

July 25, 1960

Dear Bill & Mary,

I can't thank you enough for helping, make this wonderful summer possible! Even today, I find it difficult to believe that I, a small nothing, am here in Istanbul, living with a Turkish family and learning about the people, how they live and why.

My family lives in the Asia Minor part of Istanbul. Baba (father) is large owner of Samsun tobacco which is mostly exported to U.S. I have a brother, 27 who will be married soon — I hope I will be here to participate in the festivities. Then come two sisters, aged 23 + 16 — my sisters speak English quite well but I still have to depend a great deal on my poor Turkish to converse with relatives and parents. It is difficult to really understand the people and the times without knowing the language.

In Turkey, 80% of the populace live off the land, thus only 20% make up the bulk of the upper class. There is no middle class as in America, thus the life is very different from that which I am accustomed to living. The position of women in Turkey is improving but even then, for the upper class with which I mostly associate, I find ^{for} many doors closed. My oldest sister was educated in Switzerland, French speaking part, and as she attended a somewhat finishing school, our outlooks are different.

The 5 girls who came with me are feeling the same way. The women here are not interested or involved in politics and are very conventional in thinking and living. We spend a

great deal of time looking attractive, attending teas, socializing with the other well-to-do.

We have a cook and young servant girl so that life is very leisurely. This is a good rest but I'm not prone to too much of that!

When we take trips to the market area, then we are really seeing Istanbul. The streets are teeming with people - mixed, dirty and extremely interesting. If only I could speak the language well enough to hear their opinions on the May 27 revolution and new constitutional committees. The girls know little about it, some places are closed to visitors, as I, due to government documents etc.

There are many new buildings being constructed - but oh, so slowly! Some places have been undergoing construction for 3 years, which would take possibly 3 months in America! Men & machinery, I should say skilled men & modern machinery are lacking. So are funds.

The climate and scenic areas are ideal! I love the mosque minaret skyline. Have visited the Blue Mosque, Aya Sophia and few other places but still have much to see.

Today we go to the Covered Bazaar - I am greatly looking forward to that. Thank you again. Always,
Sharon Heyman