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My Sister

Juia Hammer's letter to Emma Hoadley

Vassar College.

Feb. 26, 1888

My dear Emma. -

What a dear girl you are to write me those Sat.night letters! I expect that I have some more note paper, but I am actually too lazy to look for it.

Don't be frightened, I will not write on much of it. I did intend to write you last week but I was so busy. I must tell you "first off" of our Washington Party. Tuesday noon Prof. Salmon, our history teacher, asked her History department to meet her in the lecture room. She said she wanted us to celebrate the coming day in some way. She said we would have an old-fashioned New England supper. Then it was decided that the whole college should dress in colonial style.

It was perfectly wonderful to see the beautiful gowns the girls got up at such short notice. Some girls were fortunate enough to have with them their grandmothers wedding silks etc. Others had friends in town from whom they borrowed elegant old things - One girl for instance had a white moire silk made about 95 years ago - old white shoes etc. Then those that lived near sent. They all powdered their hair. Some did it awfully high & stuck stockings, mittens & caps inside. They dressed as George Washington too. Wore little short black skirts. That is the sign of a man here. The Georges were perfectly lovely. Lulu Curtis & another girl rigged up as Indian. They were splendid. Wore red blankets painted their faces let down their hair and wore feathers & carried bows & arrows. One girl represented Salem Witchcraft, others Quakers.

Actually I never saw girls look so charming in all my life.

Emma and I together with a few of our friends. Edith Greer & Laura Harris got me to go in town & buy a lot of blue & pink & cream cheese cloth. I got cream & had a dress-maker cut me a wattoo [Watteau] pleat, full skirt & train. The others made full baby like dresses. We did not begin them until after dinner on Wed. and supper was at 5.30, so you can imagine how we had to work. I powdered my locks & took the black tips from my hat & wore them. I did not have time to sew the lining in my train real good. I only tacked it here and there and as I was sweeping out of the dining-room the president of the senior class caught her foot in it between the dress & lining. She had to lift it out with her hand. I can't imagine where she thought her foot had got to. The dinning-room was all decorated with flags & pictures of the states, and there was a large hatchet tied with red, white, & blue ribbons hanging in front. The president and his family, and all the professors with their families took supper with us. The children had a little table by themselves. The president made a pro-dinner speech, as he called it, on Washington, then we ate baked-beans, brown-bread, apple butter, apples, sponge-cake, cookies, pumpkin-pie etc. pop-corn too. Then the seniors sang "Who was George Wash-n? and the Declaration of Independence was read. We had a perfectly lovely time! In the evening about 100 girls went into town to see Mojeska. For those that stayed there was an organ concert. It was so funny to sit behind Indians, and quakers in chapel.

Emma and I were invited to a spread in Edith Greer's room (It is her brother that came to call on me with Lucy N's cousin) There were quakers there and Lafayette(?) and his friends etc. Miss G. had had a box from home - lovely fruit-cake, white frosted cake then she had fruit-cream & macaroons & kisses from Smith's in town. Since I came back, I have been to three lovely spreads - ice-cream etc you know. Then once one of the girls brought in to us a big plate of cake & lots of cream. There was a party given to the Juniors by the seniors & the lady principal. Miss Goodsell and Miss Buttler was one of the waiters and this is one of the privaleges [sic] to carry cream to friends. Wasn't it lovely. Honestly, I don't believe you can read this. I am awfully sleepy. I have been feeling perfectly horrid for the last week - but am better now. I don't know what ailed me. My heart used to beat so hard that it would almost choke me. I couldn't walk up three little steps, but it would begin to thump horribly. I made a scene on Tuesday at the meeting in the Hist. room. I had just eaten quite a little dinner and walked up a pair of stairs. I had to go out before all that crowd. I didn't care. I think if I had stayed I should have keeled over. I made another scene at Gyms. When I got here I was awfully tired and the gymnastic teacher told me not to come into the class til I felt better. Well I went last Monday and came home. She told me she thought I had better not indulge myself in Gyms, so I shan't. I have had the malaria and I guess that is all, but isn't it silly to act so. Why, it just made me boo-hoo I couldn't help it. I just I shall act better in the future.

There has been lots going on since I came back, but I guess you are looking for the end so I will make it here. I am so sorry, Emma, for the loss of your friend.

With much love,
Julia Hammer

[Julia (Hammer) Eaton, spec.'86-88]

Your letters on Sat night are so nice. You take the hint? Won't you tell Annie that I can't take the time to tell her all this about the W-Day. Won't you read it too her. I wouldn't look this letter over for anything so you must do the correcting.
J.H.