

# CAMP FIRE



## Note Book

No.27



Thursday  
~~Wednesday~~, June 29/72

Vin" is 66  
Clarence is 38  
Ernie is about 24

Left L'pool.  
with Bill at 8 a.m. Lunched at  
Malagash with Cecil & Frances Dennis.

Then on to Moncton <sup>(Cape-Breton)</sup> where we picked  
up the two boys & the fishing rods etc.

Then on to Boiestown, at the  
Upper Miramichi Fishing Lodge, proprietor  
Clayton Stewart. Met old guide  
Sanny Carr & wife Hazel.

Looked at the pool & adjoining bank  
which ~~was~~ Bill & eleven other Moncton men have  
bought. Dr. Charlie Doyle was there  
in camp.

Friday, June 30/72 Set off in a minibus towing  
a trailer with 3 20-foot Chestnut canoes.

Guides: - <sup>\* to "Vin" beyond</sup> Don Invernion, <sup>very blind deep</sup> Ernie Norrad, Clarence  
Mackay. Drove to within 25 miles of Fredericton,  
then turned off on a road following up the Nashwaak  
for miles <sup>travelling</sup> ~~then~~ <sup>over</sup> this very straight road over the  
height of land - ~~woods~~ <sup>woods</sup> most of the way - to the

verandah, & dozens of them flitting about us as we sat there sipping drinks before supper.

Much of the timberland we passed through is owned by K. C. Irving.

After supper we all fished until dark (10 p.m.) ~~Happy~~ & Bill caught a few trout. No sign of salmon. Saw one beaver.

A bear knacker over the garbage can tonight.  
 SATURDAY, JULY 1/72 Heavy showers in the night. Overcast, with occasional showers, today.

Fished from 9.30 a.m. to noon. Nobody saw a fish except the usual few small trout. After dinner, sitting on the verandah, we saw a grouse jump twice on the far side of the river opposite Moose Call Camp. Bill & Clarence went out at once in their canoe to fish the spot; & caught a 9 lb salmon which took 25 minutes to bring to the net.

Clarence saw the bear behind the camp this afternoon. (Note: - "Fin" Lyons says grouseleaks first appeared in the summer season on the Miramichi about 10 or 15 years ago, & have increased greatly since.)

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"Vin", Gregg & I fished in the evening below the camp about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile, no luck. In fact nobody had any luck or any sign of a salmon.

After dark we heard cans rattling in the garbage dump, took the flashlight, & saw one big bear, & heard two others.

SUNDAY, JULY 2/72 Fine & hot (80° in the shade of the camp veranda) with a strong W. breeze.

"Vin" & I fished at the head of the pool, above Peaked Rock, all morning. Caught (& threw back) 3 or 4 small trout. Bill & Gregg saw a salmon raise above Peaked Rock. Nobody else even saw one. Clarence busy smoking Bill's 9 lb. salmon (filleted) in the smokehouse. The smokehouse is about 5 feet high, frame covered with tin, contains a rack for fish & a fine screen to stop specks of soot & embers. The firebox is down on the river bank, fueled with maple wood, & connected with the smokehouse by about 20 feet of stovepipe at ground level. This is so the fish will really smoke, & not cook. Salmon is salted, & spiced with

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brown sugar before putting in smokehouse. Fish can be smoked lightly or fully if you have the time. ("Vin" says it takes four days to make the best smoked salmon.)

About a dozen pairs of barn swallows have mud nests under the veranda eaves. Some contain young, some have as many as 5 eggs, some are still under construction. The swallows flutter about us, & over our heads, but don't seem to mind us. Twenty to thirty evening grosbeaks, ~~ditto~~ male & female; ditto purple finches, & <sup>pair of tree sparrows and an</sup> ~~one~~ occasional pair of pine grosbeaks, are busy all day long pecking up & swallowing the coarse salt on the ground 10 feet from the veranda. One would think they never ate anything else.

No fishing in the afternoon, just enjoying the scene & the breeze on the veranda, & watching the antics of the birds. In the river edge of the tall spruce & cedar woods you hear a wonderful

The guides prefer to give the pools — and themselves — a rest during the afternoon. Hence we fish from 9 a.m. to 12-30, & from 7 p.m. till dark. <sub>at 10 p.m.</sub>

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chorus of songbirds, especially at morning & evening.

In one of the spruce trees in front of the camp is the nest-hole of a woodpecker, about 2 inches diameter, drilled in the living tree, & a measured 18 inches in depth. Clarence identified it from a bird book as the Northern Three-toed Woodpecker, said it was the only one he had ever seen. (The bird book says it is rare in eastern North America) Note: - The Canada Jay is known locally as the GORBIE.

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Saw what the guides call a "freshwater crab", eating some of the trout gills young Greg had thrown in the shallow water in front of the camp. It looks more like a lobster, about two or three inches long, having two lobster-like claws & a similar body.

A fine evening, with the wind dropping to dead calm. Fished from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. "Yin" & I took spells at the rod. By the Peaked Rock, "Yin" got a bite from what seemed to a large salmon, but it was gush enough to feel the pull & then it was off again.

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Gene & Greg saw two bears, & as did "Tom" & I. They were calmly swimming along the shore & passing east young adults.

Monday, July 3/72  
Time & hot. Packed up & left Moose Ball camp about 9 a.m. Came down the river over a series of riffles & rapids. A small "port" below the ranger's camp. Found & took an "O" & I in the fish camp, Gene & another, called Port Barrel.

"O" & I in the fish camp, Gene & the boys in the saddle. Clarence Mackay & Bill went up to look at Teal's Rock before coming down-river. They saw a big mouse at the edge of the river.

The boys got a few trout on the way down, but nobody saw a salmon. About 10:30 am, we reached our last camp, called State Island, after a



(July 3 continued) small island just below the camp site, which is on the wooded top of a rocky bank. These stony banks appear to be all or mostly on the north side of the river, where there is a bend & a stony bar, which throws the main current against the bank. The scour of ice after the spring break-up causes these bared flanks.

Here & there, on both sides of the river, you see a small scour spot was caused by a vagrant ice-cake, in some cases tearing out fair-sized trees.

All the canoes have 8 longitudinal slats of beech or birchwood screwed along the bottom & bilges to protect the canvas from bumps & scrapes. Each has an anchor consisting of about 6 feet of steel chain in 2. inch links, gathered in small loops on an iron ring at the end of a yellow nylon rope. "Yin" says this is preferable to a killock or anchor

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July 3 continued)

which is apt to catch among rocks on the bottom. "Fin" says these chain-anchors have been used on the Miramichi ~~at~~ as long as he can remember.

The canoe poles are of carefully selected black spruce, average 2 inch diameter, & about 8 or 9 feet long. They are not shod with iron.

Note: - Hordes of black butterflies with conspicuous white bars on wings.

Note: - In places in the woods you come upon large patches of twin-flowers, scenting the air. On the river banks occasional clumps of blue iris among the sedge grass. In the woods, much trillium.

"Fin" told me that in ~~1977 or 1978~~<sup>1889</sup> a young man from Stanley was drowned on Big Looney Falls when a log jam broke. The decomposed body was found much later on a gravel bar, several miles below, which we passed this morning. <sup>(see lake note)</sup> He was buried beside a small brook which flowed into

(July 3 continued) (11)

the river there, under a white birch tree, & the owner of the logging company, a Mr. Griffin, always had the grave kept clear of undergrowth. Two years ago the ~~Griffin~~ <sup>Griffin</sup> descendants had a wooden cross made, & painted, with the dead man's name, & date of birth & death; and "Yin" & another guide brought it to the spot & placed ~~it on the ground~~ <sup>it on the grave</sup>. "Yin" pointed out the birch tree as we went by, but the intervening alders etc. prevented any view of the grave from the river.

Clarence brought along the partly-smoked salmon Bill caught on July 1st, & put it into the smokehouse here.

So far, owing to the fresh breeze along the river, we have had little annoyance from blackflies & "no-see-ums", although they can be bad outside the camp in evening calms.

Very few mosquitoes.

The trees along the river banks continue to

(July 3 continued)

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be mostly softwood (spruce, fir, cedar, with an occasional white pine standing taller than the other species); but occasionally on the way down river we see a large rounded hill ("Louey's Mountain", "Otter Slide", etc.) & there the hardwoods are much more numerous - maple, birch, etc. Some poplar here & there.

After leaving Moose Ball camp we passed out of the K. C. Irving timberlands, & at Slate Island camp we are in timber owned by International Paper Co.

Slate Island camp is comparatively new. A separate hub for the guides, kitchen, & dining room. Our hub has one large bedroom-lounge, with 4' x 4' plate glass windows looking on the river, 2 winter bedrooms, & a toilet with hot & cold water, & water closet. The water is drawn from the river through a plastic pipe by a small gasoline pump. This fills a 40-gallon drum mounted on a 10-foot staging behind the camp,

(Monday,  
July 3, continued)

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which provides enough "head" for gravity flow to the taps, & toilet.

Just below the camp about 200 yards is Slatt Island Brook, where there are trout, & salmon are apt to linger for the cooler water.

Except McKiel Brook we have seen no brooks or tributaries of considerable size, but along the river are many small springs, invisible among the alders & sedge grass.

You hear them trickling into the river with a small chuckling sound over the stones.

Immediately in front of our cabin are two sapling trees which the guides call "cherry trees", & Clarence vows that "cherry wood" is the finest fuel for smoking salmon. ~~At home in Nova Scotia we call these "Indian pear" or "wild pear".~~ Proper name is PIN CHERRY.

Bill & the boys spent most of the afternoon fishing for trout at the brook mouth. They got 4 or 5, none very big. I spent it on the camp verandah, chatting with "Vin" & Clarence.

Monday  
July 3 continued

(14)

After supper time the sky, which had clouded darkly in the afternoon, began to shower in big drops. After supper we put on our rain clothes & separated to fish in various places:— Ernie & Greg to Slate Island, Bill & Clarence to fish along the bank at the lodge, "Vin" & I by canoe to fish ~~at~~ near the outlet of Slate Island brook, Terry to fish for trout at the brook mouth. The rain increased to a downpour, & we all quit at 9 p.m., having seen no salmon, although Bill <sup>got</sup> a fine trout, & Terry got several smaller ones. So far on this trip Terry has caught 23 trout, Bill has caught about a dozen. I caught seven or eight small trout & dropped them back into the river. Greg found & ~~carried by~~ <sup>brought</sup> back a small turtle on Slate Island & brought

Monday  
July 3, continued

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it back to the lodge. (We identified it  
as a PRINTED TURTLE.)

Clarence tells me that the firewood supply for each camp is cut in winter or early spring. Formerly men came in by canoe after the ice broke up, & the trip & the job took 3 days. Nowadays they come in over the snow by "Skidoo" snowmobile, cut & pile the wood, & are back in Boiestown the same night.

In the dry summer of 1968, Clayton Stewart, proprietor of the Upper Miramichi Lodge & its several camps, got a bulldozer in to the river, by way of a log road. It was able to move along the dry or semi-dry part of the river bed, & Stewart had it plow a channel through several of the gravel & stone bars that formerly impeded the movement of salmon in a dry time.

Tuesday, July 4/72 Rain all last night,  
 & threatening rain most of today. The wind  
 was cold, & we wore our waterproof coats &  
 trousers as much for protection from the wind  
 as for defence against rain.

Set off from Slate Island camp about  
 9 a.m. & passed down a series of  
 serpentine curves in the river, falling quite  
 steeply in long riffles but no really  
 difficult falls.

From Slate Island downwards you  
 see slate ledges quite frequently, although  
 there are still plenty of granite boulders  
 & granite gravel bars in the river bed.

What the guides call "pools" or  
 sometimes "ponds" are simply stretches where  
 the river is deeper although just as fast as  
 on the rapids or "falls". These are  
 the most practical fishing places, & every  
 one of them has a name. One is  
 called "the two-and-a-half-mile-pool".

The rapids also have names. We



passed down one called "Push-and-be-damned" — "Push" for short.

The guides do not attempt to run the rapids with paddles. That would be stupid as well as dangerous, because the canoe travels too fast, & if it hits a rock it may be badly damaged or upset. They keep control with the skillful use of their 8- or 9 foot setting-poles. Often there is just <sup>enough</sup> room to pass between two barely submerged rocks.

We stopped at one place on a long rapid to inspect a very old grave, about 150 feet back from the left bank, almost opposite Buttermilk Brook, ~~at~~ which ~~is~~ foams over a ten-foot ledge on the right bank & looks as white as milk.

We walked up a narrow sandy path to an old small clearing where there was a fireplace ring of granite stones, & then the grave, marked at head & foot by pieces of natural stone about 3 feet high, &

tapering from about 8 inches at the base to about ~~4~~ 4 inches at the top.

The legend is that a white man & woman & their young son were camping there, & the son "took ill" & died. The spot was very far from a settlement in those days, so the parents buried him at the edge of the camping place. They must have searched the river bank a long time to find two stones almost identical in length, width, & shape. Nobody has any idea of the date, except that it was "a long way back".

Note: - re the grave mentioned on page 10.  
 Mr. <sup>PRESTON</sup> ~~FERRIS~~ Griffin, <sup>son</sup> ~~grandson~~ of the lumberman who employed the drowned man, told me the following. The young man's name was Saunders, & the date of his death was 1889. He was working on a log jam on BOYCE'S ROCK, at the foot of BIG LOUEY

FALLS. The jam broke up suddenly & he disappeared. In the following ~~spring~~ summer a human foot was seen protruding from a gravel bar about 10 miles below Boyce's Rock. It was that of Saunders, badly decomposed.

The stretch of the river which we have passed over is mostly quite shallow, from two to four feet deep, but in the "pools" the water may be as much as 10' deep.

We fished in every possible place on the way down from Slate Island, but did not get a single "raise". Lunched on a point on the right bank where a ledge of metamorphosed slate stood out into the river. Then on again over shallow rapids mostly. About 2.30 p.m. we came to the end of our journey, at a place called Burnt Hill, although the woods are now tall & green again.

At this place there is a road, made & maintained by International Paper Company, a narrow track of granite gravel winding for several miles through the woods from a motor ~~road~~ <sup>highway</sup>. The I.P. Company has a toll-bar & a watchman at the ~~road~~ <sup>highway</sup> ~~junction~~ <sup>entrance</sup>, & they charge a fee of \$10 to each car or truck using ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> their own road.

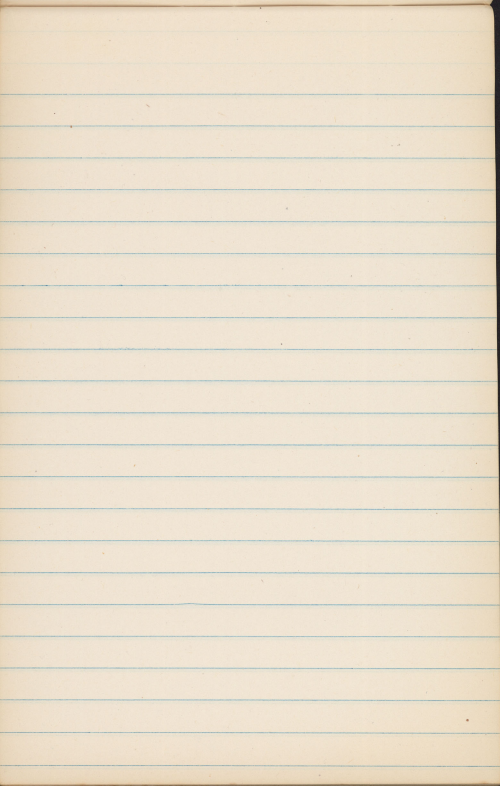
Clayton Stewart came along with the minibus & trailer. The guides had no difficulty in putting three 225 lb. canoes on the trailer, & lashing them firmly there. We all piled into the minibus with our gear - and Bill's lone salmon, smoked partly at Moose Call and partly at Slate Island.

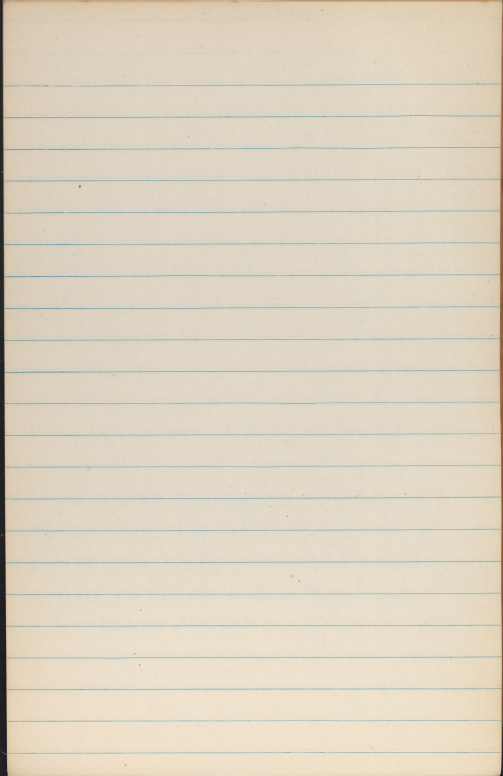
By 4 p.m. we were back in Boiestown, paying our bills, & tipping the guides. Stewart charges \$40 per person per day, so my bill was \$200 plus the \$17.00 fee for a fishing license, total \$217.00, & cheap at that.

I enjoyed this 25-mile trip on the South West Miramichi. It reminded me of younger days, in the 1920's, when our Mersey River was a good salmon stream & the forest about it was uncut.

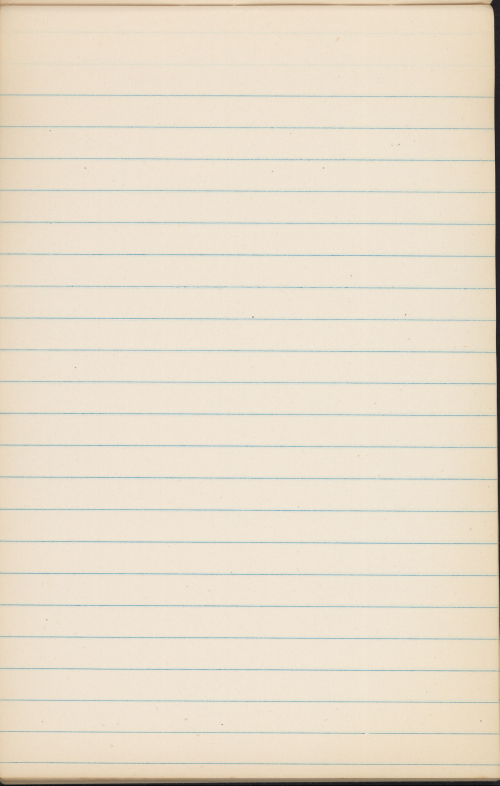
|       |        |        |       |
|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| Greg. | caught | 4 or 5 | trout |
| Jerry | "      | 26     | "     |

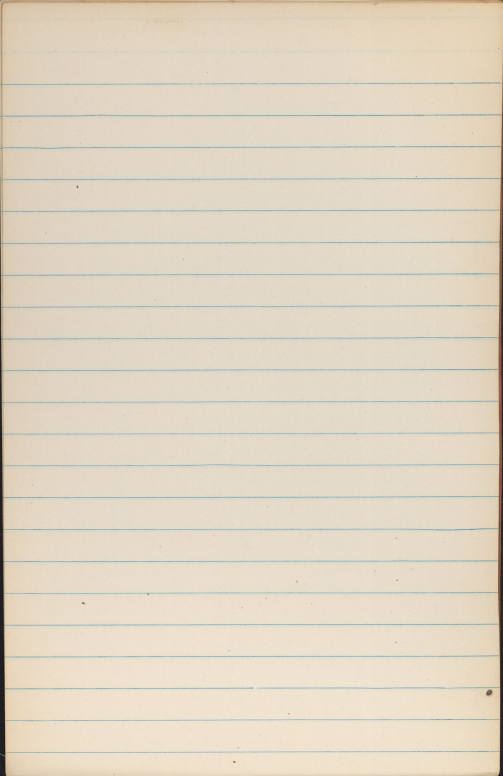


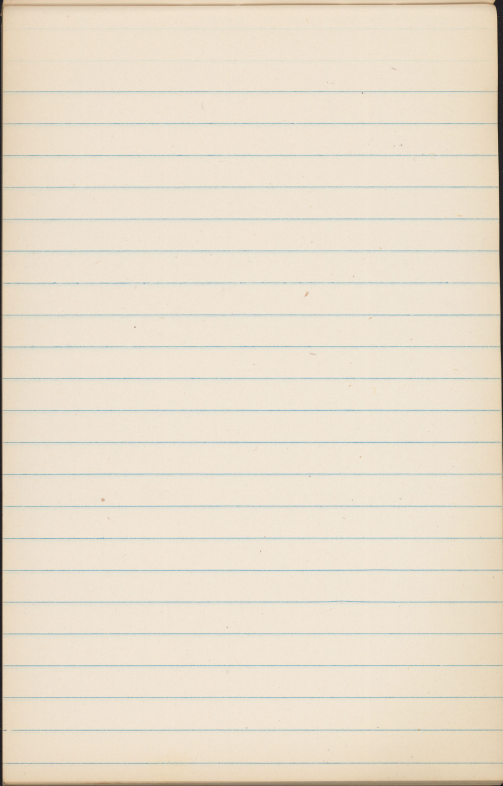


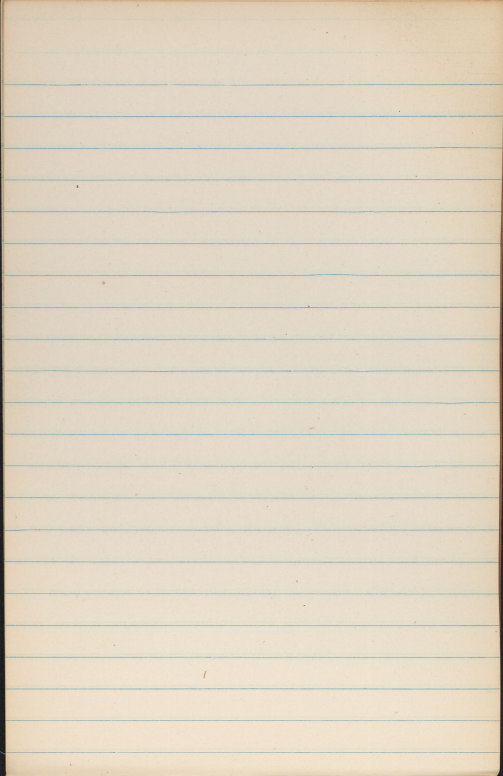


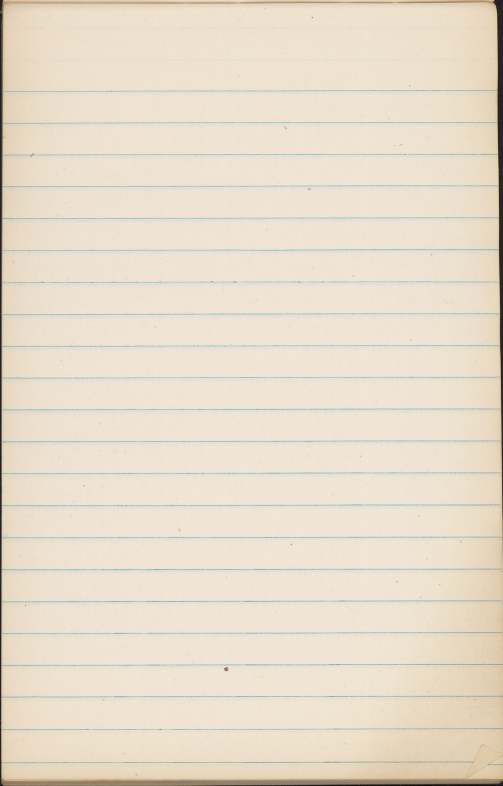


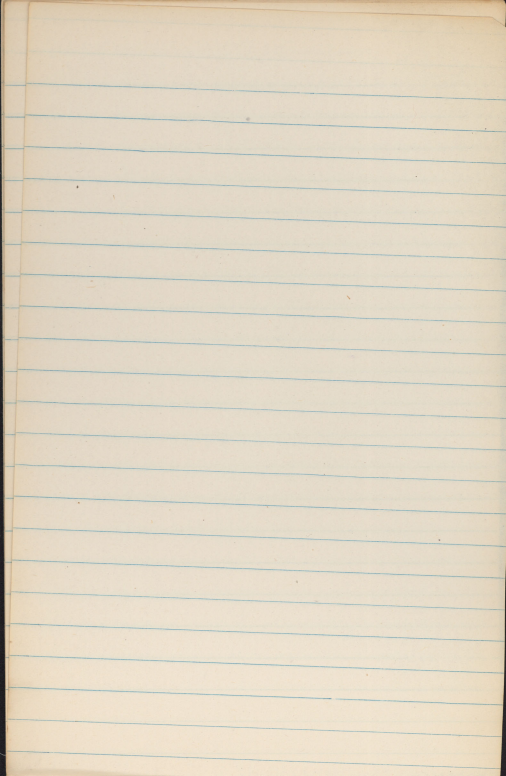


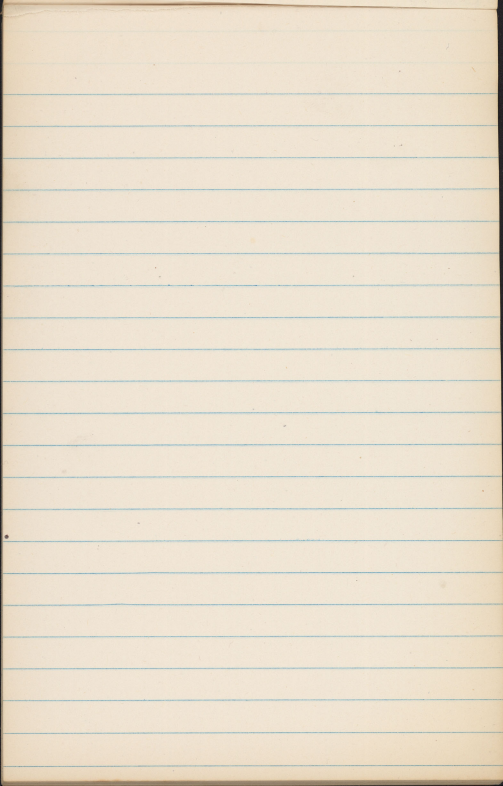


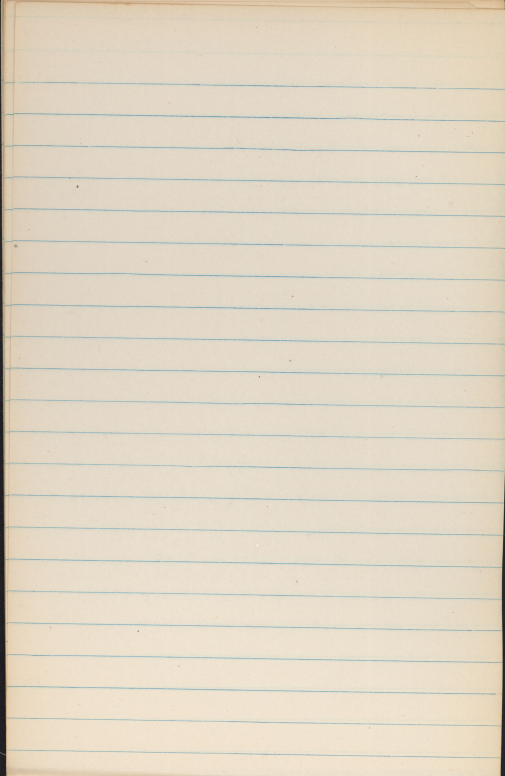




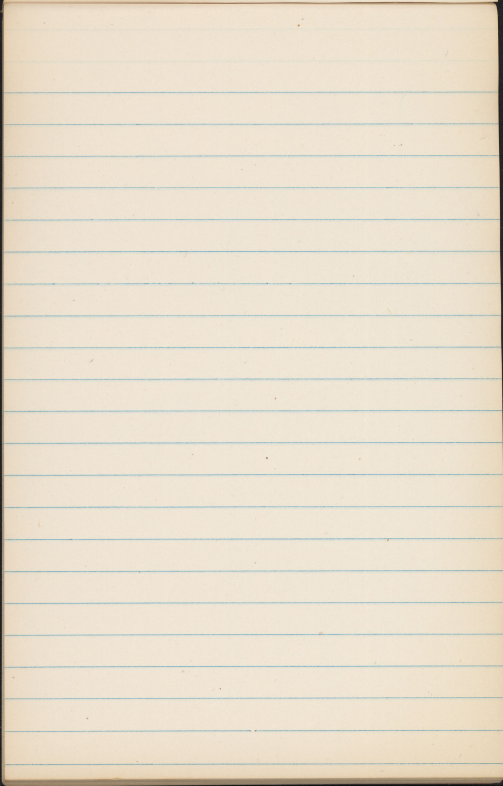


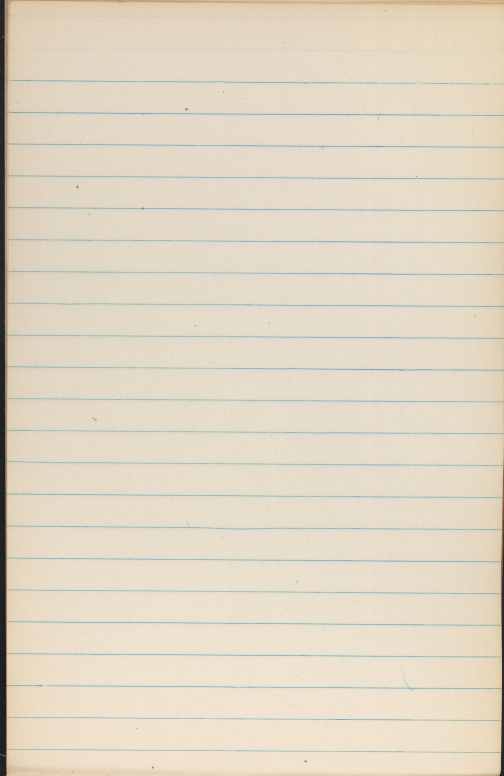


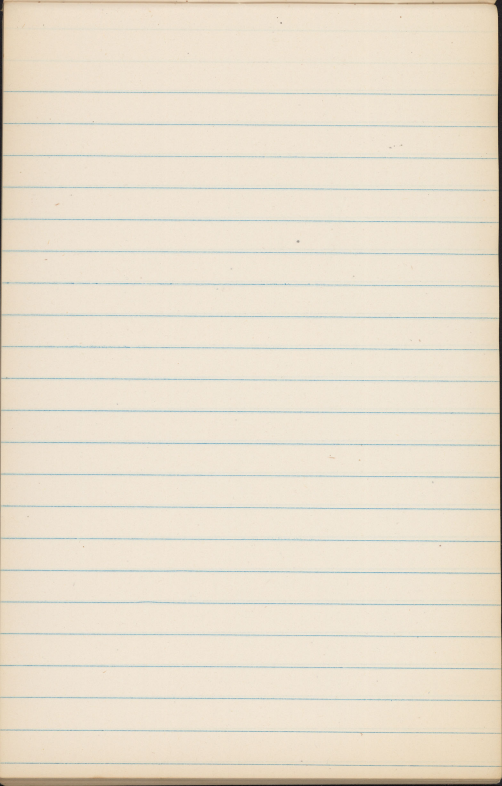


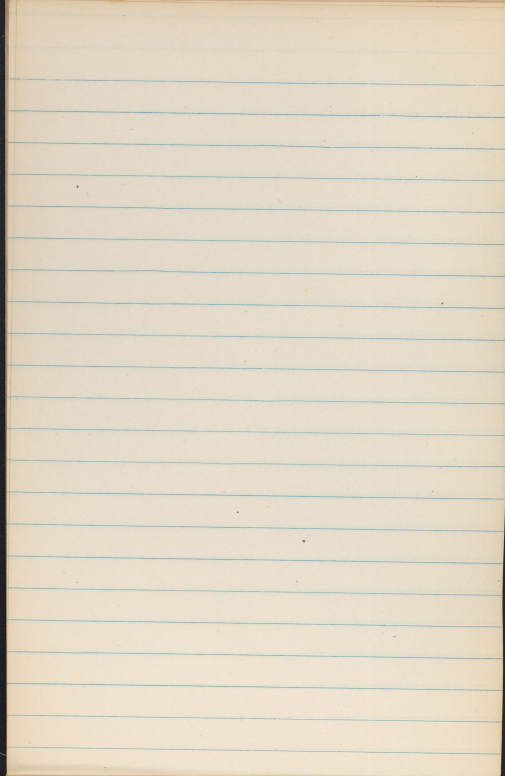


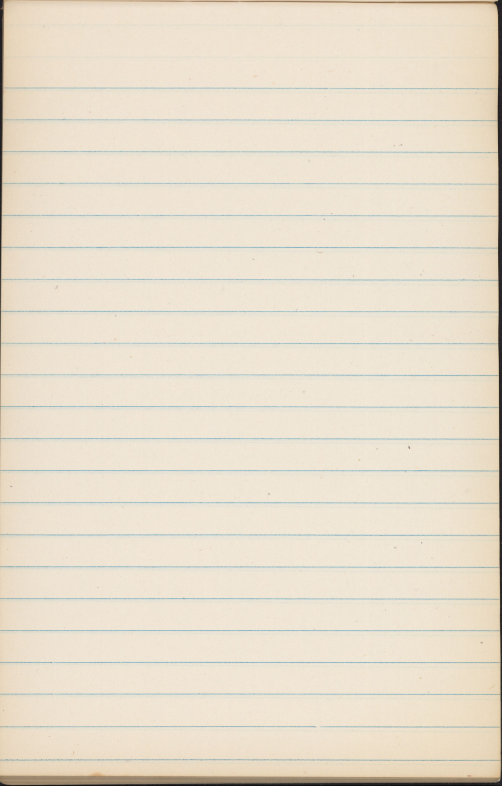


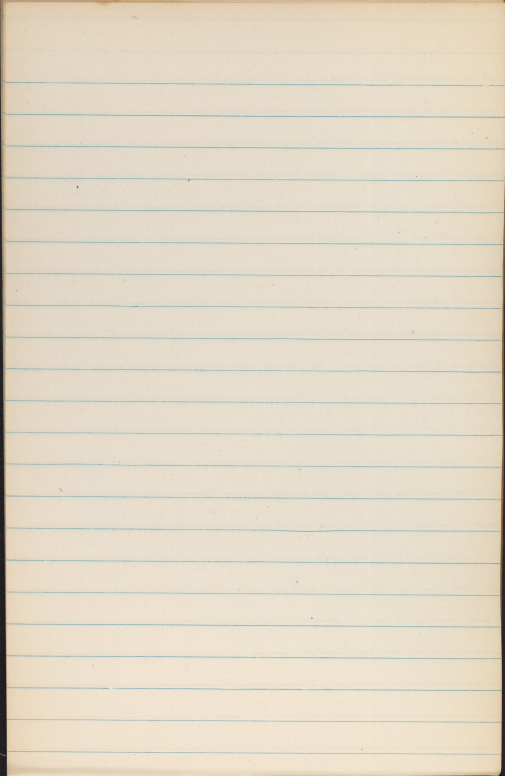


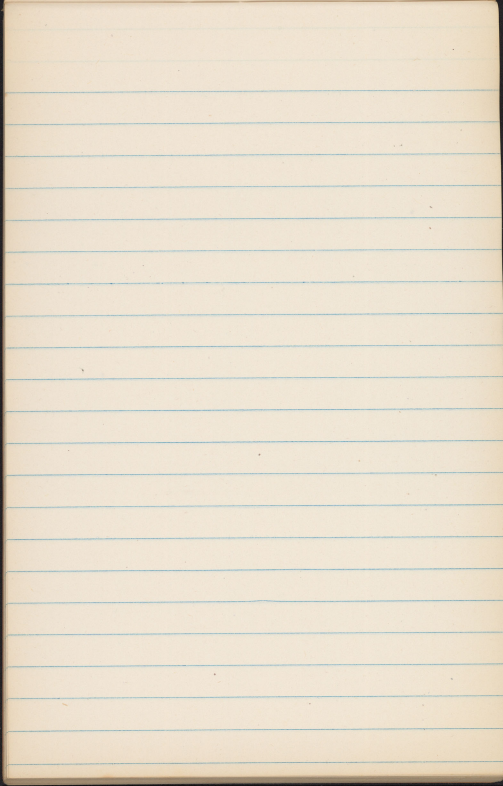


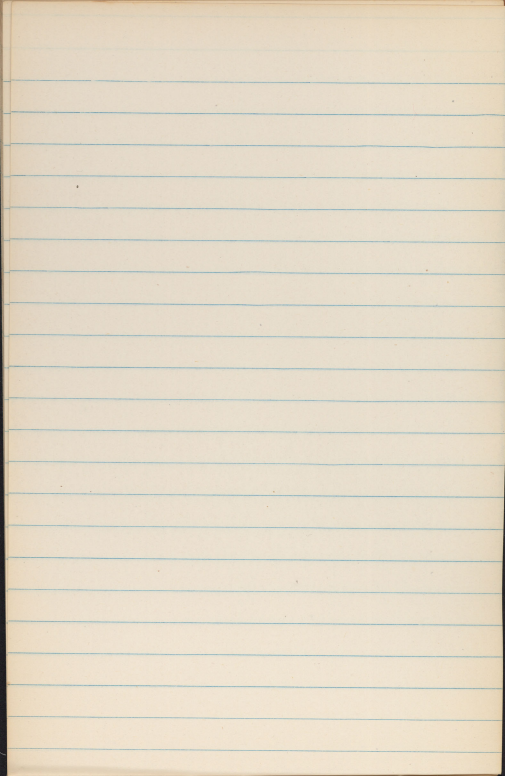




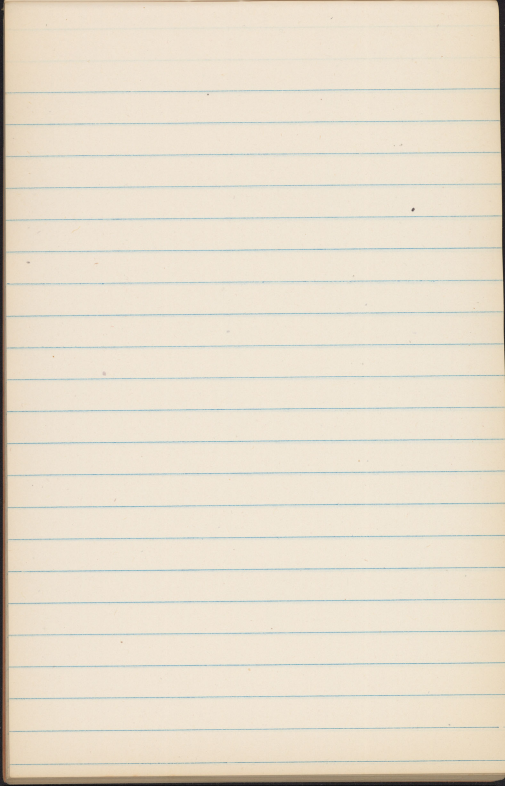


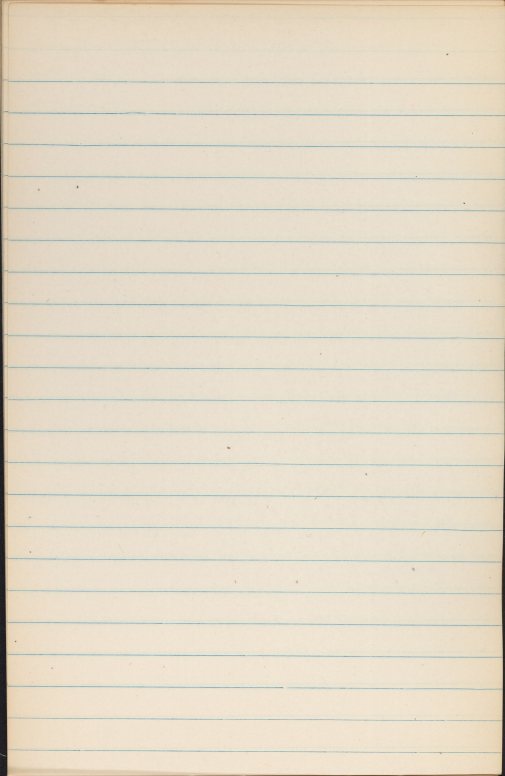


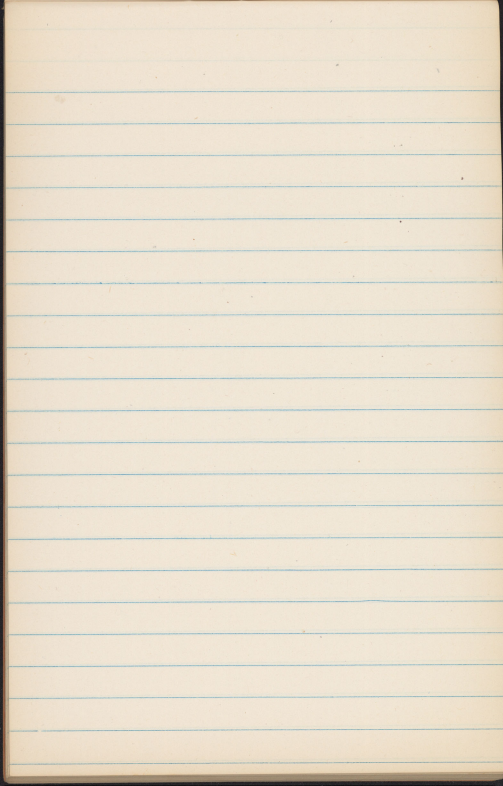


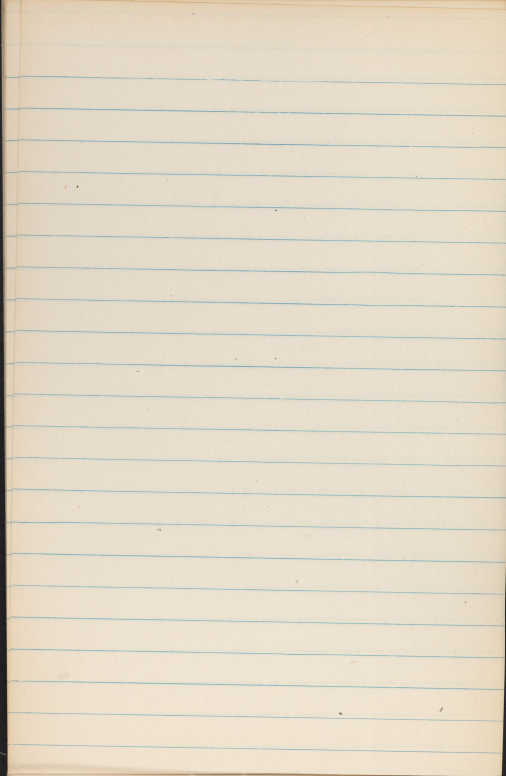


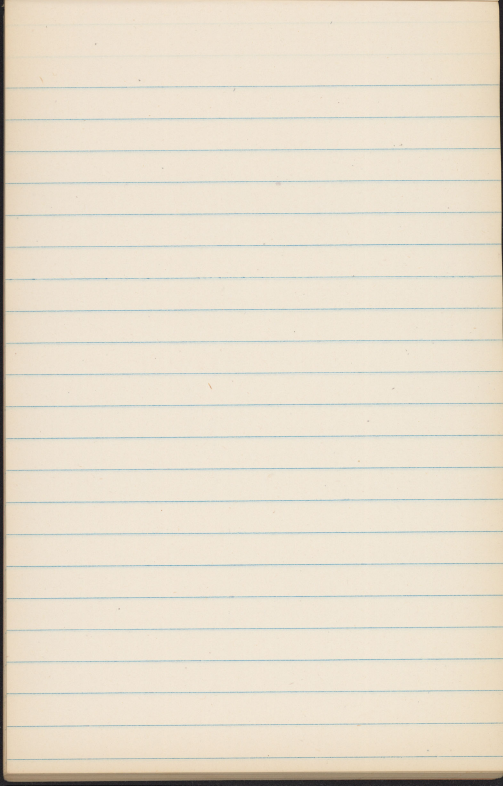


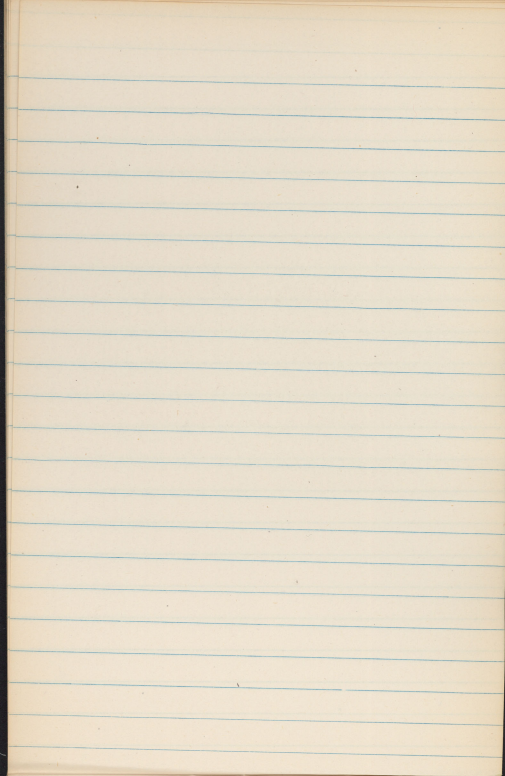


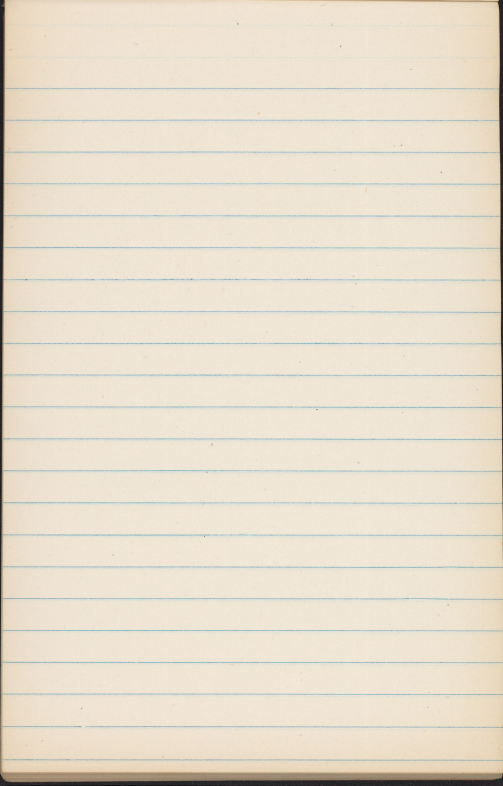


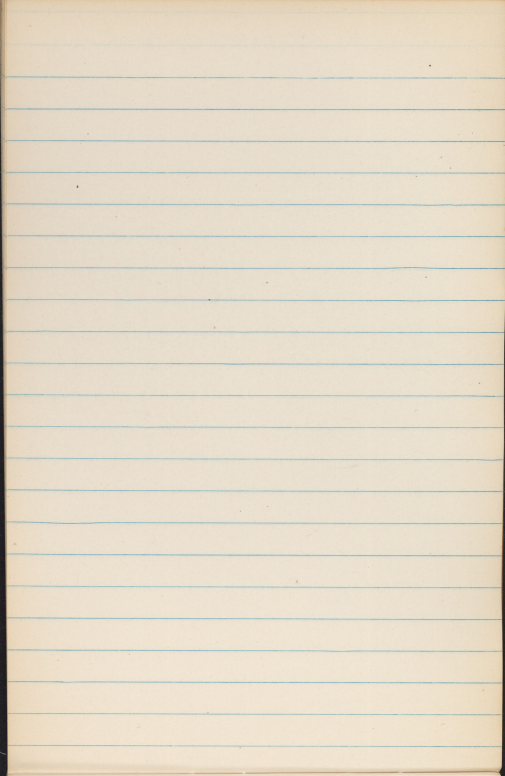




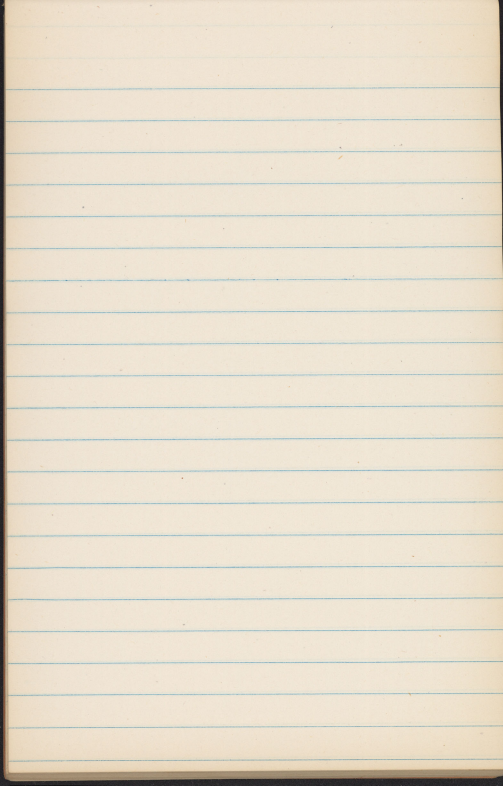


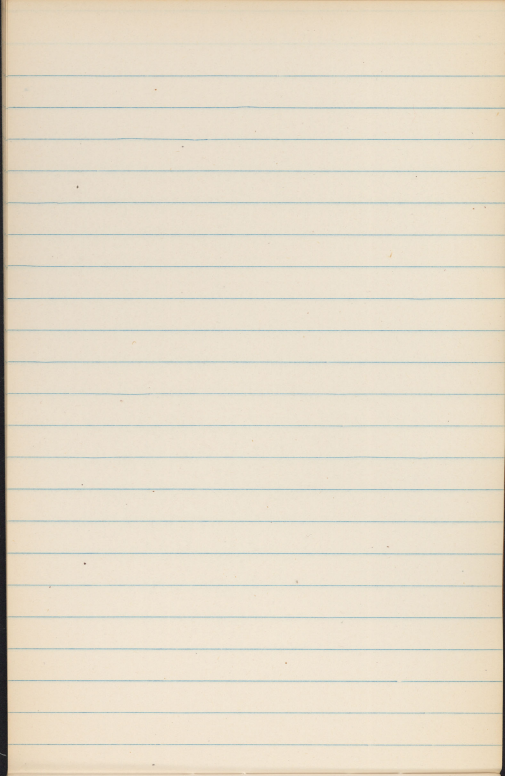


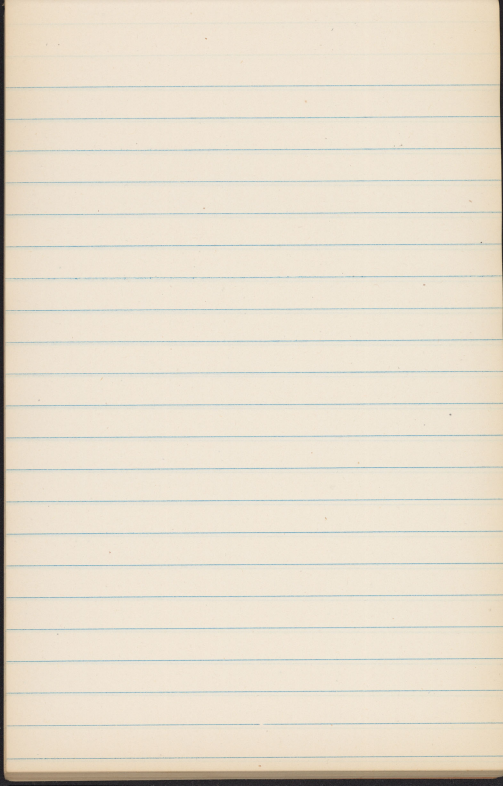


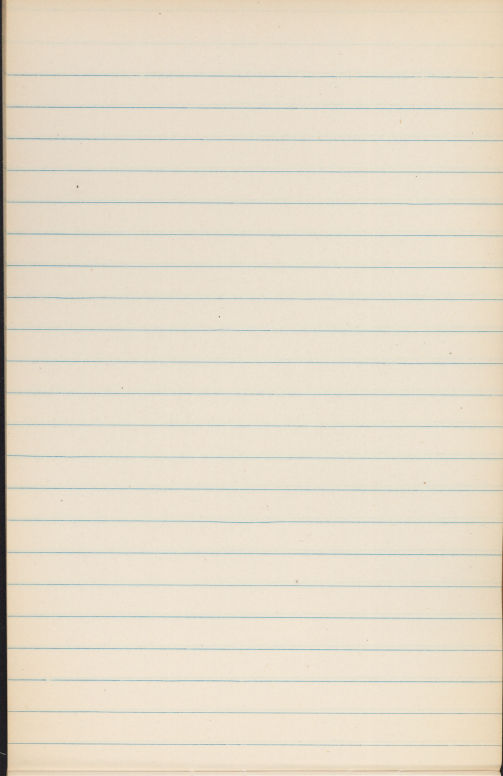


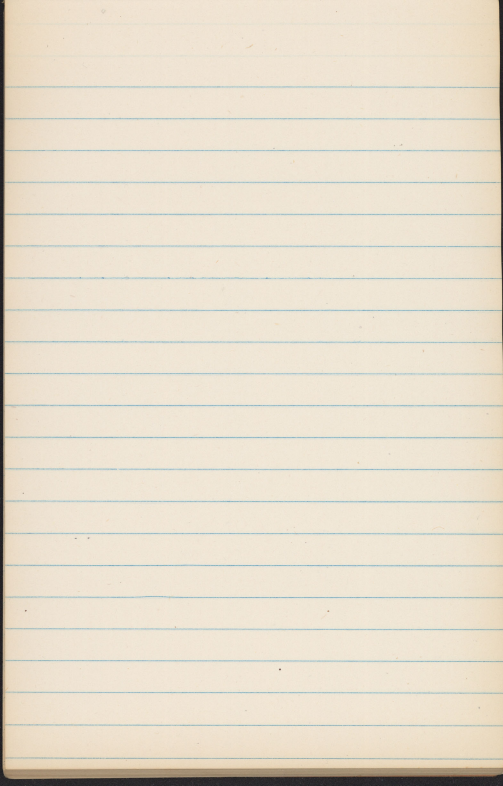


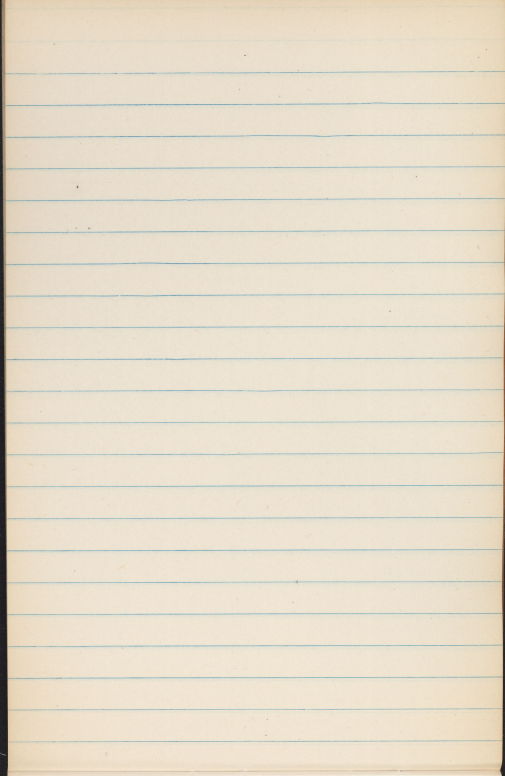


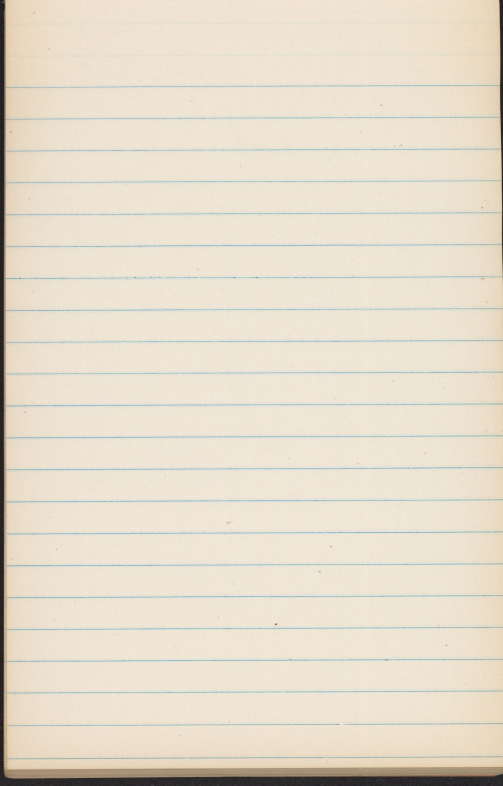


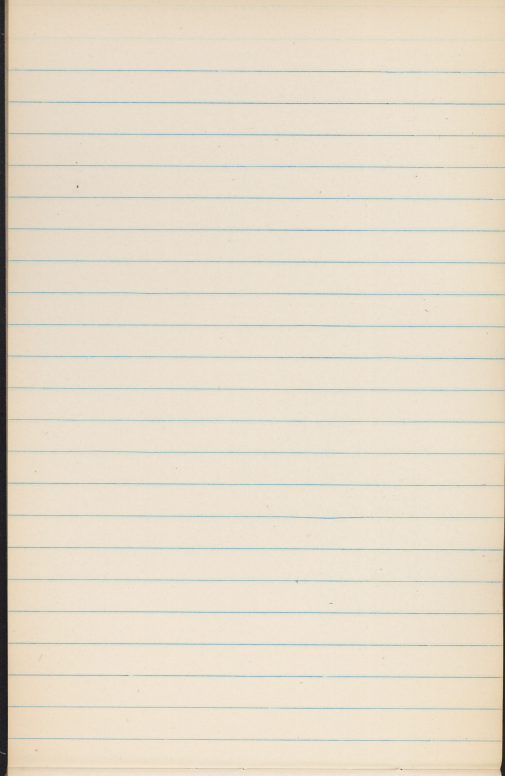




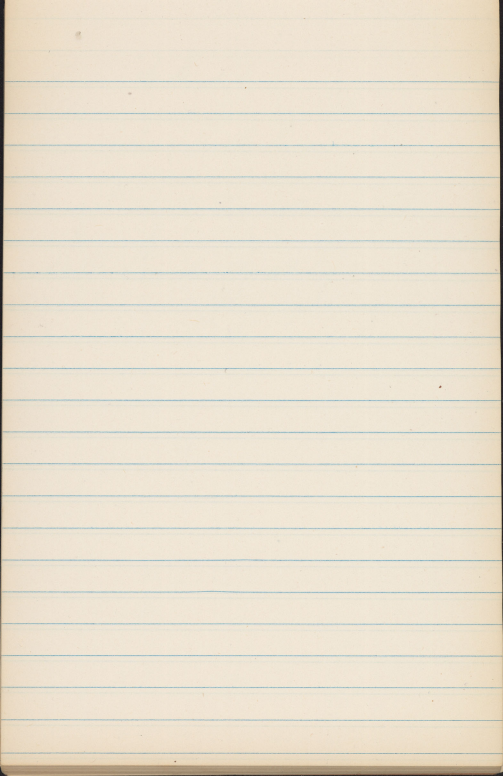


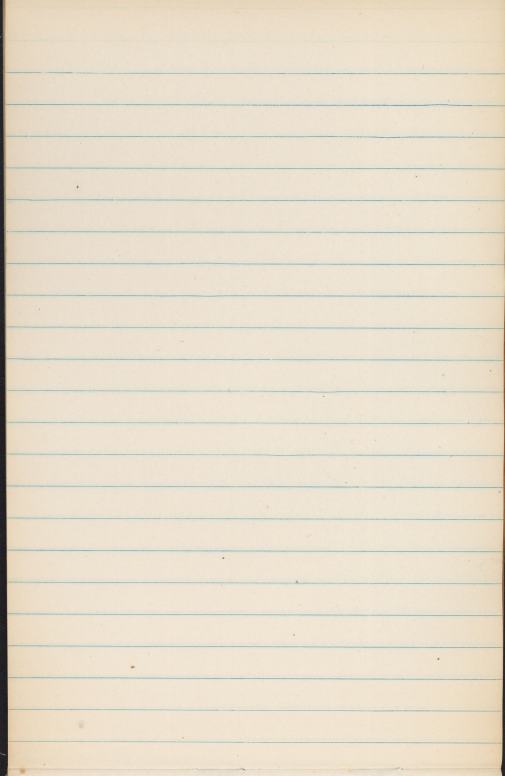












Jan 1st 1880

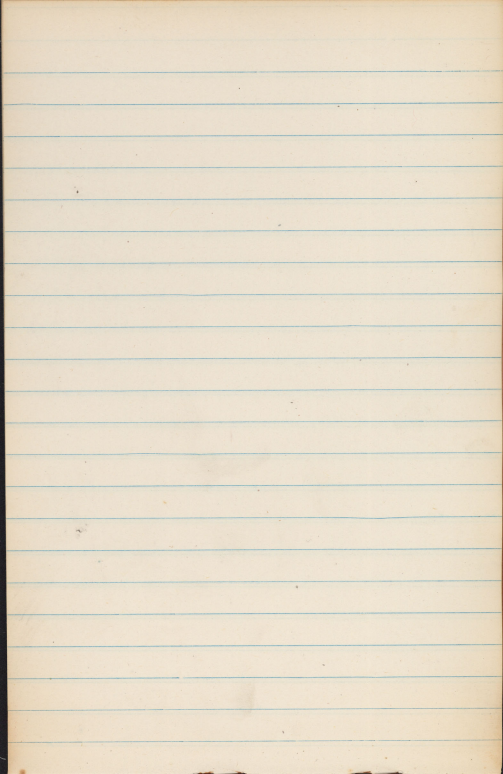
Dear Mother

I am well and hope these few lines will find you the same

I have not much news to write at present

I am your affectionate son

John Doe



Foments the Good

The sergeant-major  
long in praise; on the harp.

So much iniquity so well concealed.

Scabby Lou & the 5<sup>th</sup> bet.

" " & the maple sugar

" " & the mug.

