



William Conover, Dorothy Hickey

[Archive]: World War II Letters

New Jersey, Maryland: 1943-1945

\$500



An archive of 35 letters, most with envelope. Very good with tears from opening and age toning.

A collection of 35 letters to William “Bill” Conover from his then girlfriend, Dorothy “Jiggs” Hickey while he was serving with the Navy in World War II. According to his obituary, Bill left the University of Texas after two years to join the Coast Guard at the start of World War II. Soon after he enlisted in the Navy and served on the USS Fall River. During his time away including training in Maryland and later out to sea, Jiggs wrote him about her daily life on the home front. She worked at an office that was part of the war effort but she never details her work except to say she’s there often. When she’s not working she visits Asbury Park, spends time with Bill when he’s on leave, and goes out with her girlfriends, although in one letter she says she’s “definitely through with girls.” Her family believed in psychics and she often talks of visiting “the lady across the river” for advice on her future and news of Bill’s naval career. In one letter she writes of a visit to the “fortune teller” saying, “she told me that you were going to make a very definite change soon and that you would go far away. She said you wouldn’t go way far away tho.”

Another continuing subject is marriage, which Jiggs was hoping would have happened in October 1943. “Tomorrow is the first of October, the month in which I had wanted to get married – certainly didn’t take long in getting here. October 31st I’ll have known you 4 years – Imagine Bill 4 years! Yes, 1939 is when we first met – seems so long ago – about all I can remember us being close by is WAR – WAR – I honestly feel like I’m screaming sometimes – that’s all you hear constantly. Course it’s better to hear of it then actually hear bombs falling.” She also discusses the status of her brother, Rob, who was recently hospitalized in Italy and flown to North Africa for rest and treatment. She writes, “he said it sure was lucky tho ‘cause most of the fellows in his outfit have been killed – in fact practically all of them.” The letters end in 1945 with Bill still serving the end of his tour of duty at the end of the war. The two did get married after the war.

A modest but interesting snapshot of a young couple’s relationship during World War II. [BTC#421343]