

Letters from London

Edited by Trail End State Historic Site Superintendent Cynde Georgen; from *Trail End Notes*, November 2000

In early 1927, Rosa-Maye Kendrick moved to London, England, with her new husband Hubert Reilly Harmon – the newly appointed military air attaché to the American Embassy. For the next two years or so, Rosa-Maye sent frequent letters to her parents, detailing the life she was leading, the events she attended, and the people she met. So taken was Eula Kendrick with her daughter’s descriptions of life abroad that she had the letters published in 1928.

Intimate Letters From London is a collection of Rosa-Maye’s personal correspondence from March 1927 to October 1928. The letters were unedited because, in Eula’s words, “... much of their natural enthusiasm and effervescence would escape in the filtering process of too great revision and elimination.”

First editions of the out-of-print book are for sale at Trail End and at www.trailend.org.



Invitation to meet Charles Lindbergh, 1927 (*Letters from London*)

3 March 1927, First Letter - Mother, dear, suppose I send you my diary from the British Isles in this form, recounting to you our experiences, beginning this morning and continuing them at intervals throughout the following days.

15 March 1927, Hubert Reports to Work - The incidents attendant on our new life are crowding one another rapidly; we find ourselves working every minute, just getting organized so we may know where to begin. ... Officially our new life began the first of last week, when Hubert reported at his office at the Embassy, leaving me to my own devices.

17 March 1927, First House - I'm happy to tell you this morning that we have secured the lease on the house and yesterday with much trepidation, I engaged my first servants: Tyler the cook, a small chipper little person, reminding me of an English sparrow (I'm uncertain about her ability but I am sure she will be cheerful and responsive).

20 April 1927, Longing for Home - I thought I heard [a meadowlark] the other day and a wave of longing for home engulfed me. I couldn't get rid of it, or the imagined smell of sage.

27 May 1927, A Royal Event at Buckingham Palace - In their gilt balcony ... the red coated musicians interspersed genuine American jazz with more classical numbers. I was amused to find that our irresistible music had invaded this last sanctuary of British conservatism! ... Hubert and I enjoyed ourselves so much that we almost forgot to leave!

3 June 1927, Charles Lindbergh's Arrival in London - At first we could only distinguish a faint blur. Gradually it developed into the escort of honor, perhaps seven or eight of the British Airways Ships, flying in formation. ... When at last [Lindbergh] was visible (a tiny gnat amongst huge black beetles) we recognized his plane by its single wing. Nearer and lower they came, and at last swept over us with a thundering roar. The crowd went wild! Thrice Lindbergh circled the field to its outermost limits enabling everyone to have a chance at him. His plane seen from below reminded me of a bat circling in an enclosure.

5 October 1927, Honeymooners - "Honeymooners" are passing through London on their way home to the States. Hubert and I have great fun looking benevolently down on the foolish young things, from our accumulated experiences of seven months married life.

13 December 1927, First English Football Game - Compared to the well trained "fight-to-the-finish" football matches we are used to, this one seemed a friendly afternoon frolic. There was no special team work; no spectacular tackles; no rough and tumble scrimmages; no breathless conferences with heads bumped close together. Their tactics seem to stress the forward pass ... The incessant playing without the thrilling moments of suspense to which we are accustomed, became almost monotonous ... and pointless.

24 December 1927, First Christmas Away - We want you to know that we are not sad – nor reflecting unduly upon past Christmases – far from that! ... As we wrapped your gifts, we thought of you wrapping ours and as we open your gifts to us this evening, we shall be thinking of you all undoing ours, with (we doubt not) great curiosity and, we hope, great pleasure as the contents come to view. As for ourselves, we know happy surprises await us and the excitement of uncertainty helps to cheer the crowding thoughts of Home – and my first Christmas away from it.

1 January 1928, Christmas Gifts - I confess we were overwhelmed with our Christmas from home – I'm sure we received more than our share of gifts – I confess, too, a lump rose up into my throat, but was heroically swallowed (without any tears being shed) aided by the nearness of your presence and because of so many evidences of your love!



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