A NOTE ON THE TEXT

The volume editors’ wish was to reproduce these letters as faithfully as possible without sacrificing readability. However, these are candid letters among friends, and at times they include obviously unintentional typographical errors resulting from the familiar mode of writing. Typos that disrupt readability have been silently corrected. In other respects, the letters are presented as written, preserving the original spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Original underlining and strike-throughs are retained. Ellipses are reproduced as written. Sic is not used.

We have not attempted to replicate the spacing and alignment of text in the original letters. Dates, addresses, signatures, and salutations have been regularized and are aligned at the right margin. Salutations and signatures have also been standardized to appear on separate lines. Dashes have been regularized (i.e., “——” is replaced with “——”).

Letters are identified by writer and recipient, followed by the date of the letter. In the case of letters where the date or part of the date is not included in the original, the interpolated portion (in some cases the complete date) is enclosed in square brackets. In most instances, the subject matter contained in undated letters allowed the volume editors to date them with a measure of confidence. Letter writers and recipients are identified by their first names or nicknames: Langston, Louise, Pat, Matt, Nebby, Nebby Lou, and Mary Lou.

The letters vary from one another materially: a brief description of the object (letterhead, postcard, telegram), where provided, follows the header in square brackets. Letterhead is provided in full in the first instance and abbreviated thereafter. Some letters include drawings and marginal notes. Descriptions of drawings are given in square brackets (e.g., “So you see I am not missing many of the comforts of home [drawing of a smiling face]”).
Marginal notes are placed at the end of each letter, preceded by “[Note in margin]” or, if the location of the note is known, “[Note above letterhead].”

Unless otherwise indicated, letters are typewritten. Handwritten letters are noted as such following the header. Postcards and letters that are entirely handwritten are reproduced in roman type. Authors’ handwritten insertions and signatures in a typewritten letter are reproduced in italic. Insertions are indicated with a caret (e.g., “[got no dough]”).

Editorial insertions are enclosed in square brackets and set in roman type. Illegible words are indicated in square brackets. Missing first or last names are added the first time they appear in each letter (e.g., “[Herbert] Delaney”).