Long had I made an attempt to seclude this miraculous but eventually effective method of beautifying myself even from my closest friends. But now that the ever-watching eye of the all-powerful press has stolen the secret of my most treasured sequence to beauty, I have deemed it permissible to let just you, the ambitious eye-lash fan, in on the secret that for centuries, maybe since the days of Cleopatra, has baffled and eluded the elite of would-be eye-lash stretchers. Included in the clipping is the photograph of a girl who, at one time was not beautiful. She couldn’t figure out why she wasn’t, however, and even her best friends wouldn’t tell her. Whereupon, one day she happened to see me peering over the edge of the Grand Canyon. She looked wistfully at me, then in a more or less perplexed manner. At length, after gazing intently into my eyes, that had now turned toward her, she shriekingly [sic] exclaimed, “I’ve found it, I’ve found it.” At last she had discovered why she wasn’t beautiful. After persuading her to go into a Mexican pool hall nearby, I revealed to her the secret of my success in growing long eye lashes. And now, as mentioned somewhere far above and in the adjacent article, even you, dear Jean, have unveiled before you, the most important secret of beautifying man and woman since the invention of Shinola.

Are you out of breath yet? Well, I don’t get this way very often. However, I hope you do appreciate me sending you the most helpful clipping.

By the way, Elinor just blew in from Normal and we didn’t know she was coming. She came over to where I am writing, picked up the paper to see who I was writing to and sez “Tell her Howdy for me.”

This is a terrible pen I've got. Think I'll try another.

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I'm glad she came home so we can have a Ford to run instead of a Chevrolet for a few days.

Tomorrow we may go to St. Louis – us kids. I want to see the Post-Dispatch and see a ball game – Cards vs Phil. – and we will go to the Municipal Opera at night. I'm not sure we're going, but hope so.

Went to Springfield yesterday and talked to about 3 men on both the Journal and Register but there simply ain't no jobs. I have a good friend on the Journal who is pretty much of a big shot, and the editor of the Register was all for me because he is well acquainted with my dad, but all for nothing cause there wasn't anything open.

Yesterday I got a letter from Paul Courtney in Rockford and he said if I was there then (Tuesday) I probably could have gotten a job. He said they needed a man on the copy desk (writing heads, correcting stories, etc) but that the editor had a Wisconsin man in mind. He said he would keep reminding him of me and today I wrote a letter to the managing ed. and hope I can convince him that he should hire me instead of the Wisconsin guy. So I still have a few hopes of landing in Rockford.

At Springfield yesterday I saw the editor of a daily paper at Marion who is a Senator. He wants a new city editor and I talked to him a while and he said he'd talk it over with his partner when he got home. Marion only has 10,000 people and is in Williamson Co. I'm not crazy about going down there, but will do that rather than nothing. Also, I've learned that I'd better take any job I can get whether it is sports or not.

Now, I suppose you are tired of reading this line about jobs, but I don't blame you.

I'm sorry I didn't stay in Troy a day longer and possibly could have seen you. We left Sunday afternoon, tho. If you happened to go past a place they are building a new bridge, my brother was there.

That will be great if you can come to St. Louis soon. For that reason I hope I don't have a job till after then. I'll keep you informed about getting a job. And I do hope we can manage to get together some way.

Lots of love,

Jim

[Envelope postmarked June 29, 1930, 6:30 PM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, 802 Indiana Ave., Urbana, Illinois; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped from 'The Daily Illini, Illinois Union Building, Champaign, Illinois,' but crossed out and typed in: 'Daily Republic, Rockford, Ill.']

Republic Office

Saturday night

Dearest Jean –

Thought I'd start a letter to you while I was down here getting ready to go home. It's only 11:15 and will get to leave pretty soon. I had to work straight through today since 7:30 in the morning with the exception of a little time off for meals. We got out our regular editions this afternoon and since then have been putting out tomorrow's Sunday paper. There ain't no rest for the wicked.

I was certainly glad to get two letters from you in one day yesterday. I got the one the folks forwarded and the one you sent Wednesday I believe. Jean, you're a peach for sending me another picture. I haven't seen it yet but I know I'll like it. The folks sent a letter saying that there was a photo at home for me from 802 Indiana, but they didn't have enough sense to send it up. If it didn't come today I'm going to write to them and bawl them out. I haven't had a chance to go home yet today to see if I got any mail.

I've written columns and columns today I bet, and will be ready to go to bed when I get home. Two of the boys who were thinking about getting an apartment with us have changed their minds now so I may get a room with Courtney. He doesn't like the one he has now.

Hope your dad has something to come up this way for soon so you can come with him. I thought about you more than ever yesterday after I got your letters.

You should hear the people talk about Dixie Smith up here. The latest dope is that he has asked every girl in the office for a date and none of them will give him one. Either they don't like him or they are all forming a mutual protection society for each other so that they won't be jealous

of each other. There are a couple of fairly good looking dames here but the best one is the editor's daughter, also his secretary, and it's kinda dangerous to date her cause if she got made at you then she'd get you canned. I haven't had a date for so long I wouldn't know how to act if you came up here now. Really, I haven't had one since I was with you. I met Ruth Hanna McCormick's daughter yesterday and she isn't so bad, but on the other hand nothing exceptional.

You haven't said much about your trip to California lately or to Atlanta, Toronto, and other points north, south, east, and west and I'm wondering if you're going.

Time off to read a little proof.

I'm so tired I think I'll go home now, Jean.

Lots of love to you, and thanks so much for the picture,

Jim

[Envelope postmarked July 1, 1930, 9:00 AM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, 802 Indiana Ave., Urbana, Illinois; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped from 'The Daily Illini, Illinois Union Building, Champaign, Illinois,' but crossed out and written in: 'J.S.F., 618 N. Main, Rockford, Ill.' Handwritten on two pieces of paper with 'The Associated Press' on the letterhead.]

Monday night

Dearest –

Tonight I am glad to tell you that I have just finished playing a lot of bridge. Four of us boys got together and had a good time playing my favorite indoor sport. This pen hasn't been used for so long it is blotting something terrible. I find that the Republic is a good paper just like the Illini because you get show passes from it every week. I got some today and will probably use them tomorrow night. It's a good thing I got them or I'd never get to go to the show much. I don't get paid till Wednesday and that will be only for the half of last week that I worked. And now that I've been here awhile it looks as though \$25 a week wouldn't go very far. You'd think Ruth Hanna McCormick could spare more money than that. You know, my dad is a [illegible word] man and I bet if Ruth knew that she'd can me. However, she hasn't been back here to find I'm on the paper yet.

Had the pleasure of running up a \$3.00 tax bill in behalf of the Republic today. I had to take the cab clear out to the edge of town to get a picture of a guy who was killed by lightning near here yesterday. The editorial department has a Ford, but someone else was using it, hence the cab.

The Republic is having an awful fight with the Register-Gazette, the other evening paper here, for supremacy here and we have to be on our toes all the time to get stuff that they don't. The R-G has Fred Sterling, lieutenant governor of Ill. for its editor.

Bill Fulton, who was engaged to Alberdine Hatcher, was here this week-end. He worked on the Republic last year and is with the Chicago Evening American now. I'm not sure whether he is

engaged to her now or not, but I heard him say he was engaged to her for a year and a half. Maybe you can figure it out from the time element.

Yesterday we celebrated Sunday by going out to an auto race where a guy was supposed to go 500 miles around a dirt track. He quit after 230 miles so it wasn't so good. Since I didn't work yesterday I thought about you all the more and sometimes I felt as though I just had to have you here right then. I must see you before school starts, and if I can't come to see you I hope you can get up here some way. If you could be here right now I'd give most anything. It's a cruel, cruel world when you can't see the one you love so much.

Since my last letter I've moved over to where Courtney is staying and we have a double room now. And you can still send my letters to the same place as usual. I was disappointed that the folks didn't send your picture today, but I wrote to them about it, so it'll be here soon. Got a letter from you today mailed in Tobias [?] June 25 and which was forwarded by the folks. They must have had it a long time or else the mail service was slow. I'll be anxiously waiting for another letter from you when I get home from work tomorrow evening. You're the best I've ever seen about sending letters.

Good night, dearest,

Jim.

[Envelope postmarked July 3, 1930, 9:00 AM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, 802 Indiana Ave., Urbana, Illinois; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped from 'The Daily Illini, Illinois Union Building, Champaign, Illinois,' but crossed out and written in: 'J.S.F., 618 N. Main, Rockford, Ill.' Handwritten on one piece of paper with 'The Associated Press' on the letterhead.]

Wednesday nite.

Dearest –

There isn't much to do in this town tonight, or any night for that matter. At least I haven't found much around here yet even if the town has got 90,000 or 100,000 people. So, since things were pretty dead around here I thought I'd write to you, & for that reason only, of course! Paul and I did go to the show but it wasn't much good and here it is only 9:15.

The other day my Dad sent me a bunch of postcards with his name & address stamped on them so now my correspondence obligations are not so great cause I only have to write a card home now instead of a letter.

I certainly enjoyed your letter yesterday, & will be looking forward to another tomorrow. About the snapshots you took, of course I'd be glad to see them, if you have some extra ones. Don't think for a minute you're giving me something I don't want when it's a picture of you.

Tomorrow I expect to get the picture you sent home because I wrote to the folks about it Monday. I'll tell you whether I like it or not.

If you want to know just what I'm doing – I'm writing a lot of stories on whatever the city editor tells me to – in other words, reporting on regular city news & everybody has quite a wide variety of stuff to write – for instance stories on a lot of picnics, Boy's Club, a new ice plant, obituaries, conventions, & chamber of commerce are a few of the things I have written up which might give you some idea of it.

Yesterday the Republic had a big picnic for kids in town under 16 & they gave a pony away. When the time came to give it away, we had to move a lot of pianos out of the way so the pony

could get through a passageway to the stage of an amphitheatre at Central Park. Then when all that was done, the pony balked and we couldn't get it to come on the stage after all. But anyway, they ran pictures of the picnic with my story so I don't care.

Friday the 4th we aren't going to have a paper but are going to broadcast the news over the Republic station KFLV. We each have to work 3 hours only during the day to prepare news for the radio. I can't figure out what to do the rest of the time.

I'm running out of news so I'd better quit. All my love to you, dearest.

Jim.

[Envelope postmarked July 5, 1930, 10:00 PM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, 802 Indiana Ave., Urbana, Illinois; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped from 'The Daily Illini, Illinois Union Building, Champaign, Illinois,' but crossed out and written in: 'J.S.F., 618 N. Main, Rockford, Ill.' Typed on two pieces of plain paper.]

Rockford, Ill.

Thursday night.

Dearest Jean –

Here I am still up in Rockford and I suppose you will be at home in Champaign Sunday. I just started work today because I had Elinor's car up here and had to take it back to Bloomington Tuesday night. Then I came back here yesterday morning and loafed around in the afternoon. This is a dandy town except that 65 per cent of the population is Swedes or Norwegians. You see them running around them [sic] everywhere, in fact it is impossible to avoid them.

After only a day's work I like my job very well. I am on the city staff and nobody knows just what my work will be after we get settled, but it'll either be reporting news about the city or writing heads in the office. There are two or three new men in the office now and they haven't got us organized just yet. Anyway I'm here and glad of it. By the time school starts in the fall, I may have a chance to get on the sports staff – at least that is my ambition. You know, Dixie Smith, the SAE from school, applied for a job on the sports staff just two days before I did and consequently got it. So I hope to take his place when he starts to school or before if he gets canned – and that isn't unlikely.

The Rockford Republic has just moved into a new building and it is the most modern thing in newspaper offices in every way. Also it has a modernistic touch which makes it very beautiful. My boss is the city editor and he is a real nice guy – the kind most city editors aren't. They say he has to go up and have a beer every evening after work, but he's all right when around the office and that's all I care about. All of the reporters on the staff have to take turns acting as guides for the crowds that come to look over our new building at our "open house" this week.

My turn was tonight and about 3,000 came through. I got so tired of telling people the same thing that I bet I say it in my sleep tonight.

Am staying with Bob Jacobs, a Theta Alpha from school, because Courtney has only a single bed in his room. We three and another man from the paper expect to get an apartment soon but haven't done much about it so far. You can continue sending my mail to 618 N. Main until I tell you differently.

It's been an awfully long time since I heard from you – probably not your fault, but you see I left home Monday afternoon and the folks haven't had time to forward any mail yet. Hope to see a letter from you forwarded by tomorrow or Saturday, however.

If I could have waited a week longer for this job maybe you could have come to St. Louis and we could have seen each other. But such is life, and with nothing except Sunday off, it's hard telling when I'll get to see you now. If you ever get a chance to come up, please do. I work from 7:30 to 5:00 six days a week but till midnight every other Saturday because we have to put out a Sunday paper for Sunday morning. It is an afternoon paper the other days.

I hope you had a nice trip home and that after you're there you'll continue to write as faithfully as you have before. Please don't let the Cubs baseball games interfere with it!

Lots of love,

Jim [*handwritten signature*]

[Second envelope postmarked July 5, 1930, this one at 9:30 AM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, 802 Indiana Ave., Urbana, Illinois; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped from 'The Daily Illini, Illinois Union Building, Champaign, Illinois,' but crossed out and typed in: 'J.S.F., 618 N. Main, Rockford, Ill.' Letter typed on one very long – 8 ½" x 34" – decrepit, yellowed, torn piece of paper!]

The Glorious Fourth

Jean, dearest –

Today is the fourth of July but I haven't bought my firecrackers yet; in fact I haven't even gone on a picnic. I slept till after nine this morning and had to be at work at 10:15. Maybe I told you before that we were broadcasting over KFLV, the Republic station, instead of printing a paper today. We each had to work about three hours at various times. It is about 4 o'clock now and I just came back to the office. Paul is working now and I will go out to eat with him after he gets through. I am quite elated to see that the Cardinals won their morning game, 15 to 4, today, and hope they do the same this afternoon. And to think that all the Cubs could do was split even in a twin bill...

Since receiving your letter yesterday I have read it over three times and all day I've been thinking of what a good time we could have if you were up here. And I think it would be just wonderful if you would go to Minneapolis because you would probably go up on the Chicago and Northwestern railroad or else the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul that goes through here. If you do go up, please stop here a while cause I'm crazy to see you.

I also think it would be a dandy idea if your mother could bring you up some time. If you ever know ahead of time that you can come, I'll let you know what Saturday I can get off at 5 o'clock. Wouldn't it be great if we could be together a Saturday night and Sunday too? I've been thinking a lot of what we would do if you were here – maybe it's all dream castles, but I hope not.

The folks said they sent up your picture Wednesday but I didn't get it yesterday so I surely ought to tomorrow. They've been so slow about sending it up that it looks as though I never would get to look upon the newest depiction of your bright and shiny countenance. And I'll be looking forward to those snapshots too – if you still want to send them.

This office is right on the edge of the Rock River that runs through the middle of Rockford, and I am sitting right by the window overlooking it. Every once in a while a motorboat comes through the water. I was just thinking it would be nice if we could have a little gondola and parade up and down the river in that!

Yesterday I had to take the Republic's Ford and go out to a factory on the edge of town for a story. And the city editor went along with me and had me drive around to his bootleg joint so he could get a drink while I was gone. I brought him back when I returned but he wasn't particularly intoxicated. While I didn't even get a drink when I got him. The Republic has a little green coupe that is commonly known as the Green Flash. It is named after one of our late afternoon scandal editions printed on green paper which is the original Green Flash. Our first edition goes to press at 1:30 in the afternoon and is printed then so as to catch the trains to outlying towns. The main or home edition deadline is 2:30 and is sent to Rockford subscribers. Then at 3:30 and 4:30 we have two green editions that have mostly crime and sports news on the front page. They are printed mainly for street sales here in town with big headlines to attract attention.

While I was working this morning I was surprised to see a story on Bobby Jones from the International News service written by Henry Molden. It has his name at the top and everything – called a "by-line" y'know. I think I'll write to him and congratulate him on it. The Republic has the International News service instead of the Associated Press but it's almost as good. It is quite interesting because they go for stories about Clara Bow and [missing] as that.

Molden is [missing] Chicago office and the other day we sent a message to [missing] the wire saying that all of us were here. Have you ever [missing] whether he really was engaged to Bertha Enger?

Do you know what I'd like to do sometime? I'd like to send you a letter printed in type on a linotype machine so it would look like a newspaper. I doubt if it can be done here cause I don't know the linotype operators well enough, but I could if I was at the Illini. One of the boys at the Illini was going to do it for me one time, but I never got around to writing the letter at the right time and that was over a year ago.

I wish I was in Champaign with you right now with nothing to worry about up here, and maybe we could go up to Robeson's roof garden and slide around a while on the glassy floor. I'd also like to see the boys at the Illini and play bridge at Feldkamp's again. It's really not such a bad town if you don't have to worry about studying... I mean not studying. I never did tell the folks what terrible grades I got the last semester, but all they were interested in was whether I graduated so it was all right with me.

You must be having a wonderful time there with a lot of school teachers and principals around town, to say nothing of a couple of hundred Catholic sisters. Have they raided any fraternity houses yet or kicked anybody out of school [?] It must be pretty dead around there if they haven't.

Paul and I had dinner with Jack Adams the other night and Phil Redeker wrote to him saying that the Psi U house was under suspicion and was being watched closely by the dean's men. I guess they're making beer in the bathtub like they did last summer. I would imagine the Sig Pi house would be closed if any were cause with Harry Richman, Rosy Rosenthal, and Bill Spivey staying there, it's no telling what would happen.

This paper seems to be getting short on one end so possibly I'd better sign off till next time. I hope this gets to Urbana tomorrow. Lots of love and a big, long kiss,

Jim [*handwritten signature*]

[Envelope postmarked July 7, 1930, 10:00 PM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, 802 Indiana Ave., Urbana, Illinois; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped from 'The Daily Illini, Illinois Union Building, Champaign, Illinois,' but crossed out and written in: 'J.S.F., 218 [? mistake?] N. Main, Rockford, Ill.' Handwritten on one piece of paper with 'The Associated Press' on the letterhead.]

Monday nite.

Dearest Jean –

Just a few lines before I go out to dinner. Dixie Smith has a pass to the Palace show tonite so I “consented” to meet him there [sic] we were going to eat. I think I’ll ask him whether he remembers you.

Yes, I got your letter this p.m. I always get them the day after you write. Am glad you still think you can come & I am certainly looking forward to seeing you. Hope you will be able to decipher my [writing?] o.k.

Ruth Hanna got into town Saturday & came into the office this afternoon. I didn’t “get” to meet her & had a terrible time trying to keep busy while she was hanging around. So did everybody else. And we all combed our hair & got fixed up when we heard she was coming.

Hope to see you Saturday, dearest. This was written in about 3 minutes & sure looks it.

Lots of love,

Jim

[Envelope postmarked July 9, 1930, 10:00 PM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, 802 Indiana Ave., Urbana, Illinois; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped from 'The Daily Illini, Illinois Union Building, Champaign, Illinois,' but crossed out and written in: 'J.S.F., 618 N. Main, Rockford, Ill.' Handwritten on one piece of paper with 'The Associated Press' on the letterhead.]

Wednesday night.

Jean, dear –

I can hardly wait till I see you Saturday, and I hope you don't find that you can't come. If you do come, I also hope it isn't as hot as it is today. We just about melted down in the office this afternoon, but the paper had to come out just the same. And yesterday it rained so hard that I got all wet even with my slicker on. My feet were soaked from 9 to 5, but I guess it didn't do any harm. The best thing to do is to go swimming, but I haven't a bathing suit here & don't know of any place nearby where we could swim anyway.

I think I'd better go to a show tonight cause the shows will be the coolest place in town.

Since starting, I've decided that this is to be a very short letter because it's too hot to write. The sweat is just rolling off of me, drop by drop.

Now don't forget to come!

Love to you,

Jim

[Envelope postmarked July 16, 1930, 1:00 PM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped from 'The Daily Illini, Illinois Union Building, Champaign, Illinois,' but crossed out and written in: 'J.S.F., 618 N. Main, Rockford, Ill.' In the bottom left corner is written: "c/o Prof. W. F. Holman" and stamped "Received, Jul 17, 1930, 10:30 AM." Handwritten on one piece of paper, both sides, with 'The Associated Press' on the letterhead.]

Tuesday night.

Darling Jean –

Yes, you said you like "Darling" so I thought I might as well use it – and then, I don't mind it myself. Your letter I received today was wonderful, especially the latter part, and I hope you remember a little of what was in it. However, I'm sorry we couldn't make connections so as to see each other again tonight, but of course I understand. Instead, Paul and I went to the Orph, but I was thinking of you, nevertheless.

Since I left you Sunday night, I've been just living those few hours over again and recalling what a perfect time I had while I could be with you. To me, also, it was the best weekend I have ever spent – and you, dearest, are the one who made it that way. You must stop here on your way home from Minneapolis – understand?! What wouldn't I give now if I could have you in my arms and give you a big, long kiss. But from the sad looks of things now, it seems as though I'd have to wait quite a few weeks for it.

By the way, have you read anything in the papers about "tree-sitters" – boys who are trying to set endurance records for sitting in trees the greatest number of hours. There are 26 kids here in Rockford trying for the record in trees now and by tomorrow there'll probably be a dozen more. I had to write all the stories about them yesterday & today & it's an awfully complicated job keeping the contestants' times straight, etc. The town is just going plain nuts over the fad, & I think it's the dumbest idea anyone ever thought of. A few boys in Rockford are starting bicycle, roller-skating & rocking chair marathons, too.

There is a baseball magazine right under this paper I'm writing on, so you know I'm in the proper frame of mind when I write. Also you know now that I've been reading A-1 literature.

If you ever write to Cheryl (?), have her tell Joe to stop & see me when he's here & tell her my address, etc.

I hope this gets to you in this indirect manner thru the U. of Minn. Don't go swimming & play bridge so much that you can't write, but I do hope you have a glorious time.

Love to my Jean,

Jim

[Envelope postmarked July 18, 1930, 1:30 PM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped from 'The Daily Illini, Illinois Union Building, Champaign, Illinois,' but crossed out and written in: 'J.S.F., 618 N. Main, Rockford, Ill.' In the bottom left corner is written: "c/o Prof. W. F. Holman." Handwritten on one piece of paper, both sides, with 'The Associated Press' on the letterhead.]

Thursday nite.

Dearest –

I have just returned from Beloit, Wis. where a couple of us went tonight. Courtney has a fraternity brother here who has a car & he took us up. It was the first time I had been in Wisconsin. Early in the evening several of us had to be down in the office to answer phone calls about the Mandell-Singer fight in New York because you know Mandell is a Rockford boy. But he was knocked out in the first round so that didn't last long. Then we went over to Bob Jacob's house & played bridge a while. Later we went for a ride & ended up in Beloit. There's a place up there something like new Prebus [NOTE: *might this refer to Preziso Cicio, a restaurant at 1624 18th Ave.?*] (not as good, of course!) called the Spanish Tanery [sic?]. We loafed around there quite a while so it is now 2:45 (C.S.T.) and all is well – because I am writing to you.

I didn't hear from you today but I suppose you are having a wonderful time in Minneapolis. Tell me all about what you are doing because I am interested in everything you do. I imagine your new green bathing suit is getting a good workout these days if you are near a lake.

The boys at the office are beginning to take their vacations now so that piles more work on we unfortunate who are there. Just think of poor me who doesn't get a vacation till next summer. And they're giving the boys only 5 days vacation at that. I guess I'll be lucky if I get home even late next summer.

Good news – I got a box of cookies from home yesterday, and they're not all eaten yet.

I'm missing you an awfully lot, dear, since you left Sunday (or Monday, rather). And I'm already looking forward to seeing you when you return from Minnesota. By the way, one of the reporter's said to me early this week: "Say, who was the keen-looking girl I saw you with Saturday night?" So you see, I'm not the only one that thinks you're good looking!

I hope you get this Saturday or I might have a guilty conscience about not writing soon enough.

Love to you, dearie,

Jim.

[Envelope postmarked July 24, 1930, 6:30 PM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, c/o Prof. W. F. Holman, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped 'The Rockford Daily Republic, 97 East State St., Rockford, Illinois' with 'J. S. Flagg' typed above this return imprint. Handwritten on two brittle pieces of paper, one side each.]

Wednesday nite.

Dearest –

It was sweet of you to write to me two days straight as you did Monday & yesterday. I like your letters all the better when I get them after not expecting them when I come home. And don't ever think your letters are too sentimental, for as I told you recently, I like it, when other people are that way.

Today was quite uneventful except that I had to get a picture of a man that had died, and while I was there, I took all four pictures they had of him so the R-G [rival newspaper, *Rockford Register-Gazette*] couldn't have any. It's an eye for an eye & a tooth for a tooth. And this afternoon I got some dope for a Sunday feature on a man here who communicated with Byrd when he was near the South Pole.

This morning I happened on to Jack Adams downtown & we went up to the club his mother manages on the top floor of one of the tallest buildings here. It is a kind of a ritzy mid-day luncheon club for women. But Jack knows the cook & had her fix some of the best chicken sandwiches for us. So of course I didn't have to spend much for lunch.

I think the R-G is weakening because they just canned one reporter & have four other men on "indefinite vacations." So, as our city editor said yesterday, now is the time to deliver the knockout punch. I hope the Republic doesn't decide to lay off anyone very soon.

If you decide to stay in Minnesota only two weeks as you intimated the other day, I guess it won't be long before I can see you again. At least, I hope you can stop off here on your way home. But don't think I'm trying to make you cut your vacation short just so I can see you.

Jean, that letter I got from you Monday was the best yet. And as to comparing it with Peg's – well, it's got it beat by a mile.

I'm running out of things to write, dear, so please forgive me for writing a short letter. And here's hoping I can see you very soon...

Love from your

Jim.

P.S. My choice of stationery seems to get worse every week, doesn't it!

[Envelope postmarked July 31, 1930, 9:30 AM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, c/o Prof. W. F. Holman, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn., stamped at bottom: "Received, Aug 1, 1930, 8:30 AM"; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped 'The Daily Republic, Rockford, Illinois' with 'J. S. Flagg' handwritten above this return imprint. Handwritten on one piece of paper, both sides, with the letterhead: "Rockford Daily Republic, the Republic Company Publishers, Rockford, Illinois."]

Wed. nite.

Jean, dearest –

It's hard for me to think that maybe I can't see you this week, but I am still holding out some hope after getting your letter today. I know you'll come if you can, but if you find it too hard to arrange it, of course I'll understand. Tonight I found out when the C&NW [Chicago and North Western Railway] trains run. I will enclose their time card. However, I suppose you have found out how all the trains run from looking at time tables up there. The I.C. [Illinois Central Railway] station was closed tonight so I couldn't find out when they leave town etc. If you find that you can stop here I'll be the happiest man in the world!

I had a visitor this morning – Wil Doebelin, a former Edwardsville boy & a very good friend of mine. He graduated from Ill. in '28 with my brother & is now state editor of the Milwaukee Sentinel. About 10 days ago he was married to a former Edwardsville girl who has lived in Milwaukee the last few years & they were on their honeymoon when they dropped in today. I had lunch with them & we had quite a nice get-together. When I thought of them being on their honeymoon, I secretly hoped that I could experience a time like that myself in the not too distant future, and I couldn't help thinking of you all the time.

I had to cover a convention of the Ill. Telephone Co. today at the Nelson Hotel & some of it was awfully boring. They had a luncheon at the hotel & I was invited but it so happened that I had to write my story on the morning session just at the time they were having lunch so as to get it in tonite's paper, so I couldn't accept. But about quarter to one when I was through writing at the office, in came Wil so I was in better company anyway. This was about the first big convention I ever saw where they didn't have a lot of liquor flooding the place. I was so disappointed!

Well, dearest, I'm not exactly counting on seeing you this weekend, but I'll still hold out some hope until you say you can't. And I hope that time doesn't come.

Love from your own,

Jim.

[Envelope postmarked Aug. 19, 1930, 9:00 AM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, 802 Indiana Ave., Urbana, Illinois, penciled on left side: "Special Delivery"; 12 cents postage (for Special Delivery). Envelope stamped 'The Rockford Daily Republic, 107-109-111 South Water St., Rockford, Illinois' with 'J. S. F.' typed above this return imprint. Typed on two very brittle pieces of thin, torn paper, one side each.]

Office...monday nite,
(or, the night AFTER).....

To the dearest girl in the world –

Needless to say I've been thinking of you all day and I wish I had you right in my arms this minute. It was so wonderful to see you again, and the memory of those few hours will be with me for a long, long time. Everything was perfect this weekend, at least until after I had kissed you goodbye, and you can't imagine how glad I am that I took that "crazy" notion to come down and see you. Please, dear, understand me – I don't get so romantic very often but I just have to this time. I love you so much that I could just crush you in my arms, but the sad part of it is that there is nothing here to crush! Since leaving you last night I have thought of everything you said and did – everything my poor memory would let me – and I have been thinking especially of Saturday night from 1:30 to 3, and of our last half hour together in the station. Every minute with you was wonderful, and even though a newspaper man is supposed to be able to write, I can't tell you how much I enjoyed it all.

I haven't been very ambitious today, but managed to stagger through all right. It's a good thing I didn't have to do a whole lot of work today or I might have been even too tired to write. You should have had a chance to hear all the remarks hurled at me today down here – such as, "How was the babe" or "Are you still single?" and so forth and so on. I tell you, it's a great life.

When I got to Chicago last night I went up to the apartment where Mart Maher and Harry Neil live, but Mart was out on a date and didn't get back until after I had to go. I saw Harry though and we exchanged "dirt" for quite a while. The train was about an hour late at Chicago, and they didn't start from Champaign until about 20 or 30 minutes after you left. If I had known that- well...Rockford is the same as ever today except that we've had another gang shooting

over Sunday. [*The following line is illegible due to the bottom of the page being torn:*] It doesn't make quite as good a story as the other one, though, because nobody was killed. We were expecting another outbreak tonight, but so far nothing has happened. The trouble is that some Chicago bootleggers are trying to take trade away from the Rockford bootleggers and they won't stand for it. So much for the bootlegging situation.

I haven't written to my folks yet, so I guess I'll do that after I finish this letter. They don't write to me any too often either so they won't have any comeback. I think Katherine is coming up to visit Elinor this week, and they said they might come out here Sunday. I hope they do and that K. brings a car with her.

After thinking over yesterday I've decided that I must have had an awful capacity to eat so much in a short time. Perhaps I should be ashamed of myself, but I just couldn't refuse. Your mother is a wonderful cook, and you can tell her so for me.

I'll be looking for a letter from you tomorrow, dear, and I know I won't be disappointed. I'm afraid maybe I'm writing this too late to get it to you tomorrow, so I may send it special if I can get a stamp anywhere.

My love to you, dearest, with a big, long kiss,

Jim. [*handwritten signature*]

[Envelope postmarked Aug. 22, 1930, 10:00 PM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, 802 Indiana Ave., Urbana, Illinois; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped 'In Five Days Return To / The Daily Republic, Rockford, Illinois' with 'j. s. f.' typed above this return imprint. Typed on two pieces of paper, one side each, with letterhead: "Rockford Daily Republic, Rockford, Illinois; Ruth Hanna McCormick, publisher; Barney Thompson, editor" and a footer: "A Great Newspaper Growing Greater."]

Friday...

Dearest Jean –

It's 4:30 now and I'm all through writing my radio speech and everything and am waiting for Courtney to get through with his work. There hasn't been much doing here today except that the paper came out as usual, and that I had to write two features for this Sunday's paper. They are all done now, thank goodness, and I can rest easily till next week.

I was overjoyed to get a letter from you three days straight this week, so I can hardly hope to have another when I get home tonight. I had a letter from the folks yesterday too and they said they would probably drive up here to see me Aug. 30 or 31. So with Katherine coming over Sunday I will get to see some of my family 2 Sundays in a row.

It looks as though Flaggin' 'Em [*J. S. Flagg's sports column*] is going to be revived before long because today I talked with the city editor and he then talked to the managing editor and they decided I should write my column for the sports page Sunday, and write it every week at first and then every other day or so later on. I am sure glad to get to do it again. Although I'm not on the sports staff yet, I may be in a few weeks, and I'm sure I will get to help out a lot on sports during the football season. If I don't put all my time on sports it'll be because they are too tight to hire somebody else in the place I have now. I don't have any idea what I will put in my column for Sunday, but then, one never does till he sits down to the typewriter and writes it.

You surprised me the other day by telling me you were going in for heavy reading now, and I suppose you will be a regular literati before long. Then, and not until then, you can be a star in one of Bruce Weirick's classes!

As to your going to Minnesota to school, I think it would be a good idea because I think it does everybody a lot of good to get away from home. I wouldn't go to college in my hometown on a bet and I think it's more of a handicap than anything else to be at home while you [are] attending school the last few years. But I realize that there is also another side to the question, and one of the biggest drawbacks in my mind is that I might not get to see you quite as often. To tell you the truth, I think a person gets a broader education of the ways and means of the world by going away to school. But then, of course, you wouldn't know many people up there, and you might not like the girls in your chapter. Well, don't let me influence you too much...Do as you like and it will be O.K. with me. Yes, I guess it would have to be.

Goodbye dearest, till next time.

Love,

Jim [*handwritten signature*]

[Envelope postmarked Aug. 24, 1930, 6:30 PM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, 802 Indiana Ave., Urbana, Illinois; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped 'In Five Days Return To / The Daily Republic, Rockford, Illinois' with 'j. s. f.' typed above this return imprint. Typed on two pieces of paper, one side each, with letterhead: "Rockford Daily Republic, Rockford, Illinois; Ruth Hanna McCormick, publisher; Barney Thompson, editor" and a footer: "A Great Newspaper Growing Greater," under which is typed "sez you" on page one of the letter.]

1:40 am. Sunday.

Dearest:

It isn't quite time to go home yet, so I thought I'd write a little note. We had quite a bit of excitement here tonight when there was an auto accident south of town. It happened at 6 o'clock just when I was going out to eat, and instead I had to go out to where the accident was, and was getting all the dope, helping take pictures, and writing about it all evening and with a lot of other stuff to do, didn't get to eat until 10 o'clock instead of 6. There was one man killed and a kid who will probably die. If he's going to die I hope he kicks off before 2 o'clock so we can get it in the paper. After covering the accident, I ate and laid around the sheriff's office the rest of the time.

Did you ever know a guy by the name of Baker '29 from the AKL house? He dropped in here tonight and is from Stillman Valley, wherever that is [*a small community 13 miles southwest of Rockford*]. Since you are so fond of the AKL's I thought probably you knew him.

I received your letter today and it thrilled me very much to know that Leota Miller wanted a date with me. Sure, I remember her, and I always thought she was a nice girl, but just never thought about dating her.

Flaggin' 'Em [*his sports column*] made its first appearance in the Republic tonight, and I had just finished it when that accident call came. Now that it's been published, I'm all ready to receive reports of how rotten it is.

Paul has contracted the adventuresome habit from his roommate and is going to Chicago tomorrow to see some show that's on the stage there. He is going to stay with Jurgey, the tough-looking guy you met up by the old gym once.

So with him gone, I don't know whether I will be up in time to receive my sister tomorrow or not. Only time can tell.

You might be interested in knowing that Rudy Vallee was in town last night and this morning on his way to somewhere. I was sent up to the Faust to interview him at 8:30 this morning. I called his manager in his room and he tried to tell me that Rudy was out of town for a few hours. But having heard that one somewhere before, I hung around the lobby with the photographer waiting for Rudy to get out of bed. Then the Register-Gazette men came along and four of us went up to his room and pounded on the door, but all he could say was "won't you let a guy get a little sleep." We pounded on the door quite a while and finally went back downstairs and called the manager on the phone. He said if there was much more pounding there would be a couple of fists come out of the door. Har, har. Finally we gave up and decided to pan him in our stories. When I got back to the office I found that a girl on the society staff had called Rudy and he had told her that he would let a WOMAN interview him, but that he didn't like being interviewed by men! So she went up and got a story and even claims he proposed to her.

With that, I think I shall run home and grab some sleep.

Lots of love, dearie,

Jim [*handwritten signature*]

[Envelope postmarked Aug. 26, 1930, 9:00 AM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, 802 Indiana Ave., Urbana, Illinois; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped 'In Five Days Return To / The Daily Republic, Rockford, Illinois' with 'j. s. f.' typed above this return imprint. Typed on two pieces of paper, one side each, with letterhead: "Rockford Daily Republic, Rockford, Illinois; Ruth Hanna McCormick, publisher; Barney Thompson, editor" and a footer: "A Great Newspaper Growing Greater."]

Office Monday night

Jean, dearest –

While I'm waiting to go up to Rockford High School I might as well use my time the best way possible, and there's nothing better than writing to you. I have to cover a board of education meeting tonight because Bob Jacobs is on his vacation. Here's hoping it doesn't last long or I will be bored to death.

I suppose you are having a good time with Lois these days. Although I've never met her, tell her hello for me and give her my love and all that dontcha know.

Katherine was here yesterday and she brought me a picture for the apartment and washed all the dishes and swept the kitchen and everything, so the place looks civilized again. We don't have time to clean it up in the mornings and are too lazy at night, so there just isn't much done about it. I am to have some more company this week when the folks come. Also Courtney got back this morning and said Jurgey was coming over next weekend too, so I don't know what I'll do with all the company. I also learned over the weekend that my brother and his wife had moved to Hannibal, Mo. to put up another bridge.

I'm wondering whether you are going to get to come up and see Fran Campbell before school starts. Dixon is only 42 miles from here and if you got that far there surely must be some way to get to Rockford from there. I do hope you can get up either before school starts or soon afterwards because, strange as it may seem, I want to see you again.

There is a big farm picnic, called the Trask Bridge Picnic up here Wednesday and I guess I'll have to cover it. They have about 25,000 attend it every year from all over northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. I've been writing the publicity for it so far and had a feature on it Sunday.

Yes, I guess I'll send you some of my columns some time when I think of it, but they aren't worth a whoop.

It's about time to run over to the high school so bye bye till next time.

Lots of love,

Jim [*handwritten signature*]

[Envelope postmarked Aug. 28, 1930, 1:00 PM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, 802 Indiana Ave., Urbana, Illinois; 2 cents postage. Envelope stamped 'In Five Days Return To / The Daily Republic, Rockford, Illinois' with 'j. s. f.' typed above this return imprint. Typed on one piece of paper, one side, with letterhead: "Rockford Daily Republic, Rockford, Illinois; Ruth Hanna McCormick, publisher; Barney Thompson, editor" and a footer: "A Great Newspaper Growing Greater."]

August 27, 1930

Dearest –

I'm kinda weary tonight because I've been tramping around at a crazy picnic all day – that Trask Bridge Picnic you know where 25,000 people come every year. It was the biggest bore, and I had to sit and listen to a congressman speak, and they're even worse than members of the state legislature. He talked for an hour and didn't say anything except that this was a pretty good country we were in and that we should support the Republican party. It seems like I've heard speeches like that somewhere before. Well, the only thing that happened all day was that some Swedish woman was hit in the jaw by a batted ball at the ball game and I phoned that in for the last edition. Had to use an old country telephone where you turn a crank to get central – like we have at Moro [Illinois], by the way. I never saw so many farmers in one group before in my life, and don't want to again for quite a while. The women were all gossiping and the men threw horseshoes and played ball etc etc...

So you think I'm a hard-hearted gent. Well, you haven't heard anything yet but I guess I won't tell you any more or I might get bawled out worse than last time! I didn't know I was so hard on the people in the auto accident but perhaps you were right. But remember, you always were more sentimental than I was.

The folks wrote yesterday and said they would be up Saturday so I guess maybe I'll get the apartment cleaned again (not before they come). Jurgey is coming over Saturday morning and will probably go back Monday morning.

I think I'll go home and go to bed, dearest. I'm not very ambitious tonight.

Love to you,

Jim [*handwritten signature*]

[Envelope postmarked Aug. 30, 1930, 10:00 PM, from Rockford, Ill. From J. S. Flagg; addressed to Miss Jean Smith, 802 Indiana Ave., Urbana, Illinois; 12 cents postage for Special Delivery. "Special Delivery" handwritten on envelope, with the return address handwritten on the back: "J. S. Flagg, 309 S. First St., Rockford, Ill." and delivery postmarked "Sept. 1, 1930, 8:00 AM, Urbana, Ill." Letter handwritten on one piece of paper, both sides.]

Saturday night

Jean, dearest –

Please accept my deepest sympathy for what happened and I want to extend it to your mother, as well. Although I have never had an experience of this kind, I think I know just how you feel, and I only wish that I could be with you right now to try to comfort you.

I could hardly believe your telegram when I received it this evening. It came before I had a chance to read your letter telling of your father's illness, and I couldn't imagine what had happened.

I know it will be dreadfully hard on you, dearest, but please try and bear up under it all the best you can.

Jean, just remember that this is one of the things that must come to all of us during a lifetime, and please be brave and remember that I want to do all I possibly can for you.

Dearest, I am dreadfully sorry, but I find that it will be simply impossible for me to attend the funeral. I know that, above all times, you want me to be with you the next few days, but I just can't get away from here. Dearest, you must understand me when I say this, and I think you will. If it was on a Sunday I would probably be able to come, but as it is, the office will not let me go because we are short of men now with several taking vacations. My folks, who are here this weekend, thought I should go too, but I find that it is impossible.

But remember, Jean dear, I will be thinking of you through thick and thin, and I would give anything if I could be with you to comfort you at such a time as this.

Again, I want to offer my most sincere regrets, and remember, I will be in love with you always.

Jim. [*handwritten signature*]