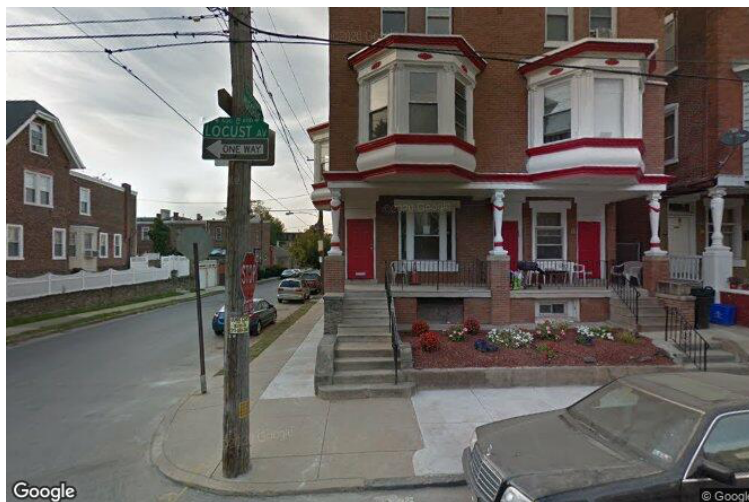


Among a stack of miscellaneous papers I found a yellowed envelope with the postmark “Fort Bragg, NC, 21 January 1953.” It contained two letters written on lined paper by my father. Regrettably, these are evidently the only two letters still available; it would have been helpful to know what Mom wrote in her letters to him.

What I find most interesting is not that the envelope was addressed to “Mrs Dorothy Weintraut” (they had been married since 28 June 1953), but was delivered to “5610 McMahan Avenue,” the house in which Mom had spent her teenage years with her parents and siblings. Obviously, as a pregnant woman Mom did not want to live alone in an apartment while Dad was completing his military service; the McMahan house offered her security and company. It wasn’t until Saturday, 31 January 1953, that Mom and Dad made arrangements to rent a second-floor apartment at 601 East Locust Avenue for a monthly rent of \$50 (Dad’s weekly income at the time of this agreement was listed as \$80). Mom and Dad stayed in this apartment until 4 June 1953, when they purchased for \$10,500 the house at 913 East Price Street—the house we lived in until we moved to New Jersey in 1965.

Dad was inducted into the army on 17 January 1951 and was honorably discharged on 23 January 1953, three days after the second letter cited below and a mere week before the rental agreement was signed. Mom and Dad must have been eager to finally start their married life together independently—even though the apartment was less than a five-minute walk from the house on McMahan Avenue (and the house on Price Street was less than a fifteen-minute walk). Mom had begun searching for a home while Dad was still in North Carolina. It’s quite likely that Dad seized the initiative to secure independent housing to provide for his small family. It’s not improbable that Mom’s parents had asked neighbors to help them network.



601 East Locust Street



913 East Price Street

Tuesday, 30 December 1952

Dear Dottie,

I'm still a sick hubbie and with all ideas of going to see a good movie tonite, I broke down and stayed in to rest up. I layed on my sack and spent a few hours putting a jigsaw puzzle together on the floor. One of the guys brought me back a pint of milk and I devoured it (I ordered it). I cleaned out my foot locker and by just trying to refill this pen I found that I locked my keys inside of my footlocker, so now I'll have a job tomorrow morning trying to break the lock on the footlocker. I washed up a little and put some clothes in the washing machine (they should be done soon). And I took two cold pills that I got from the dispensary.

I received your Saturday and Sunday nite letters this evening and I'll call you if I am here New Year's Eve. I had all plans ready to come home as we were due to get paid to tomorrow and then have the day off along with New Year's Day. But tonite after work we had a special formation and were told a big crap story that the work must be put out and then a lot of new works came in. So tomorrow's morning will be full blast. We get up at 4:45 AM, chow at 5:15 and start work at six a.m. until noon, the get paid and then have the day off. What a bunch of baloney! I would not be surprised if it changed again. I called Jim today to get help if I drive up and he expects me to be ready by 10:30 AM. I guess i'll have to call him and change plans.

It would pay me to stay here in camp if we get off late but if there is time to pool out of here I think I will as I would be very happy and please to welcome the new year with my wife. If I can't make it I wish you a happy new year and may our future years be wonderful ones. With love to my precious lover forever. Your hubbie, Eddie. xxxooxxx

Tuesday, 20 January 1953

Dear Darling,

I love you—do you like that—well you better because I'm going to love you all our life and its [sic] getting stronger and a sense that cannot be put into words. In a way I am lost without you as I [sic] life's pattern was to start a new after the 16th of this month. It's put off and now but when I stop to think, Wend (tomorrow), Thurs, Fri, and then the final day. outstanding weekend ahead if all goes well. I think I [sic] getting too causious [sic] and carefull [sic] now as I take care in everything li do, so as not to have any trouble to keep me here. I ate lunch at the PX but waited in a very long line at supper and ate in the mess hall. I came here after supper and cleaned up, went to the PX for soap, went to the 7 PM show, saw Mississippi Gambler with Tyrone Power and was back here at 9:15 for bed. It's already 9:45 PM and when I finish this I'll be getting off to sleep. I didn't sleep very good last nite and worried all night for fear I would not get out in the morning. I was up early and moved around a lot in case there was any question of my health. Hi didn't eat breakfast good as I still worried and got nervous inside. The nurse told me after breakfast that I must be getting out as she can't fine my chart. I got [illegible] again but waited patiently for the doctor to come at 8 AM and when he did the nurse checked with him and he said okay but they found my chart and had me scared for a minute—but let me walk it around to the different offices to get cleared. Four of us got out and I was the first one to

completely. I still felt the weakness and sweat and new that I still had a little fever. The medicine was still working. No matter what I felt, I still would never go back. I had a discharge physical last Friday but must get another tomorrow and so on. The guy in charge of separation was snotty and this made me very bitter. Besides having my car greased I'm calling you—I spent the rest of the day drowsy in the library. I didn't have anything to do at separation and tried reading magazines but kept falling to sleep. It felt good to relax. I was still bitter but I figure there's nothing to do but wait till Friday.

I was going to wait until tonite to call you but thought it better to let you know where I was. I hope I get a letter from you as I really need one to hold me good till I get home. Being apart is so very wicked and if it is my affair I'll never see that it ever happens again. Since I have experience the love you have for me I can only want to be with you forever. I feel better tonite but feel a little warm and funny and got the sniffles since early this morning. Honey, I thank God that I am getting better and can get home to you. I pray that my wife and little family keeps good health always [sic] as we are all going to be happy and do things together when I get home. I can just feel the sun and ocean waves of Atlantic City that we will enjoy together this summer. I hope also that there shall never be room for any family trouble and enjoy the folks and maybe we can all enjoy you good times together. Before I get too deep I'll say good nite again with treasured love for my wife and 479 zillion solid Gold kisses for you as the years go by. With love, your hubbie, Eddie