

11-12-1918

## 1918-11-12, Elmo to Emeline

Elmo S. Culbert

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## Subject Terms

Elmo S. Culbert; World War 1914 1918; United States-- History--20th Century. United States Army American Expeditionary Forces; Camp Pike (Ark.); World war 1914 1918 Regimental histories United States; World War 1914 1918 United States Military discharge; World War 1914 1918 United States Army Travel; Country life Arkansas; World war 1914 1918 Moral and ethical aspects; World war 1914 1918 Participation African-Americans; World war 1914 1918 Social aspects The South; World War 1914 1918 United States Army Race relations; World War 1914 1918 Kansas City, MO.; World War 1914 1918 Fort Smith, AK.; World War 1914 1918 Oklahoma;

## Keywords

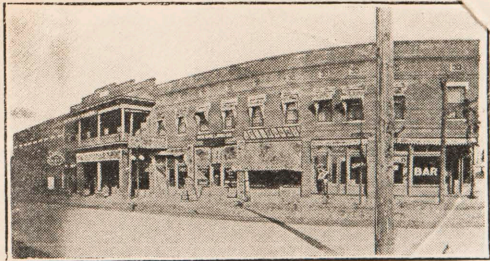
U.S.A., U.S. Postal Service, Stamp, Washington, George, President Washington, Salt Lake City, U.S.A., Soldiers, Homesickness, Romance, Hot Weather, Funds, Food, Wife, Camaraderie, Women at Home, Train, Soldiers' Slang, discipline and punishment, housing, poverty, race, racial stereotyping, racism, explosives, racial slur, accident, Military Police, Arkansas River

## Identifier

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**UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT**

Return after five days to

**THE HOFFMAN HOTEL**

Opposite Union Depot

FRANK HOFFMAN, Prop. and Mgr.

Steam Heat, Hot and Cold Water in Every Room

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

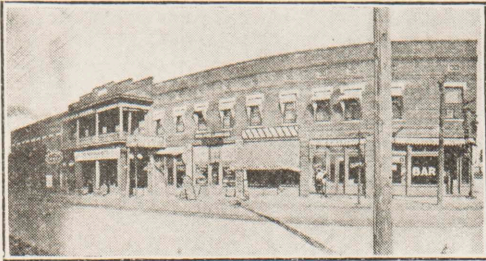


19



Mrs. Elmo S. Culbert,  
Salt Lake City,  
Utah.

Go Shields Staty. Co.



# HOFFMAN HOTEL

OPPOSITE UNION DEPOT

CAFE IN CONNECTION  
EUROPEAN PLAN

Steam Heat, Hot and Cold Water in Every Room—Rooms  
50c, 75c, \$1.00 and \$1.50

FRANK HOFFMAN, PROP. AND MGR.

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

Tuesday Night  
1917

Sweetheart mine:—

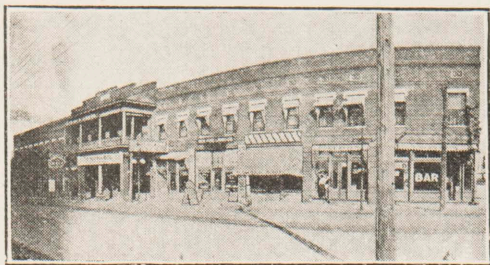
Where shall I begin, dear? My first impressions of the south? Well, lets see. First, upon leaving K.C. we had to travel via day coach, which wasn't the most comfortable in the world. But we did it, rather than fork out the extra dough for Standard sleeper—the only thing our train carried. You see, our tickets called for 2<sup>nd</sup> class passage. It's still real hot back here, so I slept with the window open all night and had my good old bath robe around me. We hit south through Mo., over into Kansas again and I woke up this A.M. in Okla. And here's where I seemed to sense the first difference. Kansas was prosperous looking, where as this

you to me, heart <sup>and</sup> soul.

Baby girl, if the opportunity comes to stay here <sup>and</sup> receive my com., what shall I do? You always know best, so I want to hear from you about it. The trouble with me is, I have nothing in the way of a good position to go back to - I wouldn't work for Lamberts' again - <sup>and</sup> I will simply have to start all over again. But maybe we had better wait <sup>and</sup> see what they want to do with me here. In any event, I shure do want my girl with me.

Received your telegram yesterday, dear - it was just like you. I know just what every word of it meant, to.

Did I tell you yet that your package arrived with your Dad's gift? It was very acceptable, dear, <sup>and</sup> I was out of tobacco <sup>and</sup> I haven't been paid as yet - am about busted. I know, though, that part of



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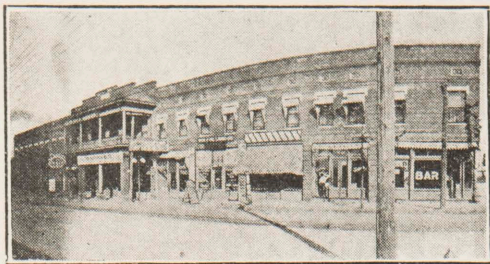
LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

191

Somewhere I have read a pretty thought that runs something like this. "They even have violets here, heartbreaking blue ones that simply beg to be plucked and given to you. No one has told them that you are thousands of miles away and they wonder why I pass them by."

Dear baby girl, that thought flashed through my mind and I silently said a prayer for you—just you. Sweet girl of mine—oh that your cares and burdens might be lighter. I'll try so hard to make good—just for you.

A horrible thing happened just after we pulled into Ft. Smith, Ark. We had just alighted from the train to stretch our legs when we heard a large explosion close by. A coffee factory had exploded, dear,



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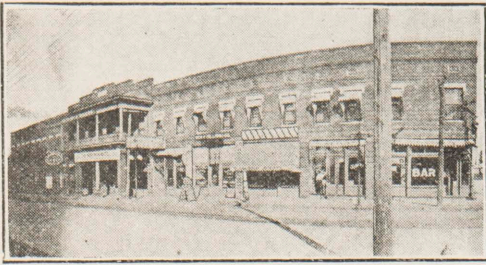
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LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

191

and almost simultaneously was a roaring furnace. Twenty five girls were caught in it and didn't have a chance in the world. I saw one girl jump from the third story and break her legs. One man crawled down a drain spout from the third story, also, but nobody else got out. It was awful. And quick - I never saw anything like it in my life. Our train left about ten minutes after, so I couldn't get any details as to cause or anything. It had a very depressing effect.

Our afternoon's travel took us along the shores principally of the Arkansas River - nothing but swamp land and ramshackle towns. The people inhabiting this section,



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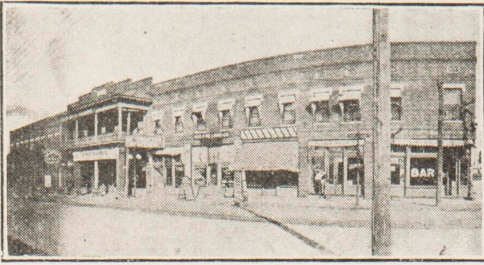
LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

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outside of the niggers, look like an ignorant, illiterate, degenerate class and the old expression of "White Trash" was forcibly brought to my mind. I passed the remark that they looked like "Nobody Home" and Garner added "Looks like nobody ever lived there."

Rather an amusing - although also touching thing took place at one station. A large group of drafted niggers were entraining for this camp - yes, there are niggers here too - and of all the bawling and boo-hoing you ever heard, this took the cake. Every young fellow had his women folks and they would take turns seeing who could wail the loudest. Dear, it shouldn't have been anything to laugh at, for it brought home forcibly our leave taking,





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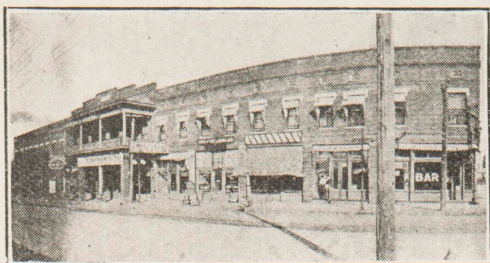
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but I couldn't help it. I laughed until the tears ran down my face. One long, tall girl actually hollered herself into hysterics, collapsed like an umbrella and the next minute was laughing as gaily as though nothing had ever happened. They are a peculiar class, and I know they are going to interest me.

The people getting on and off our train—white people—also talk the broad southern lingo, and I kept my ears open.

Dear, I think I told you we would arrive here at two. Well, I was wrong. We weren't due until eight and arrived at nine. Our camp lays 14 miles out of town, and as we were hungry and tired we decided to stay in town, get



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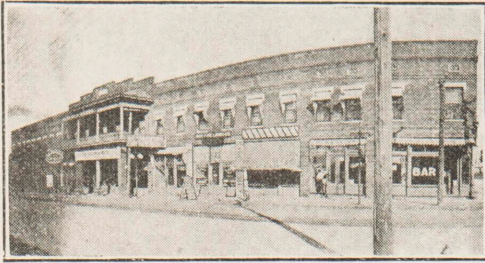
LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

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something to eat, get a good nights' sleep, and show up in the morning. Well, we pretty near couldn't, as this town is under strict quarantine and no soldiers are allowed in it.

All of the hotels and public places are visited every hour by the M.P. (Military Police) and any soldier found is arrested. Well, after parlying for a few minutes Garner made arrangements to get us in this dump - right accross the street from the depot and here we are, not allowed to leave the house. We have just been in to eat next door, and now are ready to turn in.

Sweetheart, this is some camp. Between 80 and 85 thousand men here. The third largest camp in the U.S. Some camp - what? But I'll tell you more about that after I've



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Good night, sweet sweet little  
wife of mine. Your boy shall retire  
now with you swaying his mind  
to sleep. How I do love my girl.

Sweetheart, good night  
Elmo.

[[Culbert Correspondence #14]]

[Page 1-Envelope-Front]

[[image- black and white photograph  
of The Hoffman Hotel]]

[[image –green U.S. postage 3 cents stamp  
of President Washington facing left]]

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[[image– black emblem- illegible]]

Mrs. Elmo S. Culbert,  
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C/O Shields Staty. Co.

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[[LITTLE ROCK, ARK.]] [[Tuesday Night]] [[1918]]

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[[LITTLE ROCK, ARK.]]                                           [[1918]]

country look forlorn and poor. And one of the first things I noticed were the latrines along side of a station. One was marked “White Men” and the other “Colored Men”, Also, we were carrying an extra coach in which the niggers rode. None of them are allowed in the white people’s coaches. And every station has its separate waiting room for “Colored” folks. It started to rain early and this seemed to add to the desolation. Another thing I noticed early –I was passing large fields of cotton –the first I have ever seen.

We got out at an eating house at noon and sweetheart –I was forcibly reminded of you then, for I saw some violets in bloom. I jumped a fence and picked a couple

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