

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

December 19, 1939

Dearest Frank,

Three days before you come home, or rather four because today has barely started, and I haven't written you this week!

I got your card from Niagara Falls and I still hope someday to see that place myself. I also got your letter this morning.

It sounds like you had a good time, and it is a shame that you should have to let the weather on the way. The weather around here has been much more like Easter than Christmas - beautiful, spring days, just like spring. The town is buzzing with Christmas shoppers, although the Christmas spirit is lacking somewhat, probably due to no snow. It won't be long now however,

I've had a very busy weekend - stopped Saturday afternoon, saw Bertie just for a moment on the street & rode home on the Directcar with Johnny Cruise; went home & packed them with the fruit cake, and then Saturday night I wrapped all my gifts (til 1:30!! AM). Sunday after Highmass I took Aunt Hilda over to the cemetery and around to a few home - in the morning. Then on Sunday afternoon

I ^{addresses} wrote all my Christmas cards, fixed the car seat covers for dad, made several trips uptown for Aug. & dad, and then got ready by 5:30 to go out to a "Sausage & Hopplesa Supper" at Claude & Vattie Taylor's house, after which we went to a double feature (2 one-act plays) at the South Bend Community Theatre. By "we" I mean Lucinda Stoneburner, one of the office girls, the one who said she would drive me up to Detroit next spring sometime. Claude & Vattie Taylor are a "very young" middle-aged couple whom I knew quite well 2 and 3 years ago, although I haven't seen them since two years ago this Christmas. Eleanor used to live at their home, so that was practically my home too then. Lu lives there now, and the Taylor's invited me over for supper before the play. Miss Smith, our boss, had these tickets and gave them to me to use when she went on her vacation last Friday. So that took care of my weekend. Yes, and I also went to the Chardresses between 5 & 7:30 on Saturday evening. Every minute since then has been the same old story. Sodality Party last night and on committee. Tomorrow night is the office dinner party, and I'm also on committee then. I'm going to a little cocktail party before the dinner. Don't you wish

you could be with me tomorrow night?
 Thursday ^{night} I'm going to finish up all my
 package wrapping & shopping, and get everything
 taken care of by Friday night, so that
 I can start enjoying myself again.

I saw Poch last night, & I talked with
 Johnny N. about 2 hours ago. He wanted
 to know about a present for Angela. He
 also discussed possibilities for New Year's Eve,
 although there is nothing definite yet.
 He was going to talk over his ideas with
 Larry. I called Fritz this morning to get
 Jerry's address, and when he called back
 to give it to me, he invited you & me
 to come over to see their Christmas tree
 sometime over the weekend. He said they
 probably would be there all the weekend except
 Christmas Eve. I told him we'd be glad
 to and that I would tell you. He's been
 down with the flu for around 3 days
 I guess.

Have you heard from Adelaide
 recently? She is planning a surprise
 birthday party for Jerry. It is to be on a
 Saturday night, Jan. 13th. She told me to
 see that you get here (if possible). She's
 inviting the whole gang and Jerry is most
 unaware. So you'll have some time to
 think that over. You know how I feel
 about it. I want to go if you go, but if

you can't make it, I won't mind missing it.
That is, I won't miss the party, but
I'll miss you.

Darling, this has been the longest
month, and every day of it gets longer.
I don't think Friday will ever come again,
or will it?

To let you in on a bit of my blues
and worries I might tell you that at
present Daddy's postmastership seems hopeless.
It wouldn't be so bad if it were a case
of just losing it to a better man or a
man with a higher grade in the exam.
But to lose it this way is just too much.
You see his only competitor for the job, Joe Bowen
County Commissioner, has, by all kinds of
crooked means, gotten himself into the
eligible list. The Civil Service angle of the
job is taken care of already and the final
appointment is made by a vote of all the
precinct committeemen of Mishawaka, 42 in all,
37 of whom Bowen threatened to take their
jobs away if they didn't vote for him at
the meeting, which will probably be held
tomorrow night. I know this isn't very
clear the way I put it, but if you could
only be following this "Bowen machine" up
as we are, you'd see how perfectly abominable
the man and the whole situation is. It's just

a terrible set-up, and we are all so nervous and upset about it. We've been praying awfully hard for the outcome of the meeting to be our way, so keep your fingers crossed and say a little prayer for Daddy's success with it will you, please, dear?

Well, we've got a big weekend to plan. I don't believe I even thanked you for the invitation to your home for Christmas dinner. I should be most happy to accept. No, I won't be needed at home. We'll probably put up our tree on Sunday afternoon, and then Sunday night we'll have our gift distribution. We always have our real celebration on Christmas Eve because the morning is always so mixed up with masses and all, + then ~~it~~ too we always hate the getting up in the morning of course. On Christmas Eve we never get any sleep anyhow on account of Midnight Mass, so we just make it all in one. I'm counting you in on everything I do; so let me know your plans too.

Now I must see if I don't have some special delivery stamps in my desk so that I can get this to you at least before you start home.

So long.

Lots of love
Cecile

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

12-26-39

1st Anniversary

Darling,

Remember a year ago tonight? We were enjoying our first actual date with each other. The Villagers' Dance. I wore my blue velvet formal and your pink roses, and something ate the pile out of the velvet on the seat of my dress. Haha remembered!

Janie Baughkinig came over this evening to see my "big attraction", in fact she practically stared a hole through my finger looking at it. She lives on Olive Street near Bendis and I just took her home. We saw a number of couples on the street in South Bend dressed in formals; probably part of the Villagers dancers.

Last night after you left Tilla came down and helped me pass those first few lonely hours after your departure. He walked out to Emily's. He wasn't home. He came back here and played Parchesi with Joe & Rena. Had "lotsa" fun. But missed you anyhow. It's a consolation though to know that one of these four days is gone by. It's now 10 of 12.

I expected a heavy day at the office but it really turned out to be quite dull. So the foree found plenty of time to admire my ring and they surely did admire it. They seemed very happy for me, and I in turn seemed to live in a cloud all day. I don't know what difference the ring could possibly have made, but it seems to make me feel so much closer, so much more "attached" to you, and I really am immeasurably happy. To think that of all the beautiful, nice girls in Detroit and around here, that you should choose crazy little me to be your wife. I'll do my best to keep you from regretting it.

My sore back is clearing up nicely now. I spent most of my "unlucky" moments at the office today by standing with my back over the hot radiator, and it helped the pain a lot. I'll sleep the rest of it off tonight, I hope.

And now I'll think I should turn in.

Love
Colette

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Gishawaka, Indiana

December 27, 1939

Dearest Frank,

A most dark and dreary day made bright for me however, by a letter on my desk this morning. Although all day it has been so dreary and tried so hard to snow; in fact, did snow a little. I've heard the report that this is the coldest day we've had yet this winter.

8 hours later

Started this letter this afternoon at the office, but was interrupted and didn't get back to it. Since then my first paragraph fell through, because it succeeded in snowing today and tonight everything is white and icy. I like to see it nice and wintery like this but I'm afraid of what the weather might do for your trip Friday night.

Well, dear, Mrs. O'Doherty must be a grand person to offer such a plan for me to visit you in Detroit. That really is very sweet of her. Tell her I said thanks and we'll see what we can do about it.

About the father-in-law, son-in-law situation, yes, dear, the folks are very happy about the whole thing. I realize, (although I didn't actually notice it at the time, over the weekend) that at no time did Daddy actually comment on the engagement. But it's just him - no hard feelings or such. It's just that his mind has been in such a whirl for the past several weeks that he hardly knows what he is doing. Friday night when he came home, as you noticed he was feeling pretty high, so now couldn't possibly have talked it over with him then. You see it was that Friday that results of the committeemen's election was let out, so two certain friends of his took him out and helped him "drown" his feelings. Things have been happening all this week about the postmasterhip business and it keeps him constantly upset. I wish they'd settle the doggone thing once and for all so he could get his mind back to me. But don't you worry about the situation because you know he likes you and he is plenty glad about our engagement. He doesn't expect you to ask him for permission or anything like that. This weekend, the first chance we get, I think it would be a good idea

for you to bring it up, and perhaps in a kidding way ask him how he likes the idea. I had company Tuesday night and last night Ami & Estine was over so Dad and I have said very little about the whole thing.

Tuesday night Amat & Hilda had me older kids and Alma + Vivian over for the annual Christmas get together which she always has during James' Christmas vacation. I couldn't go because Jean was over but the next day when I called her about it, she said for me to be sure and bring you over sometime. I explained that we difficulty finding time of the weekends but promised to do so some day.

One of my old girlfriends from Keehin's called me this afternoon and asked to take me to dinner tomorrow night to celebrate my birthday and the engagement. Wasn't that sweet of them? Of course I accepted, under the condition that I get home early because I want to get reeled up for the weekend with you.

Did I tell you that I asked Bezilla Sunday evening to be my bridesmaid? He was all-billed about it.

Naomi and I were talking about budgets and stuff like that there today.

She's going to bring me a Good Housekeeping Magazine which she saw recently carried a lot of Dope on budgets. I'm anxious to see it. Personally I think that is going to be our biggest problem, because I'm leary about the kind of housekeeper I'd make without it.

I hope I'll be able to get this letter to you before you start home. I'll mail it the first thing in the morning and hope it reaches you Friday.

So take it easy and I hope you won't have any trouble with the road Friday night. Be careful. I'll be waiting regardless of how late it might get.

With all my love

Colette