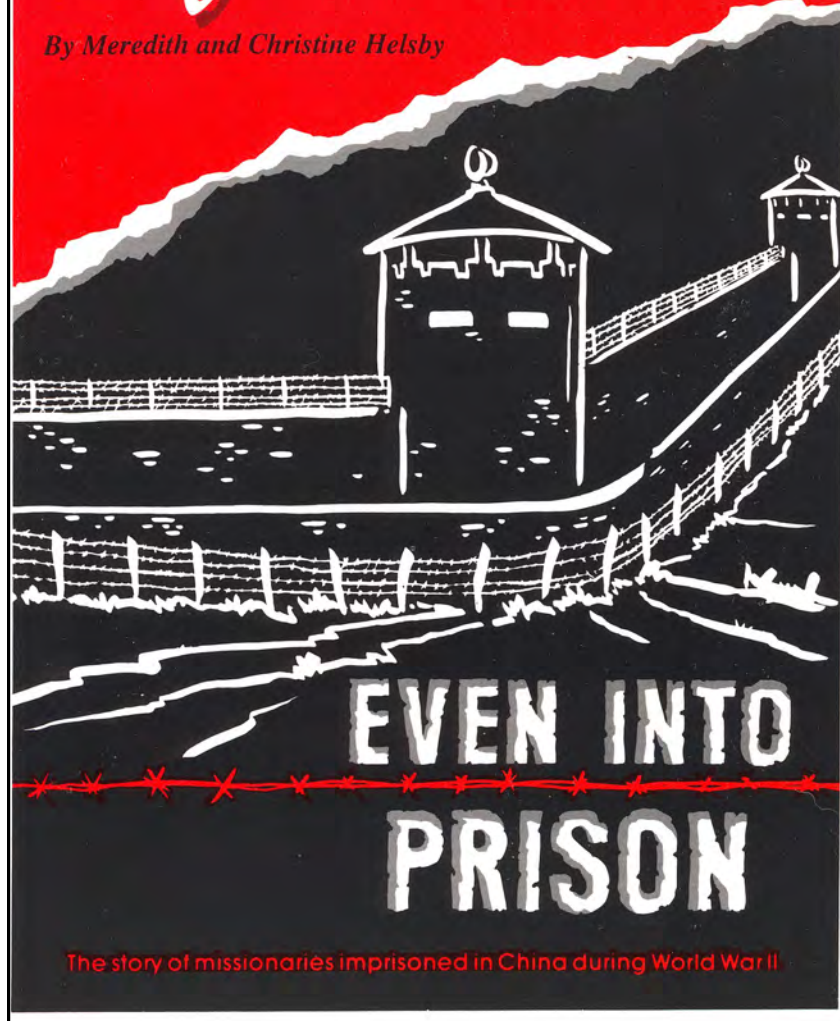


He Goes Before Them...

By Meredith and Christine Helsby



EVEN INTO
PRISON

The story of missionaries imprisoned in China during World War II

HE GOES BEFORE THEM . . . EVEN INTO PRISON

by

Meredith and Christine Helsby

*"When He puts forth His own sheep,
He goes before them" John 10:4.*

OMS INTERNATIONAL
Box A, Greenwood, IN 46142

seating capacity of 300.

But in 1943 this community became the prison home for 1800 civilians from Allied nations. Malnutrition, disease and suffering made a mockery of the name, "Happy Way." Guard towers manned by Japanese soldiers, searchlights and machine guns became symbols of death and destruction. Yet, the sudden dawn of the atomic age dramatically changed all, and the glorious moment of liberty finally came. At last, the loathsome bars of confinement were broken.

This account of God's protection and care is a story of answered prayer. With the recovery of freedom we were ushered into a world from which we had been isolated for four war-weary years.

During deputation years (the years in the States which have punctuated a lifetime of overseas missionary work) many encouraged us to write down the story of our prison camp experience. We did have a journal, but it was a mere record of events, escalating food prices and deteriorating living conditions.

The first reader of my typed journal tersely said, "It won't fly." However, in the ensuing years we've had time to reflect on our story and share the heart as well as the events themselves.

Christine and I are deeply indebted to Carroll Ferguson Hunt and Edward M. Erny. Carroll did a rewrite of the original journal, preserving the facts

DEDICATION

To our beloved children, Sandra, Gerry, Sheryl and Gordon and their "Spice" Chuck, Anne, Mark and Lynn who have brought so much joy and excitement into our lives.

PREFACE

How ironic that the "Happy Way Courtyard" became an emblem of oppression under the heel of Japanese militarists! That which had formerly been a stronghold of conservative Christianity was drastically changed. For three decades these walls had housed a hospital, with nurses training school and doctors' residences, a Bible women's training school with dormitories, elementary and middle schools, as well as living quarters (single storied), row upon row. In a prominent place, near the main entrance, was the sturdily built brick church with a

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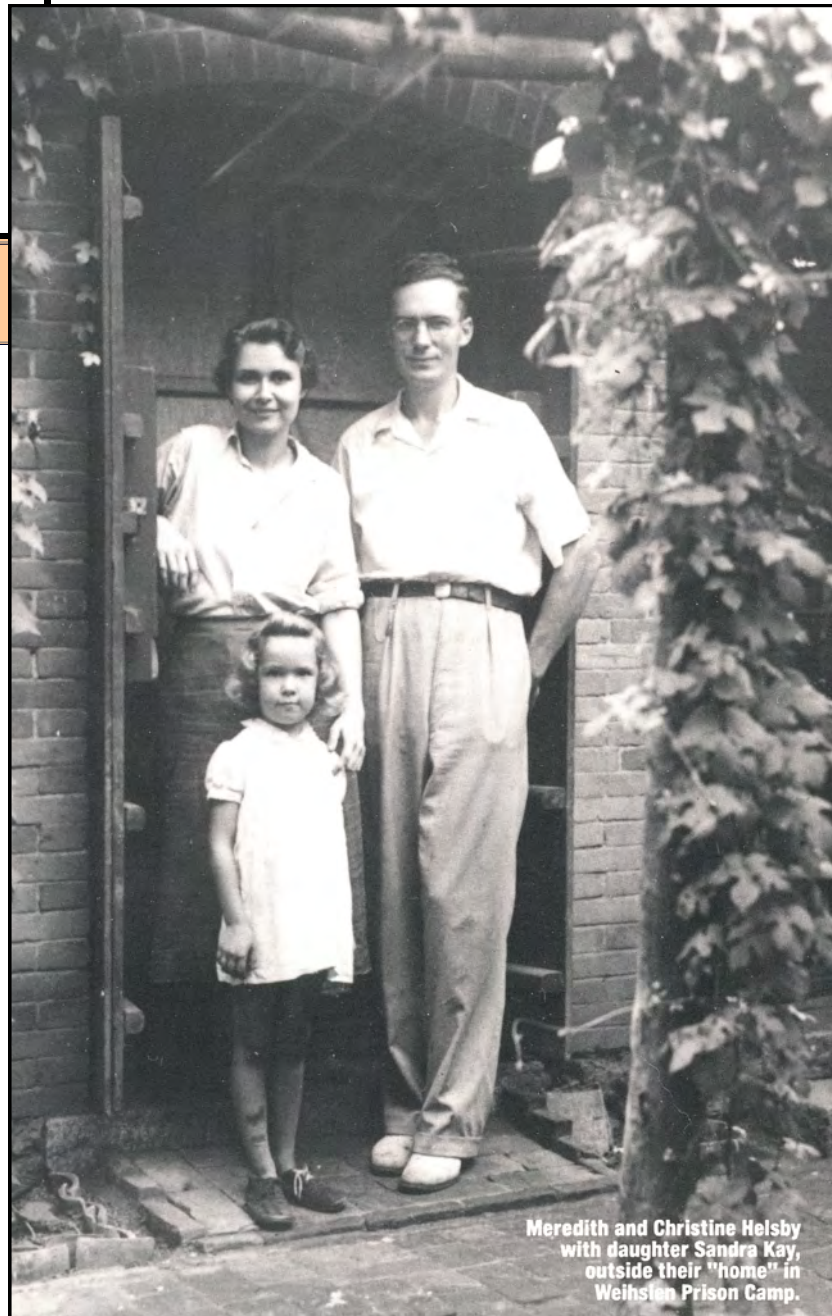
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By courtesy of Gordon Helsby

Chapter 1

STORM CLOUDS

March is a bitterly cold month in Peking. Bone-chilling winds sweep relentlessly down out of Mongolia, across the ancient capital. On this particular day, March 24, 1943, more than 200 foreigners swaddled in padded garments, and overburdened with suitcases and assorted bundles, struggled from every quarter of this city, to assemble inside the gates of the American Embassy.

Christine and I had arrived in China two years earlier, fledgling missionaries with the Oriental Missionary Society, assigned to teach in the mission's Bible school in Peking. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941, brought an abrupt end to our course of language study and marked the beginning of 15 months of house arrest.



Meredith and Christine Helsby
with daughter Sandra Kay,
outside their "home" in
Weihsien Prison Camp.

and highlighting the more interesting sections. Then Ed, my nephew, added historical perspective to round out the story — describing our family heritage, the 15 months under house arrest in Peking, and a sequel to our Weihsien days.

A glimpse of the afteryears again shows the marvelous faithfulness of God and illustrates the way He has brought us through in the ultimate triumph He promises every believer. Etched indelibly upon our hearts is the appropriate word of Paul in I Thessalonians 2:8 (NASB), "Having thus a fond affection for you [our Chinese brothers], we are well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also, our own lives, because you have become very dear to us."



<http://weih sien-paintings.org/hanquet/mapAsiaUNRA/ColourMapChina.jpg>

Now our captors prepared to herd all citizens of Allied nations in the northeastern provinces of China into a single camp located outside the city of Weih sien, a compound which they now euphemistically labeled the "Civilian Assembly Center." The notice, laboriously inscribed in slightly fractured English, pictured our future home as a virtual utopia where we would enjoy all the amenities of civilization, including "fresh strawberries in season!"

Orders were that we could take with us only what we could carry. (Our beds and a footlocker apiece would come later by freight truck.) No baggage allowance was given to small children. Chinese, we had observed, managed to carry imposing burdens by suspending their cargo from either end of a bamboo pole balanced on their shoulders. Though in our state of semi-incarceration we could not locate a suitable bamboo pole, I decided a heavy wooden drapery rod would serve the purpose. Alas, our scheme came to naught when just outside our compound gate the pole snapped, dumping our luggage unceremoniously in the street.

Thus Christine and I, suitcases in hand trudging along, joined our other missionaries. Our small daughter, Sandra Kay, just two and a half and enfolded in the loving embrace of her Chinese amah (nurse), followed in a rickshaw.

At the Embassy, several thousand Chinese thronged the streets to bid their Allied friends a heartfelt, tearful farewell and, at the same time, to voice their outrage at the Japanese for abusive treatment of the

foreigners. Our captors, though clearly taken aback by this spirited protest from the customarily unemotional Chinese, devised a plan to cast the demonstration in a more "favorable" light. The following morning newspapers carried a picture of the thronging Chinese, with the explanation that the citizens of Peking had gathered to "celebrate" the ridding of their city of pernicious foreign elements!

Now we were ordered to march, two abreast, to the station where we would board a train for the 500-mile journey to Weih sien. So commenced the unsightly luggage-burdened caravan, which struggled through the narrow streets to the accompaniment of harsh commands and the rough proddings by officious, strutting men in olive-drab uniforms. An elderly gentleman in the column in front of us slumped to the ground, clearly unconscious. Impatiently the guards seized him by the feet, dragging him roughly to the side. When the man's companions tried to revive him they were pushed forward with rough thrusts of the long rifles.

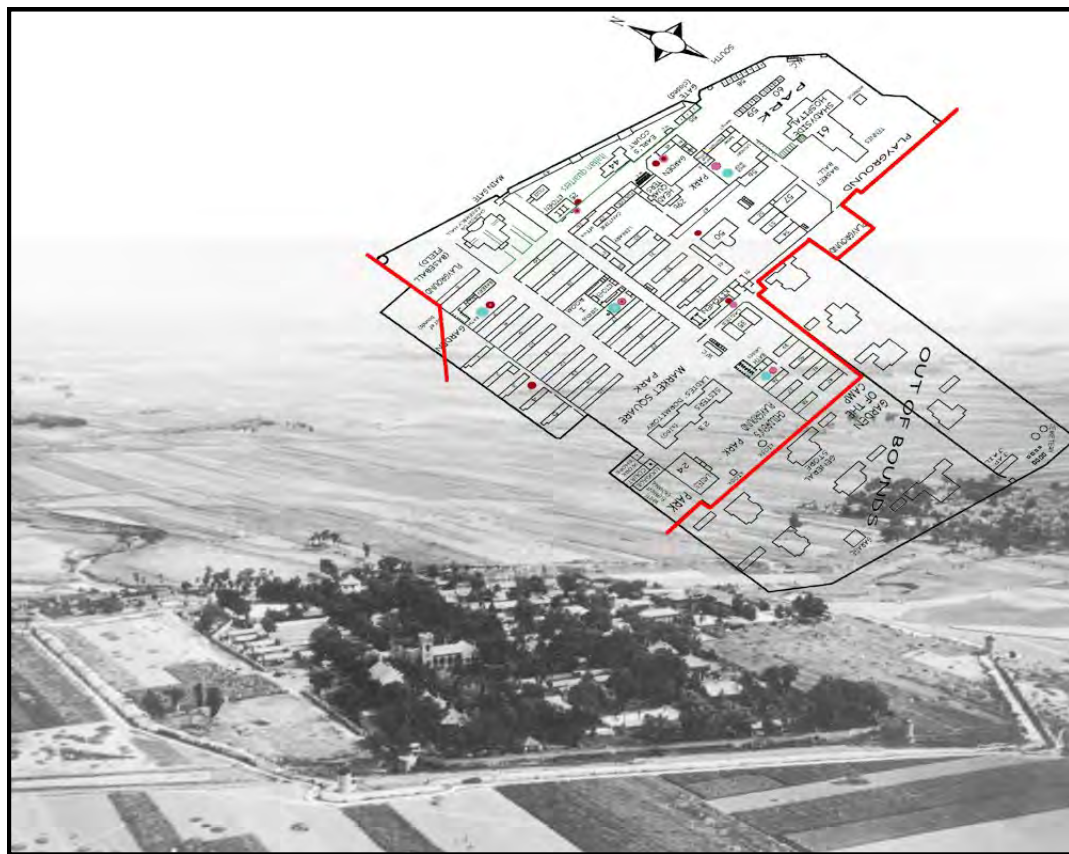
At the station we were herded like cattle onto a waiting train. Though we had the entire train of three compartments to ourselves, the narrow, slatted, wooden benches could decently accommodate only about half of us. The fortunate occupied seats while the rest were forced to stand or sit on luggage in the carriage aisles. When a single lady missionary expressed outrage at the rough handling, she was rewarded with a savage blow to the chest — the force

of which would have sent her sprawling were she not encompassed by a sea of bodies.

At 10 o'clock that evening our train ground noisily to a halt. We learned that we had arrived in Tientsin and would be required to change trains. Our guards, we discovered, had agreed on a little diversion to ease the boredom of the journey — an impromptu contest to see which officer could transfer his cargo load of prisoners from one train to another in the shortest time. While I struggled with suitcases, Christine — a large bedroll strapped to her back — carried our sleeping two-year-old. With our tormentors behind pushing and prodding, we stumbled out of the coaches and across the platform. Christine, laden with the heavy backpack and our little daughter, could not move with sufficient alacrity to satisfy the guards. A brutal shove to her back sent her stumbling, collapsing against the rough, steel steps of the train, opening a deep gash along her right shin. In the narrow, overcrowded coach with seats facing each other, her wounded leg was of necessity now wedged mercilessly between her neighbors — kicked and bumped with every sudden change in the movement of the coach.

Another change of train was called for at Tsinan. In the remorseless cold and dark of early morning, the bleakest hours of the day, we were roused from fitful half-sleep to shuffle across the station platform. This transfer was even more discomforting than the last, due to the fact that our three coach-loads of passengers were now sardined into only two carriages. Thus we lurched on in abject misery, arriving at our destination of Weih sien at 4:30 the next afternoon.

Trucks were waiting to convey us through the narrow alleys and out the south gate of the walled city. Two miles outside of town we came to a large compound surrounded by high walls with ominous looking guard towers situated at each corner. We entered the enclosure through two large wooden gates. Ironically the Chinese characters on the sign above read, "Le Tao Yuan" (Courtyard of the Happy Way). We had reached the Weih sien civilian concentration camp!



http://weihsien-paintings.org/maps/pages/p_aerial-1000pix.htm

Hundreds of Allied prisoners from other parts of China had already arrived. Exhausted and hungry (it had been 24 hours since we had eaten) all of us were ushered into the mess hall. Our repast was a bowl of watery soup in which floated small nondescript fish, heads and all, along with morsels of stale bread. This was, very literally, a foretaste of the thousands of meals we would ingest in this camp in the years ahead.

A cold rain had begun to fall. While men bedded down in the dormitories, women and children were led to the second floor of the old administration building. We divided the bedding from Christine's backpack, using the thinnest blankets for mattresses and pulling the heavy quilts about us for warmth. Christine held Sandra close to her to share body heat, talking with her about God's protective care. Weary from the long journey, Sandra was asleep almost with the closing of her eyes.

By now Christine's injured leg throbbed and ached all the way up to the hip, yet, having a place to curl up even there on the hard, rough floor she thought "felt good." And in her heart strangely rose prayers of gratitude, remembering that, yes, even in prison camp, our "times are in His hands."

After three nights we were assigned to the 9- by 12-foot dormitory room, which was to be our home for the duration of the war.

BEGINNINGS

I was born in Denton, Maryland, the fourth child of G. Lindley and Jennie Helsby. From what we can learn of our ancestors, the Helsbys migrated from Scandinavia to Normandy, France, and then finally to England in the 12th century. Today a town near Birmingham still bears the name Helsby. My forbears may have been beekeepers, since the family coat of arms depicts a beehive surrounded by 12 bees.



The Helsbys (L to R): Philip, Jennie, Esther (standing), Robert, Lindley, Meredith.

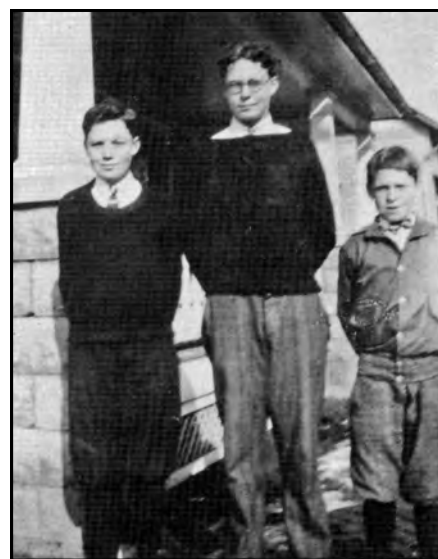
The stream of divine blessing which came to us as a sweet legacy from our parents can be traced to a tent meeting near the village of Trappe, Maryland, held by evangelist, T. F. Tabler, in 1900. Dad, a farm boy in his mid-teens, attended the meeting and was soundly converted. The next night he found his friend A. E. Blann seated at the rear of the tent. Putting his arms around his shoulder he said, "Elwood, you've got to get in on this," and accompanied him to the altar. Lindley and Elwood later enrolled in God's Bible School in Cincinnati and there met H. J. Olsen, who had come to the school from Michigan. The three boys were bonded together in a special friendship, and all served a lifetime in the Pilgrim Holiness Church.

Dad courted and won the hand of Jennie Blanche Davis, who lived nearby on the Waterloo Farm near Trappe. The Davises were devout Quakers, among the earliest settlers on the state's eastern shore. The meeting house in which they worshipped remains one of the oldest churches in North America. Though

Jennie also attended God's Bible School for a time, family circumstances prevented her from completing the course of study.

My parents were married August 27, 1905. Dad accepted the pastorate of a small church in Salisbury, Maryland, and there their first child, Hannah Esther, destined to one day be a missionary in China and India was born.

Two years later the Helsbys moved to Denton, to assume the pastorate of the Apostolic Holiness Church (later renamed the Pilgrim Holiness Church). Here their remaining four children were born — William Thawley (who died of cholera at age two); George Phillip, myself, Willard Meredith; and Robert Davis.



Brothers: Meredith 14 (on L), Philip 16, and Bob 10.

The Pilgrim Holiness community had roots in a pietistic tradition, which called for strict separation from the world and a manner of life which sets one apart as indeed a "peculiar people." Worldly fashion, bright colors and adornment of any kind was eschewed, including, to my dismay, a class ring which I truly coveted. Participation on school athletic teams was likewise banned as bordering on familiarity with the world.

In the home, unquestioned obedience was the order of the day, and any foolishness or infraction of family strictures met with stern and immediate discipline.

"As long as you put your feet under this dining room table," Dad would say with emphasis, "you are going to obey what I say."

On one occasion, when I was causing some mischief in the Sunday morning worship service, Dad paused, looked straight at me and shook his head in solemn, unspoken reproof. Judging my position fairly safe, with me in the audience and Dad behind the pulpit, I gave him a small insolent smile and shook my head back. Forsaking the pulpit, Dad strode down from the platform, seized me by the arm and took me out of the church for a sudden "meeting of the board." Sniffing and quite subdued, I was returned to my seat to endure the remainder of the service.

That this catalogue of restrictions did not turn us from our parents' faith (as happened with regrettable

frequency in many families of the denomination), I attribute to the fact that discipline was always mixed with a large measure of parental love.

Under Dad's leadership, the church in Denton grew and prospered. He was elected president of nearby Denton Camp and here we became familiar with "leading lights" in the holiness movement, including



The Celestial Singers — 1933-35

(L to R) Guy Bridges, baritone; Dan Andreson, 1st tenor; Meredith, 2nd tenor; Paul Qualls, bass.

Joseph Smith; Seth Rees and his gifted son, Paul; the Fleming brothers; E. E. Shelhammer; C. W. Butler and Martin Wells Knapp, founder of God's Bible School.

Both of my parents had a special fondness for missionaries. At Bible school Mother had roomed with Stella Wood, who would later be called to Central America and spent many years in the San Blas Islands off the eastern coast of Panama. So missionaries were often entertained in the Helsby parsonage, among them Charles and Lettie Cowman. The Cowmans came regularly to Denton Camp, to tell of the work of the Oriental Missionary Society, and particularly, the Great Village Campaign which was putting the Gospel in every home in Japan, a feat never before attempted. Thus, I early formed ties with the society under which we would one day go to China.

In the spring of 1924 Dad received a call to the Pilgrim Holiness Church in Milton, Pennsylvania. We came to love this beautiful area of the state with its rolling hills bordering the Susquehanna River. My brothers and I gained a measure of freedom when we took paper routes and began earning our first pocket money. Before long, Phil was working as a box boy at the local American Stores Market, the company in

which he would one day rise to the rank of vice-president.

When I was 14, revival services were conducted in our church by the Reverend William Dean. As the evangelist described the prospects of coming judgment, my heart came under deep conviction. At the invitation I went to the altar to weep over my sins and seek God's forgiveness. There, I opened my heart to Christ and experienced the joys of the new birth.

Public schools in Pennsylvania were, at that time, superior to those in Maryland and, as a result, I received an excellent middle school and high school education. I graduated eighth among 102 students in the class of 1932, a satisfactory enough record but well short of my distinguished older brother, Phillip, who was not only salutatorian but voted best all-around student, an honor which earned him a beautiful gold watch at the graduation ceremony!

The Depression was at its worst and prospects of a college education looked bleak when I attended the Sunbury Holiness Camp Meeting following my graduation, the summer of 1932. In the course of his preaching, one of the evangelists, Dr. Walter Surbrook, made a pointed remark that grabbed my attention. "A young man who is unwilling to work his way through college," he said, "isn't worth the salt in his bread." This remark kindled in me a fierce determination to enter college and at the same time find work to pay for my tuition. That fall I enrolled in God's Bible School, which had just inaugurated a liberal arts course. While I took 16 credit hours, a full academic load, I also worked 30 hours a week in the school's publishing office. I had arrived on campus with the sum total of \$10 in my pocket, feeling very much alone in the big city of Cincinnati, yet possessing a strong determination to accept Dr. Surbrook's challenge and prove myself "worth the salt in my bread."

In my second year, a course in the history of missions required the reading of a number of missionary biographies. One book, Goforth of China, touched me deeply. By this time my sister, Esther, was serving her second term with the OMS in China, and I felt my heart drawn to that vast nation with almost a quarter of the world's population. After weeks of seeking God's will for my life, I felt that He was, indeed, calling me to China as a missionary teacher.

The summer of my junior year I traveled in meetings with the GBS quartet, "The Celestial Singers." A high point of these months was singing in one of Billy Sunday's last campaigns held on the Tjador Estate in Milbrook, New York. Billy Sunday

had recently under-gone major surgery and preached only part of the time. I remember his saying, "The hardest thing I've had to do is sit in the congregation and listen to someone else preach."

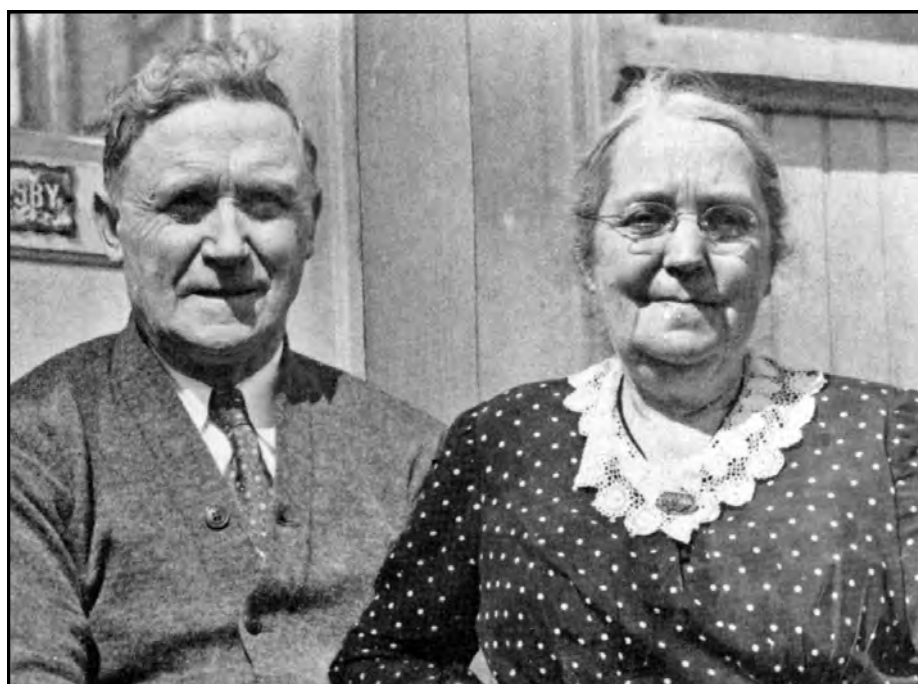
Since God's Bible School was still not accredited I thought it wise to choose an accredited college for my senior year. In 1935, I, along with three classmates, transferred to Alfred Holbrook College in Manchester, Ohio. By the end of the next year I had completed all the requirements and graduated with a B.A. degree.

To properly qualify for teaching in a Bible school in China, I felt the need for seminary training. So, returning that fall to Gloversville, New York, where Dad was now pastoring, I found a job in a Sears-Roebuck store. Still, the prospect of saving enough money to enter seminary seemed dim indeed. In God's providence the well-known song evangelist, J. Byron Crouse, was holding revival services at Dad's church. Byron was a graduate of Asbury College and with two other Asburians, Virgil Kirkpatrick and Esther's husband, Eugene Erny, had formed the now-famous Asbury Missionary Trio, which had traveled around the world. Learning of my desire to go to seminary, as well as the regrettable state of my finances, Byron went with Dad to a Christian business-man, Mr. Gangle, who owned a glove factory in town. As a result, Mr. Gangle not only gave me \$75 for a new top coat, but promised to supply \$25 a month toward my seminary tuition. This was clearly God's seal of approval on my next step of faith. And since both Eugene and Byron were Asbury graduates, it did not take me long to decide that Asbury Seminary was the place for me.

That February of 1937 I hitchhiked from Gloversville to Wilmore where Asbury College and Seminary are located. One of the required courses that first year was Rural Sociology, a class that met in the basement of Hughes Auditorium (at this time Asbury College and Seminary shared the same campus). Students sat on long benches with only a writing arm dividing them. The professor, a substitute for Dr. Boyd MaCrory, was somewhat less than inspiring. Much more inspiring was a beautiful coed, Christine Camden, who was seated right next to me. [As a Social Science major this class was also on her requirement list. However, neither of us were very interested in such facts as the number of mules-sold in Texas last year."] Since she is right-handed and I am left-handed, we survived many a boring lecture playing tic-tac-toe. Our friendship began to flourish and soon we were dating regularly. She was a college junior at that time. So at the end of the school year, I had all summer to think about her, send letters off to Richmond, Virginia, and hope that we would continue dating upon our return to campus the following fall. And we did. By then I so wanted to believe that she was the one God had chosen for my life. But a gnawing doubt always intruded into my beautiful dream, for I knew that although she had many wonderful aspirations, going to China was not one of them!

On June 4, 1939, I received my diploma from our distinguished president, Dr. Henry Clay Morrison. This granted me a B.D. degree.

#



Meredith's parents — 1939.

CHRISTINE'S STORY

I was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, on December 1, 1915, the second child of Howard and Sallie Camden. My paternal ancestors, the Camdens, I was told, had come from Ireland to the United States in the early 1800s and founded the city of Camden, New Jersey. Our branch of the family eventually moved south to Buckingham, Virginia, where my father was born, and the first of 13 children.

Dad's parents, when standing side by side, presented quite a spectacle. Grandfather, a giant of a man, stood a full 6 feet 3 inches. Grandma, by contrast, barely reached 5 feet and never weighed more than 90 pounds. But what she lacked in size, she more than made up for in energy. Her considerable brood was further increased when her sister and brother-in-law were tragically killed in a horse and buggy crash. (Their horse ran berserk as a result of a nearby bolt of lightning and they were thrown out against a tree.) Without hesitation Grandma took in their orphaned children, a 3-year-old son and baby girl. Later, two homeless waifs wandered into the neighborhood. Grandma hurt for these "unloved ones," so they were also adopted, increasing the juvenile population of the Camden home to a whopping 17!

To preserve some measure of order in that crowded household called for both discipline and regimen. Grandma Camden was more than equal to the task. Up every morning at dawn she baked two huge pans of biscuits to go with fried ham, fried potatoes and eggs. That was the beginning of a daily schedule which she orchestrated with incredible skill and firmness. Grandma tolerated no back talk, and her orders, given in a quiet voice, carried with them a force that was truly awesome. As a child visiting my grandparents, I recall that once my dad had, in exiting the house, let the screen door slam. "Howard," Grandma called in a firm little voice.

"Yes, Mother?"

"Come back in and close that door properly."

Though in our home, Dad was very much the man in charge, I watched with amazement as, in an instant, he was once again his mother's boy, complying with her request in dutiful obedience.

My mother's maiden name was Elam and her mother, a Lee, was related to that most distinguished southerner, Robert E. Lee. Her father had fought under the great general in the Civil War and was for a time held prisoner by the Union Army. When I was nine she gave me a yellowed letter which she, as a child, had received from her father during his imprisonment. He had admonished her to "be a good girl, mind your mother and love Jesus with all your heart." For years I treasured this wonderful bit of family memorabilia, but alas, it was stolen when our house was broken into one summer.

My brother, Howard Burnell, was six years my senior. Most of his friends called him "Cam," but to me he was always "Bubber," a holdover from my early childish attempts to say brother.

He was tall with dark, wavy hair and definitely had the "good looks" of the family, so girlfriends were numerous. But his pre-teen years were difficult because of a heart problem and bouts of St. Vitus Dance. Doctors forbade any participation in sports, and he was often admonished to "be careful." And he was doubtless overindulged in other ways. Though he gained a measure of health in his adult years, there were months when he suffered great pain from tic-dou-loureux, spasmodic neuralgia of the face, and a condition for which there is no effective medication. He was truly a gifted salesman with a very outgoing personality, an extremely likeable person, but not a happy one for he became an alcoholic and went through three marriages. We were all grateful

that he was eventually in recovery from his addiction through the help of Alcoholics Anonymous. I was heartsick when he died very suddenly of cerebral hemorrhaging at the age of 53. I've always wished we could have been closer. When we were children Mom took us to church and Sunday School but after going off to a military academy for college, he distanced



Christine's mother, Sallie Camden — 1910.



Christine's father, Howard Camden — 1908.

himself from the church for many years. So he was long the subject of our prayers. After Mom's death I felt, more than ever, my responsibility to pray for him and I truly expected to receive a cable in Taiwan telling us he had come to the Lord. The cable came — but it told only of his sudden passing.

My dad, in his earlier years, had taught Sunday School but during my growing-up days had neglected church. It was not until he was 74 that he opened his heart to the Savior. We were home from China at the time and together were listening to Charles Fuller on the Old-fashioned Revival Hour.



Christine, age 7, with mother and brother.

At the conclusion of the message, I turned to him and said, "Dad, don't you feel it's time for you to give your-self to the Lord?"

"Yes," he responded, "it is time. I'd like that." Together we knelt by the sofa in the living room and he asked Christ to come into his heart.

Thus, as is the case in so many homes, it was Mom who assumed the burden of spiritual leadership. A staunch Christian who loved to read her Bible, she took us children to the local Methodist Church every Lord's Day. When she was a girl she somehow had learned of Asbury College in Kentucky and longed to go there. Her father, however, would not hear of it.

"Too far away" was his judgment. For a young Virginia girl to go all the way to Kentucky for schooling just wasn't right. In consequence, Mom enrolled in Blackstone, at the time a two-year college for women.

By the time I was nine, Dad was having health problems. The doctors suggested that, for his sake as well as my brother's, a move to a warmer climate

would be advisable.

This meant selling the big old house in Richmond and loading up our Studebaker Touring car. Of course there were no "thruways" then, and most roads couldn't even be called "highways." I remember one "corduroy" stretch that was made entirely of logs laid crossways, very close together. I don't think we exceeded the 10-MPH speed limit there! And then there were no motels so every night we pitched a tent and camped. Our car had a canvas top. When it rained we'd scramble to put up the isinglass curtains — and, of course, it often stopped raining before this was accomplished. But in all, it was a happy trip, which took just under three weeks. It was a very special "family time" for we were all together 24 hours a day with no radio or cassettes to distract us or help fill the time.

We arrived in Winter Haven, Florida, in 1924, the beginning of the land boom. Prices of everything had begun to skyrocket. We paid the then exorbitant sum of \$150 per month for a duplex which we shared with another family, the Davises — wife, husband and son, Junior, age 7 at that time. Our two families became life-long friends. We each paid \$75, renting out the upstairs rooms to single men for a little extra income.

With the land boom there was plenty of work for contractors. Dad agreed to build homes on a large sub-division being developed by a local woman of dubious character. Somehow she was able to get out of the so-called "binding agreement" and prospered, while Dad lost everything, including the \$12,000 he had received from the sale of our property in Richmond.

But he, a gentle soul, was not inclined to seek redress through a court of law. He found work in the northern part of the state, driving the long way home every week-end for almost two years, until we moved to Jacksonville where we lived throughout my high school years.

I graduated in January 1933, a month after my eighteenth birthday. This was during the trough of the Great Depression. I worked almost a year in a "five and dime" for money was in scarce supply. But I continued to hold to the hope of some day going to college. From a catalog someone had given me, I had decided that Maryville College in Tennessee promised the ideal environment for Christine Camden. Mom, however, had other ideas.

Since her own aspirations to go to Asbury had been thwarted, she both resolved and prayed that if at all possible her daughter would have this opportunity

and gain the blessing that she had been denied.

That summer, while I was visiting relatives in Virginia, Mom called to say that she and Dad felt they could finance at least my first year of college at Asbury and application papers were on their way to me in the mail.

I arrived at Asbury on the afternoon of the last day of registration, but from the moment I set foot on campus I realized I had entered an environment quite unlike anything I had ever known. I had never been "wild" in my outlook on life, and I had been to the altar several times in special meetings which I'd attended with Mom all during my growing-up years. But these Asbury young people had something I knew I didn't have. Joy and goodwill seemed to inhabit the place, and the friendly smiles and hellos from students and faculty were clearly not "put on." More than this, people talked of their faith and relationship with Jesus Christ with a joy and naturalness I hadn't encountered elsewhere.

When I found myself paired with Jimmy, a P.K. freshman (destined to become a missionary to Korea), for the junior/freshman reception on the night of my arrival, we agreed that we did not know Jesus Christ in the intimate way that many of our classmates did. A few weeks later, during the fall revival, I committed myself completely to the Lord, an act that for me marked the beginning of a totally new life of faith and devotion.

President Henry Clay Morrison, already a legend, was a towering presence at the college. Though away much of the time in revival meetings, when he returned to campus everybody knew it. Tall and with a states-manlike bearing, his long white hair was swept back congregating in curls on the back of his neck — a hair-style younger preachers would occasionally imitate. When he preached with bold gestures and flashing eyes, he reminded one of an Old Testament prophet. I can still see him pushing imaginary buttons on the big pulpit in Hughes

Auditorium to enact his famous drama of the elevator ride to heaven and hell. Frequently, he would announce his return to the campus by entering the dining hall at noon, breaking out in a lusty verse of "I'm Bound for the Promised Land." All of us loved

him. After lunch we would gather about on the Administration Building steps for an impromptu sermon. As he waxed eloquent, his big resonant voice could be heard all over the campus.

The Depression was hitting our family hard and Dad was struggling to stay in business. After the conclusion of my freshman year I agreed to transfer to William and Mary College, where I could live at home thus reducing expenses. But being back in a secular environment after my year at Asbury came as a shock. How I missed that beloved campus and the precious Christian friends I had made there.

Six weeks into that fall semester at William and Mary I decided to make a suggestion to my folks. "Dad," I said, "if times are such, and I know they are, that you can't manage to keep me at Asbury until I graduate, what would the possibility be of my going back there next semester and finishing my sophomore year? I'd much rather do that than to have two and a half more years at William and Mary."

So, the second semester found me back in the Bluegrass, among the stately white-columned buildings on the semicircle and with the friends that in so short a time had become very dear. My wonderful parents, knowing how I loved Asbury, worked overtime at any jobs available to give me that precious privilege. I never felt worthy of such loving care.

I dated fairly frequently, and sometimes our "gang" (about 10 of us) did things together. There were always Monday afternoon hikes and Saturday night programs or basketball games as well. Those were good days.

I don't think I ever felt "in a rut" or that life was



Christine's brother, "Bubber" — 1946. —



Christine's parents — 1945.

dull. Of course, I didn't have much spending money. I did dorm or kitchen work to help with expenses, and Mom and Dad took care of tuition, books, etc., but there were seldom any leftovers. I remember once a \$5 bill fell out of a letter from home as I opened it. Lying across my bed I read my letter and then looked for the money. It wasn't on or under the bed which I practically tore apart. Five dollars! I had seen it. I wasn't dreaming, but where was it? I just couldn't lose that much money, and probably the folks had gone without something to send it. The only possibility I could think of was the base-board. I tried a nail file but to no avail. I needed help! Dr. Cross, our housemother, came with a long butcher knife. Bless her heart; with all her "dignitude" she was down on her knees behind my bed. She was finally successful, and I was rich!

Sometimes, too, fellow classmates brought new experiences. Joe had arrived on campus my second year. He was several years older than most students and mainly interested in speech and drama. He was in school on a shoestring, couldn't afford a dorm room and lived above a nearby store. But he had a great personality and was very popular. We had a few dates but I remember only one.

It was a Monday afternoon hike. (Mondays were our free days.) I wore a new dress, simple, brightly flowered cotton (the code book in those days banned slacks for girls and hose were always a must). Joe chose to walk through fields where there were no paths and where I'd never been, but the trees were fresh and beautiful in their spring attire. We came to a brook, cool and rippling over the clean, washed stones. No doubt he already knew it was there and had decided that we should be on the other side! Without a word, he suddenly scooped me up in his arms and waded into the water. I was flabbergasted. I immediately kicked — violently, so violently that he lost his balance and we both fell, kerplop, in midstream. We crept to the far bank and so back to campus. Covering those two miles, my "el cheapo" dress began to shrink, and by the time we reached my dorm it was definitely a "mini" and would never have passed the regulation code. Praying that no one would see me, I

crept silently up the back stairs.

I suppose I was foolish to even hope that Joe would forget about that hike, but beginning that very evening, with all of our gang at our table in the dining hall, he, sitting across from me, kept sticking his spoon in the tines of his fork, marching the two across the table and dropping the spoon into his glass of water. This must have continued off and on for the next 15 meals or so. Of course, nobody else understood that little drama, and, thankfully as far as I know he never talked, but I practically died of embarrassment.

By the end of my sophomore year, I had turned down three marriage proposals. (Joe's was not one of them!) They were "nice boys," but there were no regrets for I felt with a certainty that none was the Lord's choice for me.

Then came Meredith. It was mid-semester of my junior year. Before classes started, the fall revival was held at the Methodist Church. And, as was usually the case, we students, before the singing began, craned our necks to see the new faces of students who had just arrived. There were two or three whom we didn't recognize — one especially with curly, auburn hair that towered skyward. None of them, however, particularly caught my eye.

In the second semester of my sophomore year I had chosen

Social Science as my major, definitely intending to become a social worker. So, for this semester my assigned course was Rural Sociology. At the same time, in case their future pastors might at some time serve in small-town or out-of-the-way churches, divinity students were also required to study the ways of rural society. And that is how, that spring of '37, I found myself seated in a basement classroom of Hughes Auditorium next to Meredith Helsby (the one with the towering auburn hair)-who had just come to Asbury from Gloversville, New York. Since neither of us were very interested in the many statistics concerning rural America, we often whiled away the lecture hours with tic-tac-toe, never thinking our paths together would lead beyond the class-room doors.

Our friendship developed and feelings for one



Courtship days at Albury College — 1938.

another deepened, but there was one great obstacle which loomed increasingly on the horizon of my heart. Meredith had made an irrevocable commitment to go to China as a missionary. He was clearly looking for a wife to accompany him to that distant land. And although I was decidedly in favor of foreign missions, I most definitely was not called to China, Africa, India or any other "Timbuktu." So I struggled to quiet my heart.

In September of 1938 following my June graduation, we broke up tearfully for by that time we were deeply, hopelessly, in love. He had come by way of Richmond on his way back to seminary for his last year of studies. We had a wonderful two days together, but we both felt the Lord was saying no to any continuance of our relationship.

Thus we said good-bye. We would not see each other, nor even write. (Once, however, I did send a box of goodies to him and his roommate, John, being careful to address it to both of them.) The Lord gave me no indication that there would ever be a green light ahead.

Our self-imposed silence lasted from September through January of the following year. The absence of letters, however, did not mean that Meredith was out of my thoughts, prayers, or heart. I had given him entirely to the Lord but felt no inkling of any possible change. Still thoughts of him intruded continuously, and every day brought fresh evidence that I was truly in love. But China? What to do about China?

I continued to bring the subject before the Lord with agonizing earnestness and not a few tears. Then slowly, gradually crept into my heart a sweet certainty that Meredith was indeed God's choice for me. So, if God had called him to that distant land, then China was also God's place for me. And 600 miles away, at about the same time, Meredith felt the clouds lifting and an assurance filled his heart.

We began writing again in February, and in March he hitchhiked to Richmond for a blissful reunion. He never did ask me to marry him, but before the visit was over he got down on his knees and very tenderly asked me to go to China with him. ---

[Later, when the Communists pushed us out of the country of our first love and we were reassigned to India, I decided that his "go-to-China" proposal was now inadequate. So, although I arrived in Allahabad, India, six months after he got there, I announced that I expected a fresh, more proper, down-on-his-knees, will-you-stay-with-me, reiteration. And, you know what? He loved me enough to do it!]

--- Then together we knelt and gave Him our all for His service wherever He would send us. Never have we felt the presence of the Holy Spirit nor the

blessing of the Lord so exquisitely ours. We set the wedding date for December 23 of that same year.

Now, as I think back over my life and His hand of care and keeping upon me, I am very sure that back in '38 when our hearts were crying out, "Go on, get engaged, do what you want to do, it'll be all right," — had we followed our own feelings, we would never have known the wondrous joy of togetherness in Him and in His service that He has given over these past 53 years. How blessed am I and are we to know ". . . You are my God, my times are in Your hands."

I returned to Asbury for Meredith's graduation. I also met his parents at that time. Meredith wanted to wait until he got home to tell them of our engagement, but in the meantime my heart was happy knowing these two dear saints were to be my family, too. The next evening following graduation, we invited a few, special friends to meet us at Jewels Corners, about a mile from campus and well-known to Asburians as a great place for a party. In truth, it was a lovely, old homestead, refurbished and beautifully equipped to more than satisfy one's gastronomical needs. We placed a small card announcing our engagement between two cookies, tied it with narrow, ribbon streamers which led from the center-piece of white roses to heart-shaped place cards. Meredith gave me a lovely, gold Gruen watch for which, I later learned, he had promised to pay a Lexington jeweler \$5 per month. Then he shared with our guests our future plans, particularly emphasizing China. To us, it was a never-to-be-forgotten evening.

Since OMS required that missionaries have experience in either teaching or the pastorate, Meredith took a position on the faculty of Owosso Bible College in Owosso, Michigan, starting that fall.

Two days before Christmas we were married in my home church, Highland Park Methodist, in Richmond. Meredith's best man was his younger brother, Bob, and his groomsman, John Vayhinger. I asked Mary Yeaman, a dear friend, to be my bridesmaid and Belle Elam, my cousin, to be maid of honor. Also, Belle's brother Herman, who was then a divinity student, assisted my pastor in the ceremony.

Meredith's mother and dad were driven down to Richmond from New York by his brother, Bob. It was a happy time for all of us, a time too when his parents and mine could get acquainted. After the festivities Bob took Mother and Dad Helsby to Maryland to visit relatives there. And since we were unable to finance a "proper honeymoon," we were allowed to take over their temporarily empty parsonage for the week they were away. Understandably we didn't see many folk during that

time except a few close friends like the Fountains, whom Meredith wanted me to know. Of course, we did attend Dad's church on Sunday, and there the people crowded around us. But Meredith hadn't gotten accustomed to saying "my wife," so to cover his nervousness he announced, "I'd like you to meet my mother's new sister-in-law!" Of course I've never let him forget that I'm not his aunt!

We arrived at Owosso Bible College in late evening of the last day of Christmas vacation. As dean of men, Meredith was required to live in the boys' dorm. So it was planned that I move into his room with him, and a small space at the other end of the long hall was partitioned off as my bathroom. Meredith reminded me that I would probably be introduced to the faculty and entire (curious) student body the next morning during the regular chapel service. That was an hour I was definitely not looking forward to. But I knew it was a must and prayed I'd somehow be proper and acceptable.

I found the president, Reverend Mills, very warm and friendly. He invited Meredith and me to sit on the platform with him. There were a few announcements and some welcoming remarks. Then the president said, "Before the morning message let's look to the Lord in prayer." Every head bowed. And then, "I will ask Sister Helsby to lead us."

I had covered my face in my hands but this startling word brought my head up. I peeked through my fingers at those seated in the small auditorium in front of me. Sister Helsby? The only Sister Helsby I knew was Meredith's mother, and I didn't see her anywhere. Then Meredith, seated next to me, leaned over and kicked my foot. Suddenly I realized, "I'm Sister Helsby!" And I hadn't even gotten used to answering to "Mrs. Helsby" yet!

I've always wondered what I prayed about in that first chapel service. But I knew with a certainty that in this, my new life, there would be experiences I'd never dreamed of. How right I was. But those were good months, and the faculty and students at Owosso Bible College became dear friends.

The salary during these depression years was minimal. We took all our meals in the college dining

hall but once a week splurged by going out for dinner at the local hamburger stand, fittingly named The Swallow. This Spartan beginning, perhaps not the ideal way to commence married life, was yet full of

joy and gave us a lifelong appreciation for the common material blessings which so many in our favored land take for granted.

Soon after our engagement in March of '39 we had applied to, and were accepted by, the Oriental Missionary Society. Now it was September 25, 1940, and with our teaching year behind, here we were ready to board the S.S. President Pierce in Los Angeles, en route to Shanghai. Mrs. Charles Cowman, president of OMS since her husband's death, was on the dock to see us off. She shared with us that September 25 was a significant day for her, too. Later we learned that this was the sixteenth anniversary of her husband's death. She also presented us with a copy of her second book, *Springs In The Valley*, which had just been

published. On the fly leaf she had written, "To my beloved fellow missionaries Meredith and Christine Helsby, September 25, 1940." And underneath she wrote, "And Jesus Himself drew near and went with them."

Three days on the other side of Honolulu each passenger was presented with an "evacuation notice," informing us that the U.S. Government was advising that all "non-essential Americans" leave the Orient. War was raging in Europe and the prospects of American involvement in conflict with Japan seemed inevitable. We pondered the word "non-essential." In the eyes of our government who would be deemed more non-essential than a young teacher, with one year of experience, and his greatly pregnant wife? We opened *Springs In The Valley* and Mrs. Cowman's words from the Word took on new meaning, "And Jesus Himself drew near and went with them."

We were met in Tientsin by OMS missionary, Uri Chandler, who shepherded us to Peking aboard a not very plush train.

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Our Wedding Day, Dec. 23, 1939.

Your Representatives to the Chinese



Christine and Meredith Helsby

Now is the opportune time to reach China's millions.
Pray for us as we go.

Sailing September 30, 1940 from Los Angeles.

Our Address:

Box 1489 Shanghai, China
Oriental Missionary Society

Chapter 4

HOUSE ARREST

By Christine

China's grand, old, treasure-laden, capital city of Peking had been occupied by foreign troops for three years. In 1937 the Japanese had orchestrated a series of "incidents," beginning with the Mukden uprising, to justify their invasion of China. With a growing population and chafing under the restricting confines of her island boundaries, Japan now clearly had Empire on her mind. In 1937 her armies attacked Shanghai. Heroic Chinese soldiers held the invader at bay for months, but in the end were no match for the crack, well-equipped Japanese armies.

The attack on Peking later that year commenced with the bombing of the Lo Kua Shan Bridge (called by many Marco Polo Bridge) just outside the city. Rather than risk the destruction of their beloved

capital, the Nationalist troops prudently withdrew.

In a short time Japanese militia were in evidence everywhere. Numerous sandbag barriers were situated throughout the city, manned by bayonet-toting guards.

Passes were required to travel anywhere outside the capital. Since the U.S. had not entered the war, however, we were still technically free.

After a three-hour train ride we pulled into Peking. Disappointingly, however, there was virtually nothing to see. The entire city was enveloped in one of the frequent dust storms which swirl in from the Gobi Desert. Compounding the confusion was the fact that all electricity was off. With Uri taking the lead we groped our way through the station to an ancient, but most welcome, taxi. He said we were really "blessed," since Peking could, at that time, only boast of six taxis in the entire city.

At the OMS compound, also the campus of our Bible school, we were welcomed by field director, Harry Woods, and his wife, Emily. I can still savor the warm fire blazing in the hearth and the bowl of hot soup.

We were soon occupying a lovely home just across from the Woods and next door to the Chandler family. Since their furlough was near, however, the Chandlers were preparing to return to the U.S. in the summer of 1941. Rolland and Mildred Rice were in the apartment over us. Our compound was located no more than a stone's throw from the famed Forbidden City and had formerly been the estate of a Chinese prince who served in the court of the young emperor. The buildings were models of classical Chinese architecture with stout red pillars and ornate tiled roofs. Some of the original structures, such as our director's home, had beautifully carved, lavishly ornamental, room partitions.

We soon fell in love with Peking. Its exotic stores and labyrinth of markets offered everything from famed Peking rugs to intricate ivory carvings, all at





Peking — 1940, on O.M.S. Bible school campus.

bargain prices. And we were soon frequenting the best Chinese restaurants in the world with their marvelous offerings of Peking duck, spring rolls and indescribably delicious chiao tzus, a kind of dumpling stuffed with vegetables and pork.

All the tales we had heard about the difficulty of acquiring the Chinese language proved more than true. While Meredith attended the local language school, due to my advanced pregnancy it was agreed I should study at home with a tutor. Chang Hsien Sheng, a gracious Chinese gentleman and friend, was not one to tolerate any hanky-panky with the complex Chinese tonal system and subtle "r" and "u" sounds. Long tedious hours were spent in the assiduous effort to reproduce the difficult intonations and inflections of Mandarin.

Our beautiful daughter, Sandra Kay, was born Friday, December 13, 1940, just two months after our arrival in China. For her delivery I was taken to the Peking Union Medical Center built by the Rockefellers and reputed to be the finest hospital in the Far East. However, as far as I could tell, not a single nurse on that floor could speak English —

except for one word, for which I was most grateful. That word was "bedpan!" A bright-eyed, laughing infant, practically from the moment of her arrival, Sandra added to our lives a joy exceeding even that which we had imagined.

For Sandra's first birthday, December 13, 1941, I had gone to a great deal of effort to plan a festive occasion inviting all the students, staff and missionaries. But, six days earlier, on that never-to-be-forgotten day, December 8, as we tuned in the Shanghai English broad-cast for the morning news, we heard,

"I REPEAT TO ALL AMERICAN CITIZENS RESIDING IN EASTERN CHINA, YOU ARE NOW PRISONERS OF THE JAPANESE. AMERICA AND JAPAN ARE NOW IN A STATE OF WAR SINCE THE BOMBING OF HAWAII YESTERDAY. DO NOT LEAVE YOUR HOMES. YOU WILL BE TOLD WHAT TO DO. LEAVE YOUR RADIOS ON FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS."

Meredith and I sat there stunned. Bombing? American prisoners? At war? We ran next door to the Woods' home. Harry called our missionary family together. We now numbered six adults and five children, but the four Woods children were already on their way to school.

We had been at the Woods' home less than ten minutes, praying and talking, when Meredith realized he was wearing Chinese cloth slippers. In view of the enemies' antipathy toward the Chinese and not knowing what our captors had in mind for us, he thought it best to change into leather shoes — just in case.

He had been gone only five minutes when through the living room window I saw between 15 to 20 Japanese soldiers, with bayonets fixed — and Meredith in their midst! They were taking him toward the front gate and my heart cried, "Oh Lord, will I ever see my husband again?"

In a moment, however, the soldiers were at the front door



With Eugene and Esther Erny and boys, Edward and Robert — Christmas 1940 (infant Sandra Kay in arms).

to take us too. We were surprised to discover they had a list and knew all of our names as well as sex and age. They signaled for us to follow them. As I was prodded out the front door, my eyes were drawn to a very small plaque, only about three by one and one half inches, just to the right of the door. I had gone in and out of that entrance several times a day for the past year but had never noticed the words that now stood out in bold relief, as though inscribed in letters of fire. It read, "Lo, I am with you always." Each word of that phrase was suddenly pregnant with meaning. I knew the Lord's finger had written it to prepare us for the hours ahead.

I was distressed that Sandra was still in her bedroom with our amah. I pointed to the house and made a rocking motion with my arms. The soldier seemed to understand that our baby, the last name on their list, was there and I was asking permission to take her with me. But he vigorously shook his head and pushed me forward. Though heartsick, I found some comfort in the thought that Sandra was with a trustworthy Chinese woman (Shen Ma), who loved her as dearly as though she were her own child. I joined the others, breathing a prayer of protection for our little one.

Our captors marched us just to our gatehouse. Within an hour Sandra appeared holding tightly to Shen Ma's hand, peering out from behind her skirts. By now, the Woods' children had also arrived. Japanese soldiers had encountered them in the street on their way to school and escorted them back to the compound.

So began that first, long, grueling day. Our captors made it plain we were to sit in a semicircle facing them, and by sign language ordered the gateman to bring the necessary chairs. Thus we sat, the six members of the Woods' family, Annie Kartoizian, Mary Maness, Meredith and I. Now began the laborious interrogation, carried on in a mixture of fractured Chinese and bits of English.

"Where did you hide your guns?" the officer asked. Our guns? It took a moment for the words to register. Finally, in reply, Harry Woods, who had served a short term as a missionary in Japan, spoke in intelligible Japanese. This clearly pleased our interrogators, who proceeded to continue the questioning using Harry as an interpreter. "Why are you in China?" they asked us one by one. "And why did you come to Peking? From whom do you receive your orders? Are you here to recruit workers?" And again, "Where have you hidden your guns?"

This continued until nearly 2 p.m. when we were allowed to go back to the Woods' house for a half

hour, to eat a belated lunch. That afternoon the interrogation was resumed with the same questions repeated. By six o'clock we were more exhausted than if we had spent the day digging ditches.

Now the Japanese insisted that we all move into the Woods' house. We were permitted to return to our own homes, under guard, to retrieve some clothing and small necessities. Then the officers sealed each house, informing us, scowlingly, of the dire consequences should we break any of those seals and reenter our homes. So we all moved in with the director and his family, which made 11 of us around the table for each meal.

Late that evening two soldiers appeared to demand that Harry pack a small bag and go with them. It was a blessing that we did not know that he was being taken to the Japanese Gendarmerie, for many times as we had passed by that notorious building we'd heard the screams of Chinese being tortured. It would be an entire month before we would see Harry again. As the days passed we hardly dared to think of any of the horrific possibilities that came to mind!

Fortunately, the Woods' cook, Sung Shih Fu, lived with his wife and two small daughters on the campus.

Soldiers decided he could continue to cook for us. And since we were forbidden to leave the house, he would also shop for groceries. Having Sung Shih Fu was a boost to our morale. Not only was he a master chef, he was adept at using the large, brick, Russian-type stove fueled with coal balls. He knew how to bank the fire each evening so it would start the next morning thus conserving precious coal. This was a "must" for such stoves, and none of us "foreigners" had acquired this skill.

December 13 came — the long anticipated date of Sandra's first birthday. Sung Shih Fu used a small amount of our now carefully rationed stock of sugar and flour to make a loaf cake with raisins. I found the stub of an oversized candle and planted it in the middle.

For a first birthday party, photographs are mandatory. I dressed Sandra warmly, and Meredith got out his camera which still had a few unexposed frames on the roll of film. With cake, camera and baby in tow, we ventured out of the house onto the porch for the first time since our incarceration. We had always taken to heart our captors' admonition, that the first one to stick his head out of that door would be shot. So this was truly a shaky trial run. In a moment, Japanese guards appeared on all sides, but when we gestured to the baby, the camera and the cake, they smiled and escorted us to a little area in



Sandra Kay, 18 months, during house arrest period.

the garden immediately in front of the steps. From the outset, we learned that Japanese have tender feelings for children. Both snapshots of our small one's first birth-day show smiling Japanese soldiers in the background.

The occupation of our campus brought an end to Bible school activities. Now with all the students dispersed, classes discontinued and the language school shut down, we found ourselves in a novel position, with plenty of time on our hands. We set about preparing a schedule, determined to make the best use of these suddenly free hours.

Thursday night was our regular OMS prayer meeting and Sunday morning, of course, was reserved for a worship service. We also decided to meet for regular times of Bible study each morning and various missionaries took turns leading these sessions. Several of us agreed to tutor the Woods' children who were now, of necessity, thrust into a program of home schooling. Others were assigned to help the cook prepare meals. Thus the days passed more quickly, but there was no word about our field

director, Harry Woods.

Christmas came and went. Our little party did the best we could do to make a celebration of it though still strictly confined to the house. Sung Shih Fu contrived to fix a Christmas dinner, but without turkey, fruitcake or any of the special foods we associate with the season, it took considerable imagination on our part. Still, without the trappings of our American tradition, perhaps we could even better savor the true essence of Christmas, the coming of the Christ Child to a people in bondage and despair. Together we praised the Lord for His care of us through the days of captivity and earnestly prayed that Harry might quickly be released, unharmed.

The New Year was soon upon us. What a strange and difficult month December had been. In prewar days we received mail from abroad only when the mail ship came in, usually every six weeks or two months, so there hadn't yet been time to really miss the news from home. (Mercifully we didn't know we'd be without mail for the next four years.) But thoughts of parents and loved ones, anxious and waiting for word about our plight, wondering whether we were still alive, troubled us.

The following week our quarantine came to an end. The Japanese issued us three-inch wide, bright red arm-bands, bearing Chinese characters which read, "Enemy National." With these displayed we were now permitted to go into town but not outside of the confines of the city walls.



That same week Harry was released. Gratefully, he had not been mistreated as we had feared but had been used primarily as an interpreter. In that role he could alleviate the suffering of Chinese prisoners who were being tortured because they could not properly communicate. In some cases he had managed to secure their release. After a month he was told that his services were no longer needed and was escorted, under guard, back to the compound and issued an armband along with the rest of us.

At the same time came other welcome news. We could now move back to our own homes and the single girls to their apartments. We decided, however, to continue eating together, to cut costs and take advantage of Sung Shih Fu's services. We were impressed with the necessity of practicing strict economy since we were no longer able to receive money from the States. All of us lost a little weight but continued in good health.

As is always the case, hard times brought with them some surprising benefits. One of these was a new and more intimate relationship with Chinese Christians. Though we were still foreigners, the fact that we suffered alike under a common enemy bonded us together in a beautiful way.

Now that our schedules were so much less restricted, we also had opportunities to see more of our fellow-missionaries of various denominations and nationalities. Two of these, casual acquaintances in prewar days, now became intimate friends and very much part of the OMS family.

Marcy Ditmanson, a few years younger than us and the son of Lutheran missionaries, had been born in China so Mandarin was very nearly his mother tongue. After completing college in the U.S. he had returned to take a masters degree at Yen Ching, China's foremost Protestant university. He and Meredith had gotten acquainted in language school and played tennis from time to time. When Marcy took ill, the Chinese family with whom he lived was unable to properly care for him so we moved him into the apartment upstairs from us.



Dr. John Hayes, about 1954.

Dr. John Hayes was the distinguished headmaster of the Peking Language School. In the fall of 1941 when war with Japan seemed imminent, his wife and children, along with most of the language school students, had moved to the Philippines. John, a tall, handsome man, had also been born in China, the son of Presbyterian missionaries. He had grown up speaking the language, and his Mandarin was beautiful. He was a Rhodes Scholar and most of us were slightly in awe of him. The first time Emily Woods invited him to join us at dinner, she said, "Christine I'm going to seat John Hayes next to you

so keep the conversation going." This was a terrifying prospect indeed. A few moments in the presence of this gentle, unassuming man, however, and our fears were dispelled. Like Marcy, he became very much a member of our household, especially beloved by Sandra, who called him "Hayse." During our years in prison camp he was a special benefactor in ways that I will later recount. ---

[After the war John returned to China where he spent several years in a communist prison in Kueilin. He was later killed in an unfortunate jeep accident while on a mission in Indonesia.] ---

Our numbers increased further the following months when Japanese authorities decided to move all foreigners residing in outlying areas to Peking. At this time Marcy's father was welcomed to the OMS campus, as well as Mary Scott, a Nazarene friend with whom we had become acquainted in language school. We thought this would complete our group, but soon after came word of the Browns, Mennonite missionaries, and Mr. Moses, another Nazarene, who needed housing in the city. They joined us in the fall of 1942, bringing our growing compound missionary family to 17.

With OMS funds in the Peking bank frozen and our pooled funds totaling a fraction above zero, we were facing a crisis. If we wanted to continue eating, it was clear that we would have to exchange our valuables for cash. As soon as armbands were issued, Meredith set out to sell whatever he could. The first two items to go were his camera and clarinet. Our portable typewriter, too, would bring a good price in Chinese dollars, if we could find someone to buy it. But Chinese had little use for a typewriter with an English alphabet, and foreigners in the city, like ourselves, were selling, and not buying. Then we had an inspiration. What about the Russian Embassy? They were still open and were happy to take the precious Smith-Corona off our hands. So like the camera and clarinet, we "ate" the typewriter too.

Now a new problem developed. Japanese soldiers, three or four together, began appearing at our doors. If we were not at home they'd simply enter uninvited and help themselves to whatever items took their fancy — a lamp, nest of tables, set of dishes. On one occasion, they instructed Meredith to have their chosen items at a certain warehouse at seven o'clock the next morning to be auctioned. Obviously, the Japanese were making a little extra money on the side. It was clear that at this rate very soon our homes would be stripped of everything of value. But God preserves his people, and sometimes even their possessions, in improbable ways.

On one of Meredith's trips downtown, he noticed a Chinese gentleman following him as though he wanted to get his attention. When Meredith stepped into a doorway, the man, peering cautiously around, slipped in behind him. He introduced himself as a carpenter, who had been led to the Lord several years earlier by OMS missionary, Rolland Rice. Aware that the Japanese were gradually appropriating all of our belongings he had determined to show his gratitude by helping us. For several nights, he explained, he had watched the little alley that ran behind our back wall and was certain that no Japanese soldiers patrolled it on a regular basis. "I have a small carpenter's shop," he explained, "where I think I can conceal your goods. If you will bring all your valuables to the small gate on a designated night, I'll be there with my men and two carts to take your things to my shop, where I will conceal them behind a wall which I will build using old bricks." Meredith was deeply moved to think that this precious Chinese friend would risk imprisonment, torture and possibly death to help us. Gratefully, we set about to collect our most important items, particularly mission books and records, allotting each missionary a small amount of space for their most treasured belongings.

I still remember the night chosen for "the deed." We had packed all the things in boxes as small and compact as possible. Our carpenter friend had chosen a night when there was no moon. He appeared, right on schedule, at midnight. Although there were 12 to 15 Japanese guarding the main entrance, there were none stationed at the small back gate.

In the distance a clock sounded the hour. Almost immediately there was a slight scratching sound on the gate. Our friend and his men were there. Because they were wearing their cloth shoes and the dust of the alley was deep, their footsteps were noiseless. So the boxes, a small chest or two, and a file cabinet were quickly loaded onto the carts.

It was three days before we received word concerning the fate of our goods. Meredith dared not go to the carpenter's shop for fear of casting suspicion on our helper. On the third day, however, he sauntered by on the opposite side of the street, hoping to catch the man's attention. Sure enough, as he passed, he saw the carpenter slip out of his shop. Using the same doorway tactics as before, Meredith stepped into the shadows and soon his friend shuffled in beside him. They praised God together, rejoicing over the safe transfer of our goods. The new, old-looking wall had been completed and everything was in place. ---

[Following our release from prison camp after the war we

were jubilant as we pulled down those bricks and retrieved our personal things along with mission records.]

During our 15 months of house arrest we enjoyed remarkably good health, but in February of 1943 (Ground Hog Day) a mishap occurred which could have been very serious.

That day Meredith was riding his bike across town to visit a Salvation Army couple with whom we had become quite close. Since they had three children he decided to take Sandra along, placing her on her familiar perch atop the crossbar. Chinese bicycles at that time were made of inferior metal, and the front forks linking the wheel to the handlebar were notoriously unreliable. They had almost reached their destination when suddenly the fork snapped throwing both of them head first onto the gravel road. As they fell, Meredith instinctively protected Sandra in his arms. As a result he crashed to the ground head first, taking a tremendous blow to the temple. Dazed, he picked himself up, took Sandra by the hand and started walking. He arrived back at our compound, incoherent. Amazingly he had been able to hail a rickshaw and give the runner our home address in Chinese. We later discovered that he had also paid the man the proper fare. When Meredith wandered onto the compound, his head badly bruised and bleeding, he was clearly in a daze. His only response to our questions was a simple, "It broke." We called an American doctor who came to the home and sewed up several deep cuts on his head and put him to bed. I remember tearfully asking Emily if she thought my husband would ever be in his right mind again. The following morning, although his memory had not yet fully returned, at least his speech was coherent. Gratefully, at the time of the accident, Meredith had been wearing a thick, Russian-type, fur cap. We all agreed that without this, he would have suffered far more serious injury.

When the notice came that we were to prepare for transfer to the "Weihsien Civilian Assembly Center" in Shantung Province, we faced the problem of deciding what to take into camp in the few pieces of baggage allowed us. "Oh Lord," I prayed, "give me special wisdom. Help me to think of what Sandra will most need to keep her well and strong." Sometime in the middle of that week as I sorted and packed, the words "bone meal" seemed to leap unbidden into my consciousness. They were words I had hardly ever heard, much less used. In fact, I wasn't sure exactly what bone meal was. Only later did I learn that it was bones ground primarily for use in fertilizer and animal food. Bone meal? "Lord, are you saying that I

WEIHSIEN

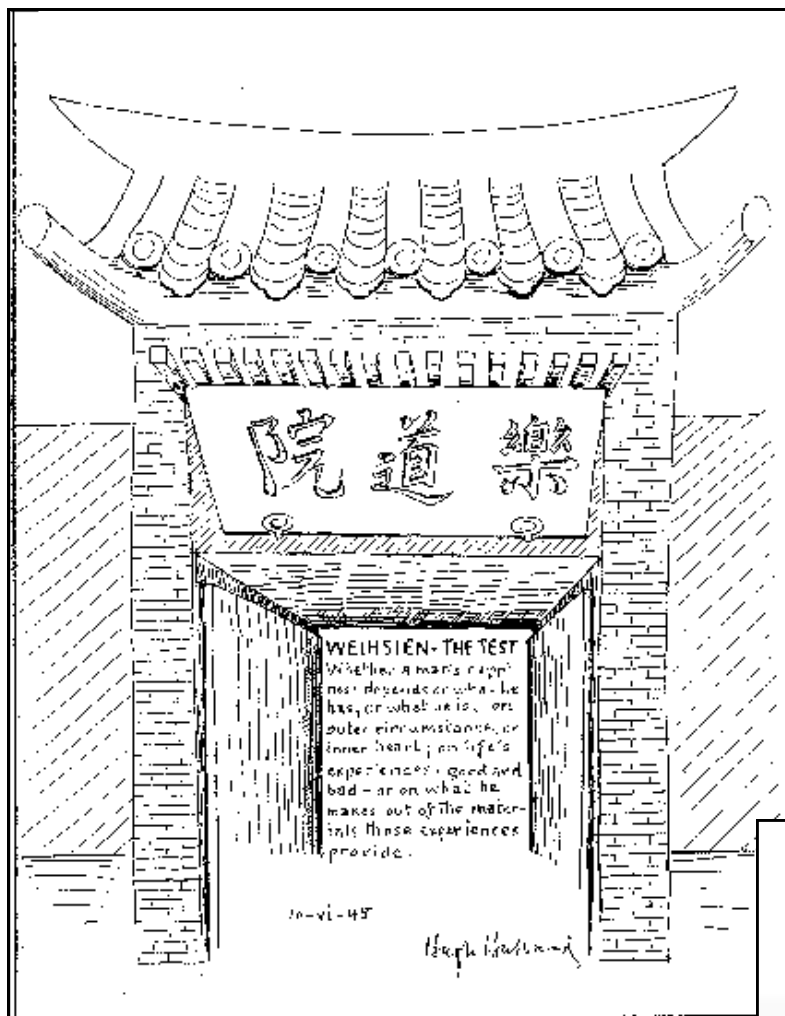
With the dawn of our first day in Weihsien Camp came opportunity to explore our surroundings. Weihsien had seen happier times. In its prime, during the early years of the century, it had been a model missionary compound of the American Presbyterian Church. Within the walls of the six-acre enclosure were a Bible school, hospital, bakery, long rows of single-story dormitories, and western-style homes for American missionary doctors and teachers. In fact, two notable personalities, novelist Pearl Buck and Henry Luce, founder of Time and Life magazines, had both been born there.

Leading from the high wooden gates up the slope through the center of the one-time campus was a black cinder road which we came to call "Main Street." On either side was an assortment of buildings. Behind them rose what had at one time been splendid edifices of Edwardian architecture, housing the administration building and the hospital.

For more than a year both Chinese and Japanese troops had been quartered on this compound, and although the buildings had not been damaged their interiors were in shambles with fixtures ripped out and furnishings ruined. Their contents now were scattered about yards and doorways in unsightly piles of debris. Gratefully, a good deal of this material could now be salvaged, refashioned and put to good use. We all learned a new word, "scrounge," which meant picking up any piece of anything we thought would make our homes more livable.

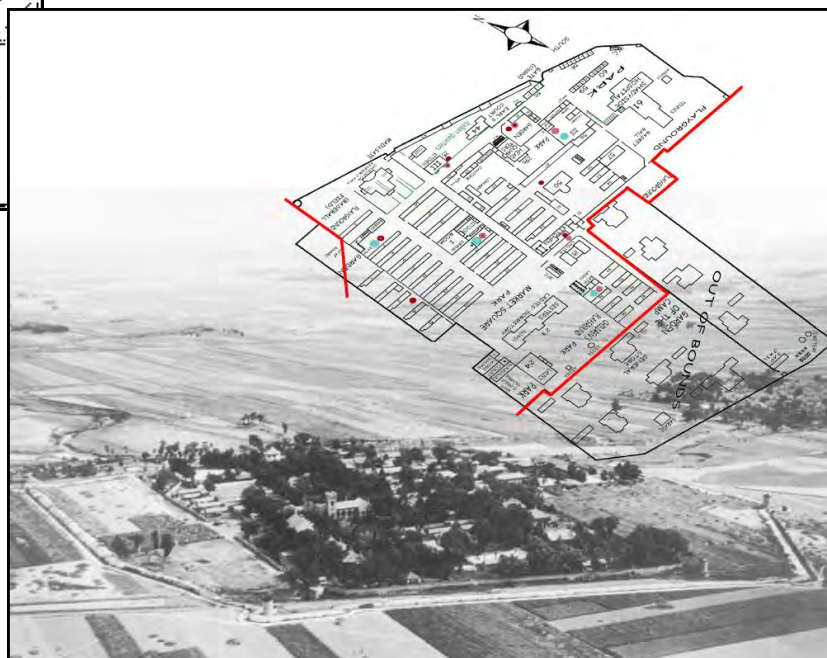
need to take bone meal for Sandra?" Right then I knew that He was reminding me that at age two Sandra's permanent teeth would be forming, and with no doubt a less than adequate diet in camp she would need something to make them strong. So into the suitcase went two and a half pounds of this nondescript powder in small packets placed around the side. My Heavenly Father is not only omnipotent; He is all-wise and all-caring. The following Wednesday we gathered at the American Embassy at 2 p.m., as instructed.

#



Artist's impression of the front gate of Weihsien Camp. The characters are "Le Dao Yuan", meaning "Courtyard of the Happy Way". The property had been an American Presbyterian mission compound.

Sketched by Hugh Hubbard



In his well-known book Shantung Compound one of the internees, Langdon Gilkey, gives a graphic description of our community:

- We were, in the words of the British, a "ruddy" mixed bag. We were almost equally divided in numbers between men and women. We had roughly 400 who were 60 years of age and another 400 under 15. Our oldest citizen was in his mid-90s, our youngest was a baby who had just been born in the camp hospital.

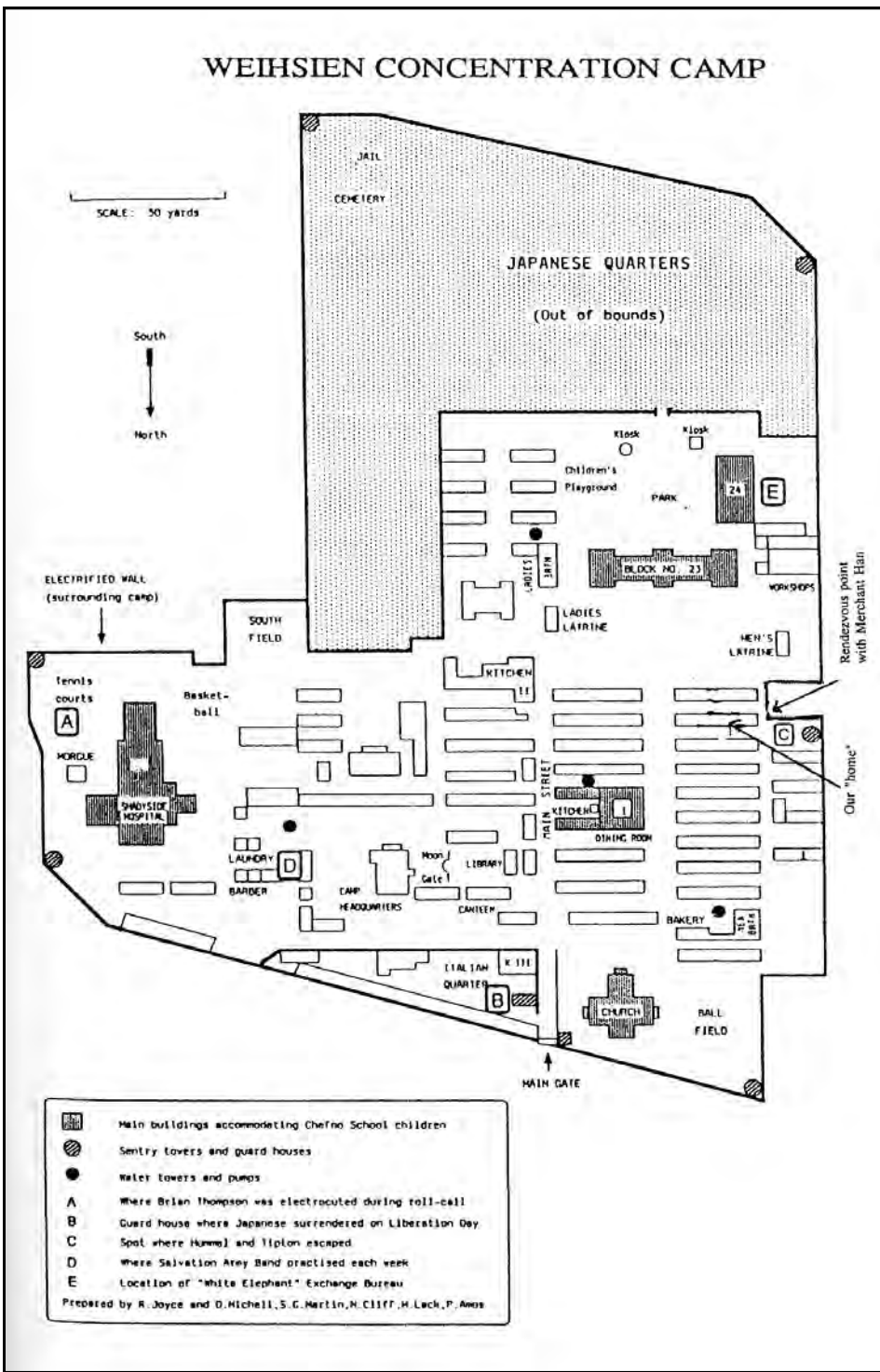
We were equally diverse in our national and racial origins. At the start of camp our population comprised about 800 Britains, 600 Americans, 250 Hollanders, 250 Belgians (the major portion of the last two groups were Roman Catholic clerics of various sorts).---

'These are approximate numbers. Scandinavians should also have been included. By April 1, 1943, our camp population numbered 1,751.---

--- We were later joined by about 100 Italians from the Shanghai area, who were placed in a separate section. Interspersed throughout were eight Belgian and two Dutch families, four Parsee families, two Cuban families, part of a touring jai-alai team, a Negro and Hawaiian jazz band, a few Palestinian Jews, an Indian translator and interpreter and about 60 White Russian women and their children... .

--- Called *White Russians* because they were politically aligned with the *Mensheviks* (whites) who were defeated by the *Bolsheviks* (reds) in the power struggle following the revolution of 1919.---

The most obvious diversity lay in the differences in the social status which each of us had enjoyed in the outside world. As we could see from the first moment, our group ranged up and down the entire social ladder. Our members included some from the well-to-do leaders of Asia's colonial business world and the genteel products of English "public school" life. More were from the Anglo-Saxon middle-class (represented by small businessmen, customs officials, engineers, exporters, lawyers, doctors and shop-keepers), and not a few from among the dopers, barflies and raffish characters of the port cities. Mingling with the secular hoi polloi were some 400 Protestant missionaries. They embraced almost all denominations, theologies and ways of life. Also, for



the first six months, there were 400 Roman Catholic priests, monks and nuns. . . . When the last group arrived in camp, we totaled nearly 1800.

The first great crisis faced by this vast hoard of people thrust so unceremoniously into the ill-prepared compound was occasioned by the basic demands for toilet facilities. Since our captors were ensconced in the western missionary homes there remained four simple latrines containing no more than five or six toilets apiece to service our entire community. These toilets were of the simplest Chinese design, mere holes in the floor bereft of flushing mechanisms and designed to be emptied regularly by Chinese coolies with "honey buckets"

From dawn to dusk lines outside the latrines were interminable, and before long contents were overflowing, creating the most repulsive conditions

imaginable. This was a special trial for women, due not only to their delicate sensibilities but to the fact that they had only one latrine to the men's three. This, we learned, was due to misinformation the Japanese had received concerning the ratio of the sexes of their captives.

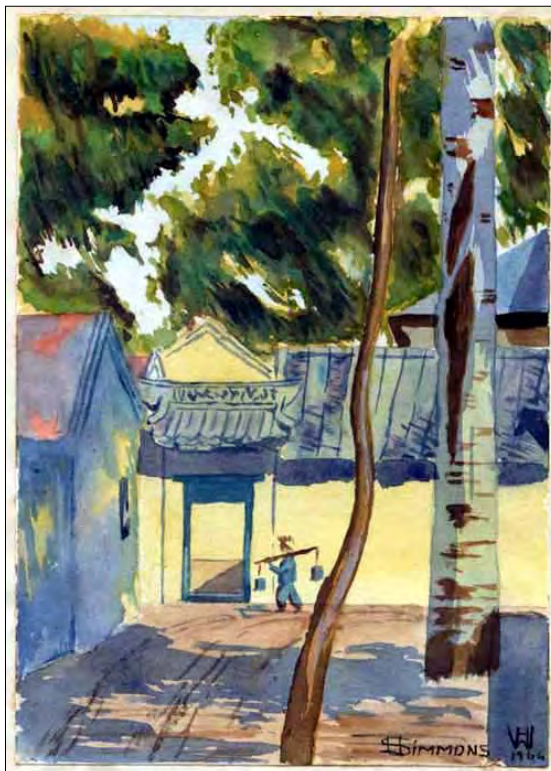
This situation was somewhat alleviated when a delegation of volunteers, among them intrepid Catholic nuns, tied cloths over their faces and waded into the loathsome mass of excrement to clean it up. In time, a crew of engineers devised a system for hand-flushing the toilets after each use.

The first day after our arrival at the Weihsien Compound, we were summoned to the playing field to be identified and counted, an irritating ordeal that took several hours. The commandant read the rules. One strictly specified that we were to have no contact with the Chinese on the outside of the wall. This was a fore-taste of the innumerable roll calls, an immutable feature of camp life.

The bell tolled at 8:30 each morning and again at 6:30 p.m. (earlier in the winter). This was to summon the entire camp population to six designated areas.

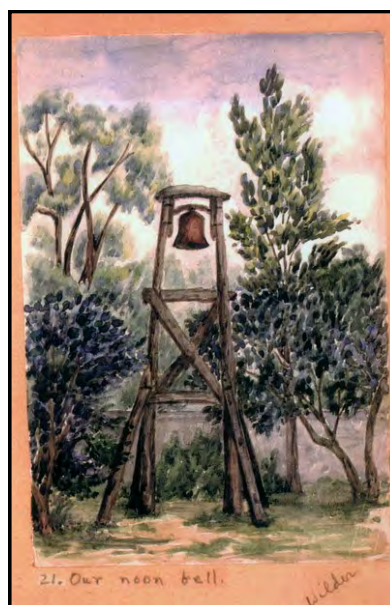
Residents of our section assembled in the church yard in rows of 20, I.D. badges properly displayed on the left shoulder. This ritual required no less than 45 minutes, often much longer if somebody couldn't be accounted for. Gratefully, while waiting to be counted, we were permitted to relax and visit with friends.

The stern-faced officers who moved at such a deliberate pace to peer at our badges and check our names in their registers soon became familiar



*The honey pot man,
by Ursula Simmons, 1944.*

<http://weihsien-paintings.org/cooke/pages/page03.htm>



21. Our noon bell.

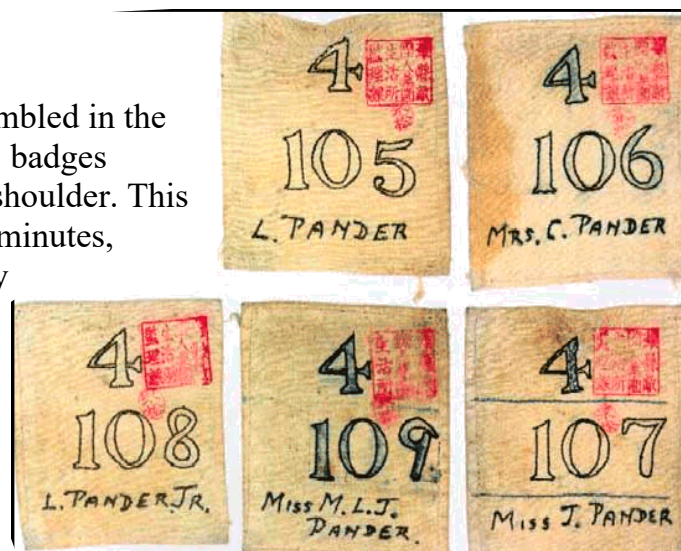
figures to us. Fortunately the 70 guards assigned to the Weihsien camp were not members of the regular Japanese army but civilian diplomatic officers, who had served in various capacities in China, thus a cut above the typical soldiers who brutalized Allied prisoners in the infamous P.O.W. camps in Singapore and the Philippines.

For the most part, the guards' treatment of us was marked by decorum and good discipline, and efforts were made to observe the articles of the Geneva Convention governing treatment of civilian prisoners of war. A few, like Mr. Kogi who had studied in a mission school, had come in contact with Christianity in Japan and went out of their way to treat us with consideration and courtesy.

Still when our captors, small of stature and looking almost like children beside a 6 foot 2 inch American or Englishman, felt intimidated they could respond with unfeigned arrogance or fly into a rage barking, ranting, gesticulating, slapping and kicking. When in dress uniform these diminutive men strutting back and forth, their long Samurai swords trailing in the dirt, looked so much like small boys at play it was hard to suppress a smile. Smiling or laughing in their presence, however, is something we early learned to avoid — as this was often taken as a sign of contempt, insolence or lack of respect, inviting angry reprisals and threats.

Among 70 men of any nationality one will, of course, discover tremendous diversity. And while some of these guards early identified themselves as friendly, others we soon learned to give a wide berth. A few acquired interesting nicknames.

The commandant, a heavy scowling man of surly disposition, was soon dubbed "King Kong." Another officer, who looked like the Japanese counterpart of Sergeant Snorkle, took a perverse



... Identity Tags.

<http://weihsien-paintings.org/pander/pages/page02.htm>

delight in squelching any activity which appeared suspiciously like fun. The sight of an internee sunbathing or a couple holding hands would elicit a growled "Pu Hsing Ti." (You can't do that!)

---'Wade-Giles Romanization was in wide use during World War II era.---

Soon he had earned the moniker Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti. Before long wherever this gentleman appeared, he was greeted by throngs of small children who followed, dancing up and down chorusing, "Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti, Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti."

This was most disconcerting, of course. So much so that the man appealed to the commandant, and a short time later the following announcement appeared on the camp bulletin board:

"Henceforth in the Weihsien Civilian Center, by special order of His Imperial Majesty, the emperor of Japan, Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti is not to be known as Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti but as Sergeant Yomiara."

Life is full of surprises, and we soon learned it was a mistake to judge the Japanese by their appearance. One internee described a surprising encounter with a menacing-looking guard:

It was with great apprehension that we saw one afternoon at tea time one of the soldiers, loaded down with every kind of portable weapon, approach a building where, among others, an American family with a baby was housed. I was the only male present at the time. Gingerly I opened the door at the guard's brisk knock. He bowed and sucked air in sharply through his teeth. Then unloading his extensive armor, to my utter amazement he opened his great coat and pulled out a small bottle of milk.

"Please," he said haltingly, "take for baby." After we had recovered from our surprise sufficiently to invite him to come in, we asked whether there was anything we could do for him in return.

"May I hear classical records?" he asked. Again we gasped and said, "Who are you?" He answered, "I,

second flutist in Tokyo Symphony Orchestra. Miss good music!"

Weihsien camp was, in effect, a hastily assembled city of 1800 people of 17 nationalities wedged into the confines of a six-acre compound. All of the organizations and services that develop in a normal community over decades we were now forced to construct almost overnight. In this enterprise, our Japanese overlords demonstrated the commendable gifts of efficiency and administration that have made them the world leaders in commerce and industry.

Ten days after our arrival in camp, the Commandant issued a decree that within 48 hours we were obliged to create nine committees, each of which would

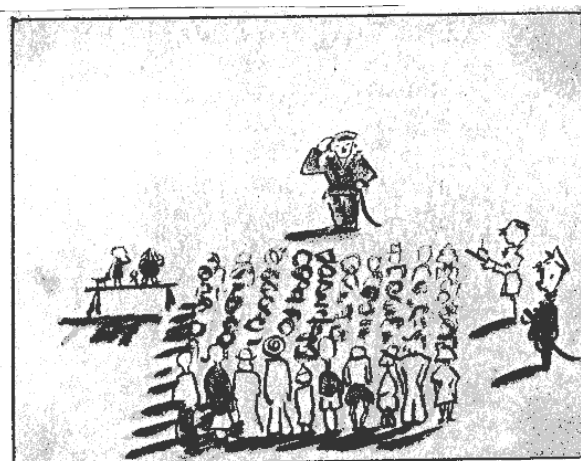
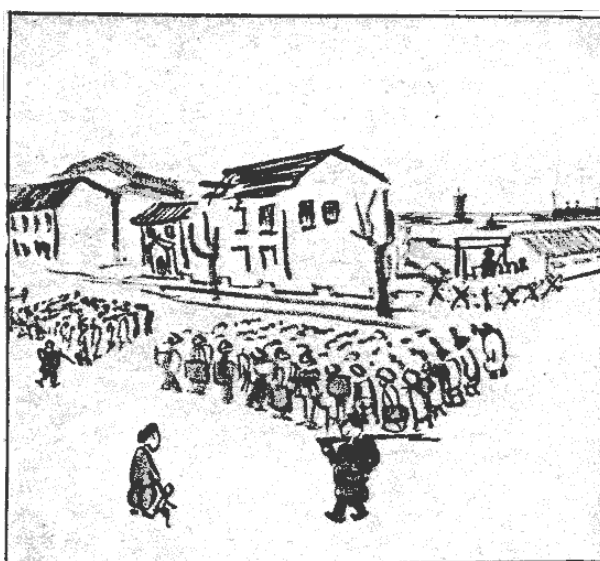
operate under the direction of a Japanese officer. These committees would then elect a member to serve on a council which would represent the interests of the entire community to the Japanese authorities, as well as to a delegate from the Swiss Council who made periodic visits to the camp.

Employing the democratic process in the election of committee members was, at this stage, clearly impractical. Virtually all of us were strangers to one another and, as such, had no intelligent basis on which to cast a vote for anyone. Hence the generally acknowledged or informal leaders of the four major groups in camp from Peking, Tientsin, Tsingtao and the Catholic clergy, would each appoint a member to sit on the nine committees. Later that

year when we had had time to make acquaintances with our fellow internees' regular elections were held.

These committees, presumably designed to care for all the needs of the camp, were designated General Affairs, Discipline, Labor, Education, Supplies, Housing or Quarters, Medical, Engineering and Finance.

Under their direction the entire camp was organized into a work force with every able-bodied individual, including youth, given an assignment. The internees themselves enforced the rules of their own making: If



you're not ill, you'd better be on the job and on time — "No work — No eat." (Manicures didn't last long in camp, and of course there was never any nail polish anyway!) On the registration form we had been required to fill out upon arrival, I, under the heading "work experience," had indicated that I had worked part time as a cook in seminary. Hence I was appointed to one of the three camp kitchens. Christine's assignment was helping to clean and prepare vegetables. With few conveniences or proper appliances, this chore took many hours each day. The task she most disliked was peeling and cutting leeks, especially in the winter when they were frozen. Her hands often became so numb that she couldn't even tell when she'd cut a finger. And all of the women worked standing on a cement floor, often in an inch or two of water. That vegetable crew caught plenty of colds but not a lot of pneumonia so we were all blessed!

Since the preponderance of our camp population was drawn from the professional class, few had the practical skills required for the maintenance of this small city. Gratefully, however, among us was a sprinkling of crafts-men, artisans and skilled laborers versed in the arts of construction, masonry, carpentry, baking, plumbing, etc. These "masters" now began to school novices assigned to their work force. Professional engineers and skilled plumbers had soon trained a corps of apprentices who set about to provide a satisfactory solution to the monumental latrine and bath crises. A shower system was devised and operated by a gang of workers, whose labors with hand pumps sent water to a tower and provided a steady flow, though small at times, to bathers.

Among us were two professional bakers from Peking. Their first project was a 48-hour clinic to train all internees assigned to the bakery in the art of making bread. By the end of the session, these recruits were turning out 400 loaves a day. The bread always had a slightly sour taste, since beer hops was the only leavening agent available. At first we were also troubled by the presence of little black bits (weevils), which we carefully picked out of each slice of bread. But after about a week we didn't even notice them. Perhaps they may have even provided some extra protein!

Few of us who arrived in camp that March had any recent acquaintance with the rigors of manual labor. Denizens of the expatriate world of business and commerce, for the most part, lived a life of shameless luxury surrounded by every imaginable comfort and a small army of Chinese servants to do their bidding. Even missionaries, many of whom had grown up on

farms, employed servants in their homes in China. They had relinquished most labors involving physical exertion to coolies desperately in need of employment and with no means of survival other than that provided by human muscle. This also freed the wives for more time for teaching and mission work.

Now overnight under this new order, bank clerks, city administrators, missionaries and professors were turned into ditch diggers, carpenters, masons, stokers and hospital orderlies. The result was an epidemic of blistered hands, aching backs, sore muscles and tired feet. But undeniably there are rich benefits in subjecting the body to hard labor. Sleep comes easily at night when the body is fatigued, and the mind relaxes in the satisfying knowledge one has put in an "honest day's work" In time, overweight businessmen and missionaries with pot-bellies and sagging jowls, were exhibiting a new trimness and muscle tone. One drug addict who entered Weihsien a virtual derelict gained weight, put on muscle and after a year was fit and rejuvenated. We all rejoiced in his rehabilitation, but his gaining several pounds on camp food made him an oddity.

Manual work is also a healthy leveler and a warm camaraderie grew between once stuffy professors, import executives, and green young missionaries who worked together in the hot sun building a latrine or dormitory extension.

One of the most pressing concerns in the early days of camp was continuing education for the children. After the entire faculty and student body of Chefoo (the China Inland Mission school for missionary children) arrived at Weihsien in the fall of '43, we had more than 400 youngsters under age 18 in our community.

Organizing classes for all the students, kindergarten through 12th grade (the responsibility of the education committee), was a Herculean task indeed. There were virtually no textbooks or equipment and the only regular classrooms on the compound were of necessity being used as dormitories. The dedication and resourcefulness of teachers and staff were a marvel to behold. Yet, regular classes continued until our liberation, and three classes of seniors actually took the Oxford Matriculation Exam.

Many of the students in Chefoo boarding school, when war broke out, were separated from their parents. The teachers were more than ever now not only instructors but surrogate parents, a responsibility they did not take lightly. This noble corps of missionaries resolved that even in prison camp, under the most appalling conditions, they would not relax

standards of decorum and good breeding one whit.

Mary Taylor Previte, the great granddaughter of CIM founder, Hudson Taylor, and her brother, James (later general director of Overseas Missionary Fellowship), were Chefoo high scholars who also became "Weihsienites." She recalls, "Our Chefoo teachers never watered down the standards for learning or decorum. There wasn't one set of standards for the outside world, they said, and another set for concentration camps. You could be eating the most awful glop out of a tin can or a soap dish, but you were to be as refined as the royalty who lived in Buckingham Palace. The rules were clear: sit up straight, don't stuff food into your mouth, don't talk with your mouth full, don't drink when you have food in your mouth, keep your voices down, and don't complain. After all, in kitchen number one where we ate, Saint Paul and Emily Post ranked almost equal. We heard Saint Paul over and over again, '... for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.' We were God's representatives in this concentration camp, our teachers said, and God was not represented well by rudeness."



Thirty six of the Chefoo Girls' School slept on mattresses in the attic of Irwin House in Temple Hill Camp, Chefoo

http://weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/paintings/Chefoo/p_ChefooGirls.htm

Children and youth were not the only students at Weihsien camp. Among the internees were distinguished professors from a dozen or more schools in east China, enough to staff a whole university. Why not, then, have evening classes for adults? Courses were offered in a number of languages, theology, bookkeeping, art, marketing, woodworking, first aid, even sailing. Among our professors were some of the finest Chinese scholars in the world, most notably Dr. Hugh Hubbard of the American Board Mission; Dr. Wilder, a Congregational missionary; and our friend, Dr. J. D. Hayes, a Presbyterian principal of the Peking

Language School. Eager to get on with our language study, Christine enrolled in Conversational Chinese and Character Writing while I studied Introduction to Literary Chinese and Newspaper Chinese. Regrettably the zeal with which we first embarked upon this venture diminished as the months passed. Suffering from malnutrition, we found that after putting in a full day's work at our regular assignments, teachers and students alike lacked energy for the demands of these academic endeavors. After about six months the adult education program was allowed to lapse.

During our years in camp, news from the outside world came to us principally from three sources. The first was the Peking Chronicle, an English language newspaper which old subscribers among the internees continued to receive. Under the Japanese puppet regime this paper was strictly a propaganda vehicle with regular "news" of the U.S. fleet being dispatched to the bottom of the Pacific. It did, however, serve one invaluable purpose. The progress of Allied Forces could easily be charted by noting names of Pacific Islands in which the Imperial Forces had enjoyed their most recent "triumph" The successive mention of the Marshall Islands, Manila, Iwo Jima and Okinawa told us of our troops' approach to Japan. And when the Chronicle reported "thousands of Allied bombers being shot down over Japan," we felt certain that the end of the war was near.

A more reliable source of news was a fellow internee, a White Russian, who was a skilled radio technician and called upon to keep radios of Japanese officers in repair. After fixing the radios, he of course "tested" them and in the process was able to glean regular war news from Allied shortwave broadcasts.

The third source of information was the coolies who almost daily entered the compound to haul away garbage and empty the reeking cesspools. These gentlemen, for obvious reasons, were given a wide berth by our guards. Significant news from Chinese guerilla bands in the area was carried into camp by these couriers, in their nostrils, mouths or concealed in the loathsome night soil kang (drums). As internees brought garbage to the coolies at the bins located in each housing area, small wads of paper bearing the precious inscriptions were surreptitiously transferred. Letters were also smuggled out of camp in airtight metal containers dropped into a barrel of fresh sewage!

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The Peking Chronicle

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No. 4541 Tuesday, 14, August 1945

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5 Dollars

TRIAL OF PETAIN NEARING ITS END

STOCKHOLM, August 13.—At the commencement of Friday's session of the high treason trial against Marshal Petain in Paris, a letter was read from General Bula, at present in Germany but commander of the French troops in Tunis when the British-American attack was made on North Africa, Reuter reports. General Bula explained in his letter that it was he and not the Vichy regime who ordered the French troops to cease resistance.

Louis Lerocq, a retired naval officer, testified that the scuttling of the French fleet in the harbour of Toulon on November 20, 1942, was carried out at the command of Petain.

Andre Lavagne, a former high official in Vichy's Ministry of the Interior, made the surprising declaration that he maintained connections with the resistance movement in France during his tenure office. Marshal Petain had showed himself very friendly towards him and only asked him to make his oath to "the defender of Verdun" and not to the Vichy Chief of State.

Other witnesses also testified in the course of the day.

On Saturday, the 18th day of the trial, Prosecutor Mornet demanded the death sentence for Petain. His speech for the prosecution lasted five hours. He

Red Army Leaders In Far East War Named By Moscow

LISBON, August 13.—Tass reports for the first time that a Russian communiqué revealed that Marshal Alexander Valsilevsky is now Supreme Commander of Far Eastern Soviet troops. He was Chief of Staff before he took charge of the third White Russian front last March and conquered Koenigsberg.

Troops of the first Far Eastern front are under the command of Marshal Kiril Meretzkov, who in 1944 commanded the Soviet troops on the Finnish front.

General Maxim Purkayev who earlier in the war fought on the Smolensk front is now in command of troops of the second Far Eastern front.

Marshal Malinovsky commands troops of the Trans-Baikal front. He commanded the troops that drove through Rumania and fought in the battle of Vienna.

—*Chung Hwa.*
Kwantung Army Bulletin
HSINKING, August 13.—The Kwantung Army in its announcement released yesterday afternoon revealed that the combined Japanese and Manchoukuoan forces are effectively intercepting the Soviet army which invaded the Manchoukuoan and Chosen sectors.

The war situation as announced by the Kwantung Army is as follows:

1. In the northern Chosen and

Emperor Receives Foreign Minister

TOKYO, August 13.—His Majesty the Emperor received in audience Foreign Minister Shigenori Togo at the Imperial Palace at 2.10 o'clock this afternoon.

The Foreign Minister reported to the Throne on matters under his jurisdiction.—*Chung Hwa.*

WAR BULLETIN FROM TOKYO

TOKYO, August 13.—A communiqué released by Imperial Headquarters at 3.30 p.m. Sunday announced:

"(1) Our forces in the Manchoukuo and Chosen sectors in concert with the Manchoukuoan army are now engaged in fierce fighting with the Soviet army which advanced roughly to the line of Yuki, Hunan and Muling on the eastern front and to the vicinities of Hailar, Solum and Lichuan on the western front.

"(2) Our submarine unit attacked an enemy convoy in the waters southeast of Okinawa on the afternoon of August 11 and sank three warcraft."—*Chung Hwa.*

Kanto District

Again attacked

People Must Preserve Peace And Order, Chairman Wang Declares

In view of the prevalence of baseless rumours resulting in a disquietude in the public sentiments, Mr. Wang Yin-tai, Chairman of the North China Political Affairs Commission, has issued under date of August 13 a circular order to all the government organizations in the various Provinces and Municipalities and the general public as a whole urging them to attend to their respective duties and pursuits and threatening the invoking of military law in dealing with those who are found guilty of fabricating rumours or manipulating the foodstuff markets or otherwise committing acts jeopardizing peace and order. The circular order reads textually as follows:

"In view of the prevalence of baseless rumours and the disquietude in public sentiments resulting therefrom, the North China Political Affairs Commission

shouldering the responsibilities of the protection of the people and the pacification of the land hereby notifies the entire staffs of all government organizations belonging to the Commission itself and those in the various Provinces and Municipalities as well to attend carefully to their respective duties and refrain from relaxing in their work. The Commission also cautions the people in the various localities to be particularly careful in attending to their regular pursuits in an unperturbed manner. All such acts as the fabricating of rumours, the agitating of public sentiments, disturbing the monetary market and manipulating foodstuff prices and all else which are liable to prove detrimental to peace and order are strictly forbidden. The leading officials in the governments of the Provinces, Special Municipalities and Special Administrative Areas shall direct the Circuit, District, Municipal and Ward authorities in doing their utmost for the maintenance

Japanese Urged To Stay United; Maintain Calm

TOKYO, August 13.—All metropolitan papers in their editorial columns warned the nation that the darkest moment in the War of Greater East Asia has arrived and urged the people to face the country's worst crisis in history with the utmost calmness and composure.

In a typical editorial the *Yomiuri-Hochi* bluntly said that the United States air attack on Hiroshima with atomic bombs followed by the Russian invasion

"News" in the Peking Chronicle had to be taken with a "grain of salt".

Chapter 6

FOOD

Our first meal when we arrived in Weihsien that bleak night in March, 1943, was a single dish, a most unappetizing soup consisting of pieces of fish — heads, tails and all mixed with stale bread and salt, in plenty of water.

Once the kitchens got organized and our cooks were trained, the fare improved somewhat. Since our camp was not located in a war zone, supplies of grain, vegetables and sometimes pork, beef and horse meat were obtainable from Chinese merchants by the Japanese. Thus, we did not suffer the near starvation so common in other P.O.W. camps in Asia.

As the war progressed, however, supplies dwindled and hunger was a constant companion. Food became an obsession. "A conversation on almost any subject," one internee remembers, "would eventually get around to food." A favorite game was, "If you could go into a restaurant and order anything at all, what would you like?" One young missionary recalls

that his favorite fantasy was going to a Howard Johnson's and ordering juicy hamburgers and copious quantities of milk shakes.

"Give us this day our daily bread" took on new meaning in that our diet consisted largely of bread, a commodity that for our first year in camp was not rationed. With more than enough flour for the daily bread supplement, the cooks also made noodles and dumplings. In October, 1943, I mentioned in my journal that Dr. Anderson, a professor in a China university, estimated that 83 percent of our nourishment came from white flour.

Along with bread, however, there were supplies of Chinese grains. Although we virtually never had rice we did receive millet occasionally, as well as a coarse sorghum-like grain called "kaoliang" which the Chinese grew primarily to feed pigs. Since any food could be made to go further by watering it down, our menu was replete with soups, stews and porridges.

A typical day's menu in camp was as follows: Breakfast — bread, porridge consisting of leftover bread (usually stale) mixed with water (no milk or

sugar), "lu tou" (very small dried green Chinese beans) or kaoliang; Lunch (our main meal of the day) — usually bread and stew (generally referred to as SOS — "same old stew"). Now and then there was relief from the stew, in an occasional "dry meal" consisting of some kind of meat, fried potatoes and gravy. Supper — soup and bread.

Each internee was entitled to a ration of about one tablespoon of sugar a week. By common consent we agreed that the entire allotment be turned over to the cooks, who could then occasionally furnish us with a dessert of inestimable delight. We cherish memories of these culinary oases in those bleak deserts of dietary sameness. From the bakery came such creations as shortbread, gingerbread, even cakes. Amazingly, wedding cakes were baked for all three of the weddings that took place in camp. These were wondrous concoctions to us, though looking back, I doubt that they bore much relationship to modern America's tiered masterpieces.

Attempts were made in a variety of ways to find additional nourishment to supplement our diets. Some discovered weeds growing around the compound which when cooked resembled a coarse spinach. Eggs, though later obtained through the black market (more about this later), were at first a rarity. Sandra, along with the other children, was allotted about two eggs a month or as the Japanese could obtain them. To prolong the pleasure and nutrition of these treasures, Christine fashioned a concoction by mixing the egg with "tang shi" (kaoliang molasses). Used as a spread to top our bread, the food value of that egg could be extended several days.

To supplement the bone meal which we brought into camp (but ran out of almost a year before we were freed), we pounced upon eggshells discovered on a trash heap, dried them for days on our window sill, then rolled them as finely as possible with a glass. Sandra consumed about a quarter teaspoon mixed daily in her food. (Her adult teeth are now as strong and beautiful as any whose childhood was spent in "replete" America.)

There was a critical need for milk, especially for small children. When the commandant was appealed to, surprisingly he arranged to have a quantity of milk brought regularly into camp. This was properly sterilized in the hospital kitchen and distributed to children under three years of age, enough for each

child to have about a cup of milk daily, though not available every day.



Kaoliang 粟



As we entered 1944, food supplies progressively dwindled. Bread was rationed to two slices a meal and the quality of food likewise deteriorated. What meat we got was half rotten and of questionable origin, generally thought to be either mule or horse. The variety of vegetables was reduced to

cabbages; large, coarse, unpalatable, waterlogged white radishes; and supplies of egg-plant, which when cooked turned into a repulsive purple mush without seasoning except a bit of salt.

Everyone lost weight. Those who came into camp overweight lost as much as 100 or more pounds. Some weighing 170 or 180 were soon dropping to 125 or lower. Though we were not starving, with the interminable progression of the war and the prospect of repatriation an ever-receding mirage, the specter of serious malnutrition loomed before us, large and threatening.

In Chapter 11 Christine describes our last Christmas in camp when she was in the hospital. It doesn't seem "fitting" in that part of the story to speak of food, so here she adds a line or two while we're on the subject:

While talking about Weih sien meals and menus, I can't help but recall what was to me the most impossible, most inedible portion set before me during our almost four years of prison life. And in my state ingesting it was not an option but an absolute "must."

The doctor had earlier said that I could probably leave the hospital by New Year's Day but that was not to be, for in my weakened condition I had now contracted typhoid fever which, in the end, meant almost a three-month stay.

The typhoid began with days (and nights) of high temperature and chills. I shook so hard that the patients in beds on either side of me couldn't sleep because I was shaking their beds too. Then I lapsed into a coma which lasted about two weeks. When I came to the doctors were in an almost constant huddle, trying to find something I could eat — not that I wanted anything. For once I was not hungry. Of course, there was no hospital equipment for I.V. feeding so what I got by way of nourishment was simply whatever they could give me by mouth. Regular camp food was definitely too coarse since it

irritated the myriad of tiny sores covering the inner lining of the intestines. This did not particularly trouble me since I had no appetite anyway. But the doctors, of course, knew they had to get some kind of food in me, and quickly. What they came up with was corn-starch, a food sufficiently bland for my organs to handle. So cornstarch — thick, gray blobs of it became my daily menu. It looked just like the glop my mother used to cook up for Dad's shirt collars! That was it, three times a day for three weeks. I really struggled with it. The taste and look of it was equally revolting. The staff — bless their hearts, worked diligently to find an incentive to help me get it down. Somebody thought of the inducement of giving me a level teaspoon of sugar on "the blob," for one meal, every third day! This was long before Mary Poppins' "A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down." So I ate — so I lived.

In the meantime there were other concerns. First, my hair! It was coming out in bunches. If I'd had my wits about me, I'd have said, "Shave it!" (Then maybe it would have come back in, curly!) But since I couldn't sit up, they just rolled my head around on the pillow and snipped it off, leaving two-inch tufts all around.

And then, it seems, I was developing a different strain of typhoid. I was covered with a rash from the soles of my feet to my scalp. Not an inch of my body was clear. This meant that all the doctors in camp wanted to see me. They stood in line outside the screen around my bed, awaiting their turn and discussing my symptoms. This extra attention I could handle except that I was very weak and soon tired of trying to answer their questions. But most tormenting of all was the itching, all over and all at once. The nurses were sympathetic but could offer no medication that would help. Their best solution was pai kan — a cheap Chinese wine which left me positively reeking. This did not make me the most popular patient in the ward! The pai kan did, however, soothe the infuriating itch. The benefits, though, quickly wore off so I often begged for another "dunking."

But, thanks to my Father's healing hand and all the loving care of my fellow internees, I survived. I left the hospital on March 8, and it was so good to be

home with Meredith and Sandra in our little 9 by 12. My weight had dropped to 93 pounds, and with my less-than-petite frame I looked a bit gaunt. But we were together, and though we didn't know it then we had less than six months to freedom.

Meredith continues:

Blessed supplements to dining hall fare came on occasion from three sources. Comfort money, which was advanced to us at intervals through the Red Cross (I'll speak more of that later), could be spent in the canteen, a small shop which periodically carried limited quantities of food stuffs. We were especially grateful for Chinese dried dates (which gave a bit of the sweetness we so much craved), peanut oil, and sometimes a ration of peanuts which we made into a chunky spread for our bread. Once, however, we were mistakenly sold fish oil which tasted much like cod liver oil. With this we spoiled three rations of peanuts we'd been hoarding to make a spread. But, of course, we ate it.

Secondly, on occasion, internees were permitted to receive packages. The arrival of Red Cross parcels was, apart from word of war's end, the most exciting news ever received in camp. These beautiful cardboard-encompassed bonanzas were supplied by the American Red Cross.



These magnificent gifts measured almost 3 feet long, 1 foot wide, and 18 inches high and weighed 50 pounds. Inside was a treasure trove of incredibly wonderful things: a pound of powdered milk, four small tins of butter, three of Spam, eight ounces of cheese, sugar, two four-ounce tins of powdered coffee, jam and a small package of dried fruit — either raisins or prunes — and four packs of Lucky Strike cigarettes.

So prized were these marvelous gifts from heaven that one internee wrote, "To each of us, this parcel was real wealth in a more basic sense than most of the symbols of wealth in civilized life. No amount of stocks or bonds, no Cadillacs or country estates, could possibly equal the actual wealth represented by this pile of food, for that food could prevent hunger for four months. A Red Cross parcel made its possessor an astoundingly rich man."

Mixed in with the food was a considerable complement of men's clothing. Curiously, however, although there were supplies of shoes, underwear,



respect, Weihsien was no exception.

With our poor diet and need for a variety of commodities unobtainable in camp, there was powerful motivation to make contact with local Chinese merchants. By nature the shrewdest business dealers on earth, our Chinese friends saw in this an opportunity for mutual profit.

During the early days of camp, the general disorder and lack of vigilance by the guards, and the fact that the compound wall was topped with but a single strand of barbed wire, provided opportunity for contact with enterprising merchants. These men

would stand outside the lightly guarded barrier, informing us that for a price they could supply us with everything from sugar and condensed milk to eggs (our all-important source of protein). In this way, I made the acquaintance of merchant Han.

I did not lightly embark on my career as a black marketeer nor without some initial pangs of conscience. Contact with Chinese, I knew, was strictly forbidden. And trading across the wall was clearly in defiance of camp rules.

Still, as we faced the daily struggle for survival, I came to believe that it was more my moral duty to use means at my disposal to relieve suffering and

shirts, even a few coats, we never received any trousers. This gave rise to some amusing remarks, particularly from the Britishers, one of whom remarked, "Doesn't anyone wear pants in your country, old boy?" But Christine wondered why the men complained because they had no trousers, while the women internees never received a single piece of any kind of clothing.

These parcels came from the American Red Cross and were designated for American prisoners of war. Needless to say when these blessed bundles arrived, we were often the objects of envy by the many non-Americans in the camp. For the most part, however, American internees made it a point to share the contents of the packages with their non-American friends and neighbors.

Later, we received a load of smaller packages from the U.S. Red Cross — and this time there were enough for everyone to have one.

The third means of quelling hunger pangs came from food from Chinese merchants, in a secretive and strictly illegal "over-the-wall" enterprise in which I figured as one of the leading camp entrepreneurs. In most penal systems throughout the world an amazing amount of commerce is carried on between prisoners and the

[illegible]

save human life than to adhere to the laws imposed upon us by our captors.

--- James H. Pyke records in *White Wolves In China* (page 143, printed in 1980 as a memoir of Fred and Francis Pyke) that "the difference between survival and disease or starvation was the operation of the black market. Fred Pyke was a very moral person, punctilious about right and wrong, but he worked on the black market chiefly because of 450 children in camp. Their whole lives would have been affected without proper nourishment and the black market did provide peanuts and eggs." ---

Thus, the "Helsby Company" was formed and my over-the-wall marketing activities begun. My partner in this crime of benevolence was Hilda Hale, a mother of two daughters whose husband in prewar days was head of Cook's Travel Service. She was my lookout, and her room served as a temporary warehouse for the stashing of our goods.

One may wonder at this point what we used for currency in these transactions. A word of explanation is in order. According to regulations of the Geneva Convention, civilian P.O.W.s were to receive the equivalent of \$5 a month, designated "comfort money." These funds came from the Swiss Consul and were intended for the purchase of toilet paper, toothpaste, sundries and occasional food items obtainable from the camp canteen which was operated by internees under Japanese supervision. For the three Helsbys our allotment came to a fairly generous \$15 a month. Unfortunately, however, squabbles between Japanese and the Swiss government over rates of exchange impeded the flow of this allowance. We seldom received comfort money two months in a row, and at one point went six months with-out a payment.

Another problem soon developed — inflation. The FRB (Federal Reserve Bank) currency, in which we received our comfort money, had a fairly stable 4 to 1 U.S. dollar value in 1943. By 1944, however, it had been devaluated a whopping 600 percent. The slight increases in the comfort allowance never began to keep pace with this galloping inflation.

At first, over-the-wall business was done with FRB dollars, but when money ran out the merchants incredibly agreed to take promissory notes in both U.S. and British currency, to be paid after the war. Toward the end, watches and rings were bartered.

In our black-market business, our confederates were Chinese coolies who regularly came into camp to empty cesspools, haul away garbage and do menial tasks. Acting as couriers they would secretly carry

notes and orders for goods back and forth between internees and Chinese merchants. At other times, they would actually carry into camp large quantities of goods concealed in the big metal "kangs"

My contact point with Han was a felicitous jog in the compound wall immediately in back of the guard tower and not a stone's throw from our barracks, room No. 14/7. By climbing up on the drain pipe I could peer over the 12-foot wall and on occasion speak directly with him.

Once I had taken an order for eggs, sugar, milk and other commodities from my fellow internees, I would laboriously write the aggregate amounts in Chinese characters and convey the memo to merchant Han. By a coolie go-between, he would inform me of the time of delivery. Our preference was a dark, moonless night or times of inclement weather, when we knew the guards would be less vigilant and we would be less likely to be seen or heard.

At the designated hour, I would slip quietly along the wall to the rendezvous point with Hilda keeping watch. A low whistle was her signal that a guard was approaching.

A knock on the wall told me that Han had arrived. My response was "Wei Wei" (yes or hello) to which Han would reply "Laile Laile" (I've come, I've come). At this point I would slip my money over the wall into his outstretched hand. Then in a few minutes I would see his men begin to materialize from behind the grave mounds in the adjacent field. Hastily now the goods were hoisted in wicker baskets atop the wall and slid under the barbed wire into our waiting hands. Fearful of being caught with any of this store of goods in our rooms, we delivered the supplies to our buyers as quickly as possible, often within minutes of the time we received them. If some things remained for daylight delivery, Christine, holding anything but eggs under her jacket or coat, could get past the guards with less suspicion.

Two cardinal rules we adhered to from the outset: we never did business in either liquor or cigarettes nor did we personally profit from the exchange, charging our fellow internees exactly what we paid merchant Han.

We were but one of several "companies" engaged in this important enterprise. Most notable perhaps was "Wade and Company" who operated at the south end of the compound. They did a brisk business, not only in eggs, but also in pai kar (a kind of rice wine) and other spirits in great demand by many in our community. Wade's most unlikely partner was a remarkable Catholic priest, Father Scanlon, of

Australian-Irish ancestry. He was a rotund little man with a shock of red hair. In the evenings while fellow monks posted themselves at strategic points as lookouts, Father Scanlon knelt beside the wall apparently engaged in evening prayers. When Japanese guards passed they observed him with his prayer book in hand chanting loudly in Latin.

Scanlon had managed to work a brick loose at the base of the wall and through this opening his contact, a Christian woman named Mrs. Kang, would with the help of her little boys slip him large quantities of eggs, which he would then conceal under his flowing, brown monk's robes. In time, Scanlon and Wade became the chief egg supplier for the camp.

His operation flourished for months until one fateful evening, in the midst of his activities, a Japanese guard approached. Though warned by his lookouts of the pending danger, Scanlon was unable to get word to Mrs. Kang to halt the flow of eggs which she continued hurriedly shoving through the opening and under his robes.

In desperation, Scanlon commenced a loud recitation of his "prayers," all the while calling his brothers in Latin. But too late. At this most inopportune time, the guard, in an unusually friendly mood, stopped to engage him in conversation. Still the eggs kept coming, until finally the sound of cracking shells and a tell-tale mess of yokes flowing out from beneath Scanlon's robes gave him away. With a shout of rage and wild gesticulations, the soldier hauled the monk off to the guard house.

When news of Scanlon's arrest circulated, there was dark speculation about his fate. Would he be shot? Possibly tortured? When authorities declared, however, that the priest's punishment for his crimes would be two weeks in solitary confinement, they were baffled by the smiles and muffled laughter their announcement provoked. They did not know as we did that Scanlon, a Trappist monk, had spent most of the past 25 years in a small cell under a vow of silence.

Though Scanlon was safely behind locked doors, the Japanese discovered they were not easily done with this pestilent fellow. At night he made it his custom to sing his Latin prayers in a booming voice. Guards, housed in a nearby building and trying to sleep, had little appreciation for this show of piety. Yet possessing the Asian's typical superstition and awe of religious ritual, they were hesitant to forbid these clearly obligatory "holy exercises." As a result, after one week's incarceration Scanlon was released.



BLACK MARKET WALL (EAST)

The building in the picture would be the morgue, and was also the place where the trappist monk, Father Scanlan, was confined after he was caught buying eggs in a "black market" operation. At the time of his confinement there was a funeral for a priest who had died of cancer, and I was assigned the task of sneaking down from the burial ground (the vantage point of the artist) to the small building and passing a flask of water to Father Scanlan. The feat was successfully accomplished.

When he exited the guard house, he received a hero's welcome with a chorus of joyful shouts and cheers. Escorted back to his quarters, he was followed by the Salvation Army marching band playing a spirited number!

Though for us internees the penalty for black-market activities was usually two weeks solitary confinement, an experience which I was destined to share, our heroic Chinese friends often helped at the risk of their very lives. One coolie trying to get goods to us atop the wall was electrocuted on the high voltage, barbed-wire fence. The Japanese authorities left his corpse hanging for days as a grim warning to all aspiring black marketeers. Others of our Chinese cohorts, more fortunate, were merely beaten up. Two, however, were taken outside the compound and within earshot executed by a firing squad. Another, found carrying contraband goods, was seized by the arms and legs, his body swung like a battering ram against the brick wall until his skull was a bloody pulp.

In 1944, the change in the chief officer in charge of the guards brought a crackdown which meant an end to our black market business. The motivation for this we soon learned, far from being any concern for maintaining the integrity of neither camp rules nor increased malice for the internee miscreants was simply greed. With the progression of the war and inflation, our captors, too, were finding themselves increasingly hard pressed for cash. In the black-market business they saw lucrative opportunity for

personal advantage. Thus business continued as usual, but now the middlemen were our Japanese guards, who like syndicate bosses fought among themselves for choice customers and the larger share of the trade.

Before leaving the subject of food, let me quote a typical entry in my diary, this for October 26, 1943:

The 23rd was a great day — our day. I was trying all week to get two chickens as a surprise for Christine to celebrate our anniversary three years in China. It was only on Friday I was able to place the order with merchant Han. I got up early Saturday morning full of hope that the order would somehow get through. And yet, there was really little chance, for the Japs have been keeping close vigil.

I climbed up the drain, high enough to peer over the wall, and soon saw Han coming. The coast was clear. I told him to quickly come with the groceries. Soon they began to pile in — two chickens, two bottles of peanut oil, 250 eggs, 40 tins of strawberry jam, 30 pounds of sugar — a total of \$1020 FRB (or U.S. \$255). Business was just finished when the guard appeared. He had a strong suspicion we had been "dealing," for a close watch was kept on Hilda's room where the goods had quickly been stored.

Coming to our room proudly carrying the chickens, I found that Christine had gone to the hospital for Sandra's breakfast. She had thoughtfully saved a chocolate bar from last summer and had left it as a gift — a real gift these days. A card on it read, "Welcome To China! Happy 23rd Sweetheart." I placed the chickens in a basin, transferred the card to the chickens' feet and left with our food carrier to get our breakfast from the dining hall. Christine was happily surprised and they were a real treat. The first chicken in many months! We made chicken salad for a little party that evening and in addition had several meals of chicken, rice and gravy. (This was one of the rare occasions when we had received a small portion of rice from the canteen.)

Friday, I baked a small cake for the occasion. We had some walnuts issued to us and were able to make a chocolate icing which included chopped nuts! It was a delightful change. In the evening Hayes, Cotterill, Ditmanson, Marjorie Monaghan, K. Porter, M. Scott came in and we enjoyed games and eats. A very full tea. (It was times like these which helped us keep our sanity and momentarily forget about the stress.)

Sunday was a full day. The 11 a.m. service was splendid. Dr. Howie, medical missionary of the CIM, spoke on Ezekiel 33: "Son of man I have appointed thee a watchman. . . . If we fail to warn the wicked, their blood is required at our hands" — what a great responsibility. About 40 present. Went to prayer and open-air meeting at 3 p.m. At the 4:30 service in the church Dr. Martin spoke — not very inspiring to me.

We led the evening hymn-sing. Lights were out and few came. But by candle light we sang the favorites from memory. Christine and I sang, "Back of the Clouds." (See words at end of chapter.) We used the double chorus "In My Heart There Rings a Melody" and "Sunshine and Rain." We also used the hymn story of "It Is Well With My Soul."

BACK OF THE CLOUDS

By Carolyn R. Freeman

Never fear tho' shadows dark around your path may fall;
Do not let your heart be troubled;
From His throne in heaven, God is watching one and all, He
will ever care for you.

Chorus:

Back of the clouds the sun is always shining.
After the storms your skies will all be blue;
God has prepared a rosy-tinted lining,
Back of the clouds it's waiting to shine thru.

Winter long is over and the spring has gone her way,
Often have the storm clouds gathered,
But the rain has only made the blossoms look more gay,
Given earth a brighter hue.

Keep the light of hope eternal dwelling in your heart,
Rest upon the Father's promise,
And you will find that care and trouble quickly will depart,
Heaven's peace will enter in.

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REPATRIATION

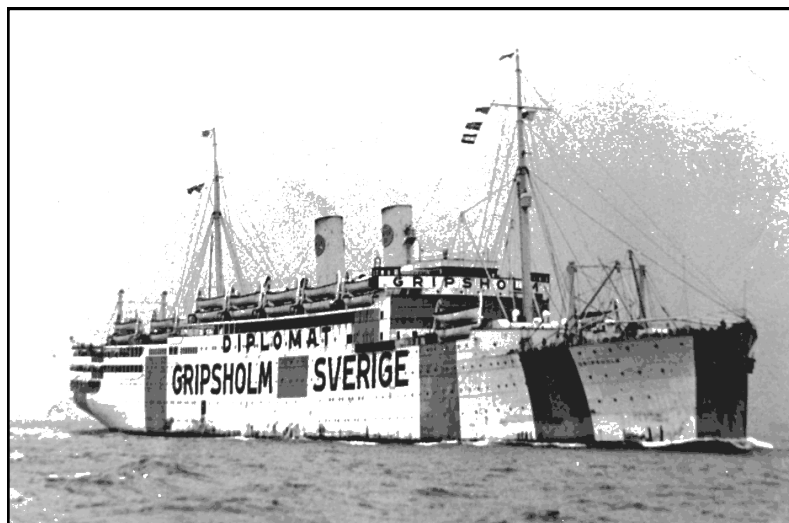
Late in the summer of 1943 rumors began to circulate about a pending prisoner exchange which would mean the repatriation of a large number of civilian P.O.W.s in China. One group had actually gone home while we were still in Peking so there was good reason to believe that a second exchange would be successfully worked out.

The list of internees selected for repatriation on the Swedish ship S.S. Gripsholm included the names of 200 Americans and 89 Canadians. With throbbing hearts we scanned that fateful manifesto for names of OMS missionaries. The names of Annie Kartoizian, Mary Maness, Harry and Emily Woods and their children leaped out at us, and there were others. In fact, every OMS American missionary held in all three of the China internment camps was on that page with the exception of the three Helsbys!"

---"A British family, the Richard Hassels, also remained in the Shanghai camp for the duration of the war.---

Our hearts sank. How to account for this omission? One possible answer was that since I was of military age I was to remain in prison to keep me out of combat. And Christine had made it clear that under no circumstances would she and Sandra go home without me. Yet this was not entirely plausible since other young men in their 20s were, in fact, on the list. Another explanation was that camp authorities were aware of my over-the-wall business and had black-listed me. Whatever the reason, we must believe that God, in His gracious wisdom and kind providence, had willed that the Helsbys remain prisoners of war in Weih sien for two more years.

It was a poignant moment when we remaining internees waved a solemn, tearful farewell to the parting friends and colleagues leaving the old camp for Shanghai, the Gripsholm and blessed freedom in their homelands. The Japanese permitted us to sit on



top of the wall (the extra strands of electrified, barbed wire had not yet been put in place) as we watched the repatriates crawl up into the military trucks. Not long afterwards they disappeared down the dusty, unpaved road. We waved to them as long as they were in view, tears coursing down our cheeks.

How we would miss Harry and Emily Woods — our leaders, mentors, confidants and friends. With them gone we felt suddenly like small, frightened children who had been abandoned by their parents.

"How is it possible," I wrote in my journal, "to feel lonely in a camp of 1600 people?"

"Although our friends and fellow missionaries had left and we felt very alone," Christine remembers. "The Lord spoke so clearly to me and said, 'Just because they have gone, doesn't mean I've gone. I haven't left camp. I'm still here with you.'"

Japanese guards, sensing our crushing disappointment, sought to cheer us. "Don't be sad," they said. "There will be another repatriation soon. You'll be in the next group." Cheering words that bolstered our spirits a bit, but it was a blessing that we did not know we had just witnessed the last Weih sien repatriation until the end of the war.

The camp population was further reduced when the following month our 380 Catholic clerics, fathers and nuns, were relocated in Peking. Rumor had it that a special agreement had been worked out between Tokyo and Rome whereby Catholic missionary P.O.W.s in war zones would be accorded

GRIPSHOLM SAILS FROM MARMAGAO

INTERESTING SCENE IN DISEMBARKING

Chung Hwa-Domei

LISBON, October 23.—A report from Marmagao said that the exchange ship *Gripsholm* sailed at 9 20 a.m. yesterday for Port Elizabeth, South Africa, where she was due in 11 days.

The repatriates from East Asia are scheduled to arrive in the United States early in December. With the exception of several sick persons, all the Americans left the Japanese exchange ship *Teia Maru* at 9 30 a.m. on October 19. The Japanese disembarked from the *Gripsholm* with the next few minutes.

The disembarking repatriates presented an interesting picture. The Americans once leaving the Japanese vessel became extremely excited and talkative. On the other hand, the Japanese were in a picture of perfect composure. There was a strongly contrasted picture the when the repatriates boarded their home going vessels.



The nearly 1200 American and Canadian repatriates aboard the Gripsholm broke into the strains of "God Bless America" as the exchange liner passed the Statue of Liberty on the way to her Pier F berth at Jersey City, N. J., this week. Crowds of excited relatives and friends awaited near the dock to welcome them home on the arrival of the vessel.

preferential treatment.

But the vacancies left by the departing groups were soon filled by the arrival of two additional contingents in October and December. The first group numbered 230 and was the entire student body, staff and faculty of the CIM (China Inland Mission) school for missionary children in Chefoo. This throng of students made for a lively addition to camp life. Since most of the youngsters had been separated from their parents by the war, missionary families in camp agreed to "adopt" a student, providing parental love, guidance and emotional support. Our adopted kids were two delightful teenagers, Ruth and Clifford (not brother and sister), who became very dear to us.

The second group of new arrivals consisted of 120 Italians, who living and working in China had refused to support the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini and took an oath of loyalty to King Emmanuel. The Italians were assigned the smaller, and in our eyes preferred, number three kitchen and dining hall which had up to this time been our domain. Reluctantly we joined the much larger community assigned to kitchen number one.

Before leaving Harry Woods had asked me to take over leadership of the weekly church services he had started. And as the last OMS missionaries in China from the U.S., we were to be the guardians of OMS' interests in that field, whatever that meant. To my 27-year-old mind, these were sobering responsibilities. I resolved to keep a journal to serve as an official record of our activities which I would, hopefully, present to mission authorities at the end of the war. So as our narrative continues we will quote entries from it, interspersed with commentary and words of explanation.

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Chapter 8

SOLITARY

March 4, 1944, is a day that will forever be engraved on my memory.

My marketing business was flourishing. As the war dragged on the quantity and quality of food in the dining hall deteriorated, creating an ever greater demand for over-the-wall foodstuffs. Increased need and demand for the goods drove prices higher and higher. Sugar, the principle commodity, was selling at \$220 FRB (U.S. \$11.58) for six and a quarter pounds. Still, orders kept coming. Though we had told Han to keep each bill under \$3000 FRB dollars, the previous week we had done \$18,000 FRB dollars worth of business, even accumulating a surplus of eight packages of sugar.

Han arrived at the wall early the morning of the 4th. I instructed him to return with the goods after the 8 a.m. roll call when I would hoist my signal flag, a piece of white cloth. Roll call over, I cautiously retreated to our rendezvous point and sent up my flag. From my perch on the drain pipe behind the guard house, I could see Han and his helpers almost immediately start running across the field toward the wall. All were burdened down with supplies. When he arrived I slipped a wad of bills, \$680 FRB, under the barbed wire into the merchant's outstretched hands.

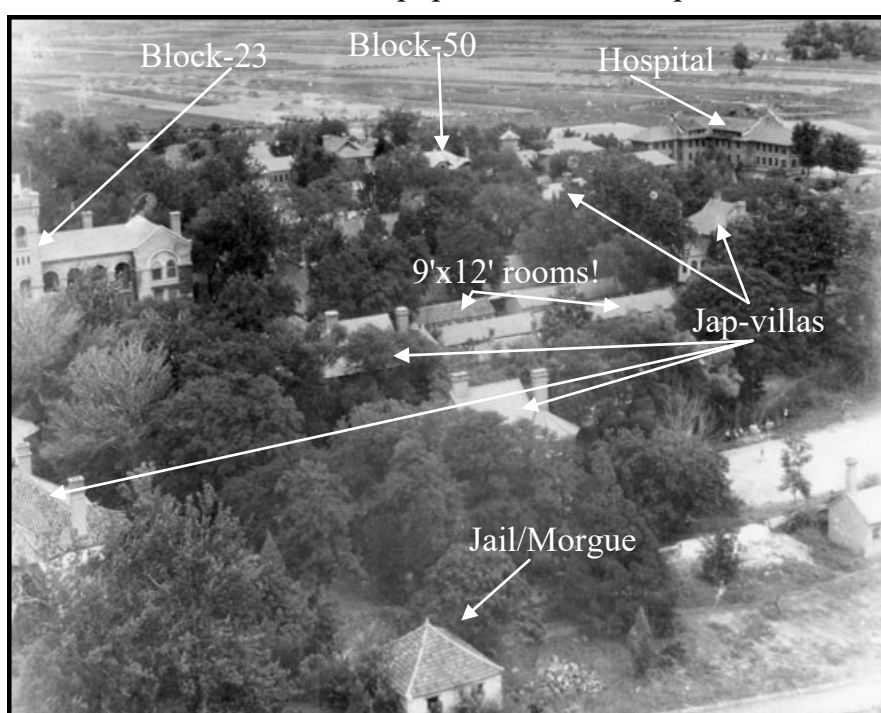
Now in a moment, I thought, the packages will begin to flow across the wall. When the goods did not arrive, however, I began to feel uneasy. Climbing back up on my perch, I surveyed the situation to learn the reason for the delay. Suddenly I saw Han's

helpers scampering in every direction. At the same time I could hear the thundering footsteps and bellows of rage coming from Japanese guards in pursuit of the miscreants.

Instantly I hauled down the flag, jumped to the ground and called to my lookouts that the deal was off. Stuffing the white cloth in my pocket I started toward our quarters, struggling to affect the casual gait of a man on a leisurely morning stroll. But the next moment I found myself looking into the surly visage of a guard who pointed to the bulge in my pocket and demanded an explanation. From the cold smile on his face as he examined the flag, it was clear he knew all too well what purpose it served.

He started to escort me to the guard house, but then evidently remembering the unclaimed bonanza of sugar and supplies abandoned outside the wall, he hastily took my name and darted toward the front gate. The brief reprieve gave me time to hurry back to our quarters and "clean house," distributing our stored goods among our friends before the inevitable search began.

At 10:30 a.m. I was summoned to the office of the commandant for the grand inquisition. Interpreting was our "friend," **Saborwal**, a burly man of unknown nationality fluent in Japanese, who was clearly serving our captors in return for sundry favors. Saborwal was not the most popular man in camp.



I soon learned that the Japanese had the story of my buying activities well in hand, obviously obtained from inside intelligence. My sentence was two weeks in solitary confinement without books (although at the end they relented allowing me to take my Bible). At 12:30 I entered my cell, a small six by eight room in what had originally been the servant's quarters.

The kang (Chinese brick bed) covered with a single blanket occupied two-thirds of the floor space, leaving me little room to move about. Surveying my new home I saw immediately that it was far from escape-proof. Although the door was secured with a huge lock, the frame around the barred window was flimsy enough and would have easily yielded to a few stout blows. But there was little point in escape. Where could one hide in the confines of the small compound? And, of course, the authorities knew exactly where I lived.

I slumped on the hard bed and looked around a bit more carefully at my little domain. This was no Sheraton for sure! There was no electric light and worse, no heat. The penetrating winter cold was already chilling my bones. At night temperatures dropped as low as 20 degrees (minus 6½ degrees Celsius) turning my drinking water to ice. And since there were no panes in the window I got the full benefit of the dust storms frequent at that time of year. Often when I awoke in the morning it was to find myself completely covered with a layer of fine grit, in my eyes, nose, and on my lips.

My captors did not allow friends to visit, but many supplied warm clothing and blankets which Christine was given permission to bring me from time to time. This they were only too glad to do, recognizing that I'd been "sticking my neck out" supplying them with sugar and other supplies at considerable personal risk. Mrs. Bruce, wife of the Chefoo school headmaster, sent me an excellent fleece-lined foot warmer, a blessed relief after that first bitter night which left my feet frostbitten. Hugh Hubbard loaned me his quilted Chinese trousers and our dear friend, John Hayes, supplied me with his long padded gown, his father's sleeping bag and extra blankets. Wonderful friends!

The Japanese permitted Christine to bring me food once a day. Of course my meal preparation and supply was entirely in the hands of fellow internees. As a result, far from suffering from meager prison fare, I now benefited from the generosity of fellow internees, eager to express in a tangible way their sympathy and appreciation for my procurements on their behalf. Not only did I receive unprecedented quantities of food, but also an extra allowance of an egg a day — unheard of! More than this, Christine outdid herself preparing special treats — a tiny cake, cookies, even a small lemon pie. This, again, was possible through the help of friends who supplied her with sugar and other ingredients.

Sleeping 14 hours a day and enjoying the best fare I had known in three years, I actually gained 12 pounds during my two-week confinement.

Daily I thanked God that I had been permitted to have my Bible. I spent long hours reading and rereading favorite scriptures, particularly the Epistles, Hebrews, Acts and the Psalms. I memorized most of Romans 8 and Psalm 34, passages which took on special meaning for me in those circumstances. Friends smuggled in other reading material, old copies of Readers Digest and a novel by Sabatini. But when the guard caught me reading the novel, he confiscated all reading matter including my Bible. Three days later, however, John Hayes managed to get his Fisherman's New Testament in to me.

I found other diversions to pass the long days. Hubbard had sent me a list of Chinese characters which I practiced writing over and over. I developed a keen appreciation for simple things I had long taken for granted. I watched, totally charmed, a family of birds that congregated outside my small cell window. Since I had so much time, one friend asked Christine to take in some four-ply wool with which she wanted to knit a pair of socks for her husband. I split it into two-ply and sent back to her two good-sized balls. Relying on memory I managed to draw a fairly accurate sketch of the Weih sien compound, though, as Christine pointed out, my "south-pawedness" had really shown up in that I'd carefully put all buildings that were on the left side of the gate on the right and vice versa. No one could possibly have found anything in camp from that map, unless they held it up to a mirror.

Christine's Story:

When Meredith was put into solitary confinement I knew my greatest need was prayer. That first night, of course, Sandra and I were alone. She was almost three and a half now and needed some explanation. "Daddy is going to be gone for a while," I told her (at that time I didn't know how long he would be imprisoned), "but God is with us and He's with Daddy too and will bring him back to us soon."

After she fell asleep I lay in the darkness thinking, asking for wisdom, and praying for my husband's protection. Though the guards were usually humane enough, once they started drinking saki (rice wine) as they often did at night, anything could happen. Over and over I kept reminding myself — "but God . . . but God!" That night we had a horrendous thunder and wind storm and part of the compound wall collapsed. People I met the next day said, "See what happens

when they pick on someone who is fine, upright and helpful to us? The Lord has shown them that He is still in control." And, of course, the guards hurriedly called outside workmen to begin the rebuilding, fearful that some of us might happily find an escape route.

Every morning about 11:30 I took Meredith his allotment of food. Since the lockup where he was held was off limits to internees, I was always accompanied by a guard on this errand. After the man removed the padlock from Meredith's cell and I handed him the three-tiered, metal lunch box, the guard would deliberately position himself between us. Any attempt to talk or to touch one another elicited a surly growl.

We did, however, find a way to communicate. In the lid of the lunch pail under the handle was a small declivity, almost an inch wide and three-fourths inch deep. Into this compartment I slipped a note along with a one-inch stub of a pencil. While Meredith ate he would extract my note and insert one of his own. We learned how precious a few words of communication are from a loved one. Even scribbled words on a scrap of paper concealed in a lunch pail brought immeasurable joy and kept hope alive.

The brusque treatment we received from the guards was marked by one memorable exception. His name was Mr. Koga. We later learned that as a lad he had attended a mission school in Japan. When Koga unlocked Meredith's cell he would actually allow me to go in for a few precious moments alone with my husband, while he stood outside throwing rocks at a wall or amusing himself in some way. After Meredith's release, this unlikely friend came to our home while we were at roll call and left gifts on our table. Once it was two eggs. Another time he left us what, in his eyes, must have been the ultimate gift — a whole bottle of saki. This, Meredith returned to him with profuse thanks and apologies explaining, as best he could, that we were abstainers.

March 18, the day Meredith was released, was the nearest thing to resurrection I expect to experience this side of eternity. The fact that this emancipation, his return to the land of the living, happened on his birthday made it all the more special.

That noon, the hour of his release, about fifty friends and "customers" gathered in the yard in front of our house to sing Happy Birthday. In the evening the three of us had a blessed reunion supper with special friends, Mary Scott, Margorie Monohan, and Marcy Ditmanson. Our friends dug deep in their carefully hoarded, under-their-beds, treasure boxes and provided a tin of salmon and a bit of cocoa,

ESCAPE

which became a salad and a pudding. Of course, these weren't made by cookbook recipes or standards but were exquisitely yummy to our deprived appetites. It was a truly big splurge to us, a royal feast even though we had to add the usual dining hall fare "for bulk."

This repast was followed by a festive time of parlor games — a ping-pong ball blowing contest, charades, and so forth. In this we were joined by other friends including John Hayes and Inger Danielson, an amazing Norwegian woman with whom we had developed a special relationship.

Inger and her husband, Gerhardt, were Norwegian missionaries assigned to a station in inland China. Upon finishing their formal language study they packed their meager belongings and with their six-month-old daughter headed west. With no cars, buses, or trains, travel was difficult. They walked many miles, but traveled mainly by crude wheelbarrow conveyances. That last night before they were to reach their station, they stopped at a Chinese inn. Inger was already in bed when bandits broke open the door demanding money, watches, clothing, anything of value. As the men started to leave, Gerhardt instinctively walked over to the wicker basket where their infant daughter, Astrid, was asleep, bending over to check her. The bandits, probably guessing that he was going for a gun, shot him in the back.

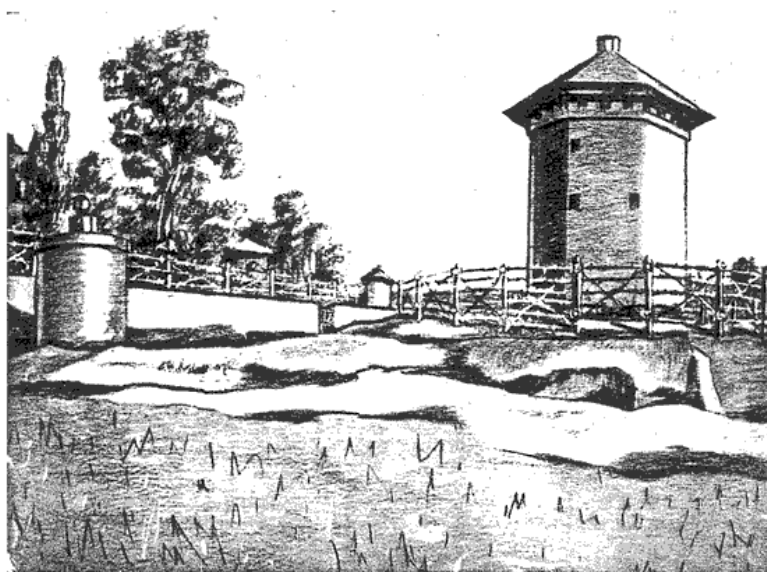
And so two years later the young widow with her daughter arrived in Weihsien, still suffering from the trauma of her great loss. We soon made friends with this courageous, sensitive, young Norwegian lady. She became part of our special group, joining us for parties and informal get-togethers. Astrid, adorable with blonde curls, was the same age and height as Sandra and they were fast friends. When Meredith took Sandra for a walk, Astrid would go along. One spot in camp behind the church was slightly elevated. There he would stand the girls on his shoulders and let them see over the wall. Neither child remembered life outside camp, so afterwards they would argue whether the "distant land" they had seen over the wall was "Orway" or "Merica."

Neither, of course, had ever been to her homeland, but they knew where they belonged. Our friendship with Inger and Astrid was so precious that when our first son was born we named him Gerud, a shortened, Americanized form of Gerhardt.

In June of 1944 word was smuggled into camp of a detachment of 60,000 Chinese troops, led by a Commander Wang, deployed in the vicinity of Weihsien. Rumor had it that Wang was actually planning to storm the camp and liberate us. This intelligence inspired two of our bolder internees to attempt an escape from camp, in order to make contact with the commander and his troops. The wisdom of this risky venture was, before and after, much debated. With steady Allied advances, the war was clearly coming to an end. What then was to be gained by an escape? And should the plan succeed, our captors would doubtless vent their wrath and frustration upon the rest of us. Yet, a successful escape would be a tremendous morale booster, and once free, our men could contact the Allies, furnishing them with valuable information and perhaps even procure desperately needed medical supplies for us.

The two conspirators, with the blessing of the camp Discipline Committee, carefully crafted their escape plan. To pass, undetected, through the countryside they would need to look as much like Chinese as possible. To accomplish this they sunned themselves daily until well darkened. They would dress in dark colored, Chinese, pajama-type outfits, especially tailored to fit their large, European dimensions.

The two men who volunteered for the deed were



Camp Wall from the outside showing searchlight, watchtowers and the electrified barbed wire fence over which Hummel and Tipton escaped.

http://weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/paintings/p_exterior.htm

Charles Tipton and Art Hummel. Tipton was an Englishman, who formerly worked for the British and American Tobacco Company. Hummel had been in graduate studies in Yen Ching University, Peking. He later served as U.S. Ambassador to China. Both men spoke Chinese fluently.

The escape plot was hatched with a great deal of care. The date chosen for the attempt was June 9; the time, between 9 and 10 p.m. That night the moon would not rise until 10:40. Once over the wall the escapees would have a full hour of darkness. It had been observed that every night at nine o'clock there was a changing of the guard. The oncoming shift, customarily, would quickly patrol the perimeter of the camp and then retire for a ten-minute break for "ocha" (tea) and cigarettes before taking their positions in the six sentry towers.

The venue for the escape would be a spot along the western wall where the shadow of an adjacent sentry box kept it in darkness. Also, due to a slight jog in the wall, this strategic few yards was never illuminated by the rotating search lights.

To insure secrecy, only three persons in camp knew the actual time of the intended escape. One of these was Roy Tchoo, an American-Chinese, who would serve as a lookout. Another was Tommy Wade, who had done a thriving business in black-market goods. A tall, broad-shouldered fellow, Tommy had the tricky assignment of boosting the men over the electrified barbed wire atop the wall. A Catholic priest also helped as a lookout along the west wall.

As it happened, on the appointed night, we had a front row seat for the drama. June 9 was muggy and



Letter to Weihsien Camp
from Commander Wang Shang chih
dated 4 May, 1944

Beleagured British and Americans

Greetings to all. The dwarf islanders, who as brigands and robbers have upset the order of the world, and whose brutality my countrymen have first felt, as war and calamity spread widely and human sacrifice became cruel beyond any comparison in human history, without taking account of virtue and measuring their strength, dared to make enemies of your countries, so that you have met with great misfortune, and have been robbed of your livelihood and happiness.

We can well imagine that your life in Hades must reach the limit of inhuman cruelty. As I write this, I tear the roots of my hair.

The Allies are now in the Pacific, in South East Asia and on the mainland of China, where they have attacked with great success. I beg of you to let your spirits rise.

My division at the present moment is able to release you, snatching you from the tiger's mouth. But the territory we control is small and restricted. I cannot guarantee your safety for a long period.

If you will request your consuls to send aeroplanes after your release to pick you up, and take you away to the rear, then my division can certainly save you. Regarding this matter, I am asking Miss Wang Juilan to find some way of getting into touch with you, and to make arrangements.

I respectfully hope that you will be able to carry this out, and send you all my good wishes,

Wang Shang chih, 33rd year of the Republic, fifth month, fourth day.

hot. Sandra was already in bed and the two of us were seated in the tiny patch of a yard in front of our room. A little after nine o'clock Art Hummel came by, barely recognizable with his darkened face and wearing the Chinese pajamas. A few moments later Wade followed carrying a high stool. Tipton, who came from a different direction, met the two men at the western wall beside the sentry tower. While Roy kept an eye open for approaching guards, the two men in turn mounted the stool and from there, positioned themselves atop Wade's broad shoulders, to be gingerly hoisted over the barbed wire. This was delicate business. Hummel, now

nervous, shoved off with such alacrity that Wade came within inches of toppling into the highly charged wire.

Once over the wall, the men concealed themselves behind the tomb mounds in the adjacent cemetery, expecting at any moment to hear the alarm siren. But everything had gone without a hitch. Under cover of darkness, for the moon had not yet appeared, Tipton and Hummel made their way to a rendezvous point at a near-by village. There, according to plan, they found some 20 armed Chinese soldiers waiting to escort them the 10 li (about 6 miles) to another juncture where horses were waiting for them.

Once mounted, they continued their flight another 40 li until they arrived at Commander Wang's headquarters. Here, guides were furnished to take them through enemy lines into free China. Once established there, they arranged for a courier to take a message, which had been sewn into the sole of his cloth shoe, to Chungking where Chiang Kai Shek and the

Nationalist government was headquartered. The note advised the general of their location and requested that a shortwave radio be dropped to them.

Incredibly, two full days passed without the Japanese discovering Tipton and Hummel's absence. At this point, our committee decided that it would go easier on the rest of us, if the wardens voluntarily reported that the men had escaped. Accordingly, the Discipline Committee informed the Japanese commandant.

Predictably, when the report of our friends' disappearance reached the commandant's ears, it precipitated no small furor. Guards with police dogs were dispatched to scour the surrounding countryside, but to no avail.

The escapees' nine roommates were shut up in the compound church and interrogated nonstop for several days. In time, however, the authorities became convinced that the men did, in fact, know very little about either the escape plans or their colleagues' present whereabouts, and therefore released them.

Most vexing, the commandant now required the tedious roll calls twice a day at 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., each session taking a full hour. Beyond this, however, there were no other reprisals; nor did our captors resort to violence or torture, as some had feared.

Before their escape Tipton and Hummel worked out a plan whereby they could convey important and strategic information back to our camp leaders. They would write the news on waterproof paper that would be concealed in a mud ball, which a Chinese confederate would toss over the camp wall at a designated spot along the edge of the playing field.

Thus we began to receive a series of dispatches from the men with fresh and reliable war news. In this way we heard for certain that the war in Europe was over. We had previously received 34 separate rumors to that effect! A mud ball also brought in news of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

--- *The Chinese word was simply "big bomb."*

Once the escapees' shortwave radio was working (this took some time as it had been damaged in the air drop, and parts had to be replaced), the men contacted the Allied command in Chungking, giving them a full report of camp conditions, as well as urgently requesting a parachute drop of medical supplies, particularly desperately needed sulfa drugs. A short time later the drop was made — four huge crates containing quantities of medicine, nowhere else available in China at that time. Now the men faced the daunting challenge of trying, somehow, to

get the supplies into camp. The channel, they decided, would have to be the Swiss Consul in Tsingtao. Shortly thereafter, a Chinese runner appeared at the Swiss Consulate handing the consul, Mr. Egger, a note telling him to expect four cart loads of medical supplies, which would arrive at his door in the dead of night around 3 a.m. The goods did arrive as scheduled and were secreted in the consulate. But now Egger faced a monumental dilemma. All medicines, which the consul routinely supplied to the camp hospital, had to be listed in detail, and the document chopped (sealed) by the Japanese Consular Police. Were Egger to list the bonanza of new medicines, most of which were not available in Japanese-occupied China, the police were sure to launch an investigation.

Puzzling over the situation, he came up with an ingenious plan. The next list of medical supplies sent to the police for approval was strictly routine. But Egger instructed his secretary to leave a full four spaces between each item on the sheet. The Japanese officials asked no questions, affixed their seals to the paper and returned it to Egger. The consul now instructed his secretary to carefully type the full inventory of the medical shipment from Tipton and Hummel in the spaces between the lines.

When the wagons laden with medical supplies arrived at camp, the officers were amazed at these cart loads of heretofore unseen drugs. Examining the listing, however, they found all the proper seals affixed. In a manner nearly miraculous, this providential blessing arrived to not only ease suffering, but doubtless to save lives. Now, early critics of Tipton and Hummel's escape joined in praising the men for their courage and resourcefulness.

When our camp was liberated after V.J. Day, Tipton and Hummel returned and were accorded a heroes' welcome.

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TRAGEDY

Tragedy touched us all in August 1944 with the death of one of the finest lads in camp. Brian Thompson, 16 years of age, was the son of a CIM director, Mr. R. E. Thompson, who had been separated from his family by the war and was at the time residing at CIM's provisional headquarters in Chungking. This meant his wife, Ella Thompson, was alone in camp with their children who had been part of the Chefoo school student body. Brian, a tall, robust young man, had a faith mature beyond his years and witnessed boldly to his classmates and other camp teens of his love for Christ.

On that morning of August 7, the Thompsons joined the 400 other internees of group six for roll call at the old tennis court situated beside the camp hospital. While waiting for the "warden" who habitually showed up late, the youngsters looked for a diversion. Running diagonally above the court was an uninsulated powerline leading from the camp transformer to the sentry tower. Originally, it had stretched a full 20 feet above the ground, but with the passing months it sagged lower and lower. Three times Japanese authorities had been appealed to, to remedy this situation, but nothing had been done. On this morning, the ground was damp due to the rain during the night.

"Bet you can't touch that wire," one of the teenagers challenged. A smaller high school student leaped high in the air barely touching the wire with the tips of his fingers.

"Wow," he exclaimed, "I got a shock!"

Now Brian, his curiosity piqued, attempted the same. Taller than the others at six feet one, he not only touched the wire, but seized it. The full charge of electricity convulsed every muscle in his body. Unable to let go, he fell to the ground with an awful cry, narrowly missing several of the internees standing nearby.

Mrs. Thompson, seeing her stricken son, instinctively rushed to his aid, but was providently restrained — her life probably saved — by alert neighbors.

While a collective cry of alarm rose, several men using wooden deck chairs slashed at the wire, finally, but belatedly, freeing Brian. He was taken to the hospital, and while our camp doctors worked over his body, his classmates waited and prayed outside. Three hours later a doctor emerged to announce that all attempts to revive the lad had proven futile. Brian Thompson was dead.

A moving funeral service led by Chefoo's headmaster, Mr. P. A. Bruce, was a powerful reminder to all of us of the brevity and uncertainty of human life, and the importance of being ready to meet one's maker at a moment's notice.

"Brian missed the roll call," the speaker said, "but he is answering another eternal call, the only one in the end that really matters." Then we tearfully sang the old gospel song, "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder."

Exposed power lines were not the only hazard for youth in Weih sien camp. Situated throughout the compound were unspeakably foul, open cesspools, dug to receive the waste produced by our camp's 1800 residents. As we have mentioned, periodically these pools were emptied by Chinese coolies with their "honey buckets." Why a child would choose the vicinity of a cesspool for a playground is a mystery beyond the ken of any adult. Yet, it is the nature of children to be oblivious to many things that their elders find impossibly distasteful. And so it was that John and Mary Kelly had chosen to play on the low, stone rim of the cesspool situated not far from kitchen number one.

Johnny's father was a British missionary who worked in Mongolia. There he met and married a Chinese woman. The whole family lived "native style," wearing Chinese clothes, eating Chinese food and speaking very little other than Chinese. In camp they kept aloof from most of the missionary community.

How it happened no one seemed to know for



Mr. and Mrs. R.E. Thompson and their family. Their eldest son Brian, right, was accidentally electrocuted during roll-call in 1944. He was 17.

CHRISTMAS 1944

On December 14 Christine was admitted to the hospital. She was three and a half months pregnant and a miscarriage had resulted in severe internal hemorrhaging. The doctor had said she would probably remain in the hospital until New Year's. We were both very disappointed over the loss of this most wanted, much prayed for, baby. We knew that the poor quality and small quantity of food made it more difficult on the mother but Christine felt that she was as strong and healthy as others, whose camp-born babies were thriving. So after two doctors had examined Christine and given us their O.K., we felt at peace. Why the fetus miscarried we do not understand but we can rest in the confidence that we will someday be with our precious child in heaven.

The prospect of celebrating Christmas with my wife in the hospital was not a pleasant one. Sandra, now age four, often had to answer roll call with the declaration, "My daddy's working in the kitchen, and my mommy's in the hospital. She's got a bazeese"

Still, under these most dismal of circumstances, we experienced what in many ways remains the most beautiful and memorable Christmas of our lives. Here is Christine's account of it as it appeared in Christian Life Magazine, 1971, under the title,

"P.O.W. Christmas":

When I came to consciousness that chilly Christmas morning, I could almost feel the gray light seeping through the window just above my head. I turned to look out at the great stretches of brick wall, bristling with strands of electrified barbed wire and broken at intervals by menacing sentry towers, manned by one of the omnipresent, olive-uniformed Japanese guards.

This was December 25, 1944, and I was lying on a rough grass mattress in the camp hospital, where I had been taken two weeks earlier for internal bleeding. An adjoining building served as a barracks for the mentally ill, and not far away lay a melancholy plot of ground which enfolded the swelling population of our dead. How much longer would we have to endure this ordeal? Not one of us knew. Few dared guess. Hope was hard to come by that bleak December. But this morning would be different, must be different. This was Christmas Day!

Now the pale morning light, like a persistent hand,

sure, but the fact is, Johnny fell head first into the loathsome pool. The frantic cries of his sister, Mary, brought men working in the area to investigate. One of these was our dear friend, John Hayes. Kelly had gone under and bobbed up the fourth time when Hayes plunged into the pool to rescue him, thus averting another camp tragedy. It was inevitable that little Johnny, thereafter, was always referred to as "Cesspool Kelly." And thankfully, neither Johnny nor our friend, John, seemed any the worse for their cesspool "baptism."

That more did not die in camp is a tribute to the heroic doctors who, under nearly impossible conditions and with only the barest minimum of medical supplies, cared for the sick and dying. During the two-and-one-half prison years the camp was devastated by succeeding epidemics of dysentery and hepatitis. Others suffered from severe mental disorders. Despite the handicaps, doctors performed many major operations, among them a good number of deliveries. There were 32 children born during our years in camp, and in that same time 28 people died. Many of these were elderly, who without sufficient nourishment grew weaker and weaker. The father of our friend, John Hayes, was one of the elderly who died early in camp. But all the victims were not the elderly and fragile. Clarice Lawless was a young, uncommonly robust woman who lived three doors down from us. She led the Chefoo girls in calisthenics every morning on the softball field. Yet Clarice was taken down by typhoid, surviving only eight days after she was stricken. Christine, stuck down by the same dreaded disease, would be more fortunate.

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Typical row of 9 by 12 foot rooms where families lived.

was stirring patients from their fitful sleep. Beside me I could hear the moans of an older woman suffering from pleurisy. Beyond her another patient, a pneumonia case, struggled for breath. Directly across from me a young mother was apparently dying of some sort of fever.

There were 16 beds and 16 patients in that barn-like, women's ward. The once well-furnished hospital had been left a shambles by troops who had been quartered there after the Japanese occupation. Now the building was crudely sectioned off into two large wards. Heroic doctors and nurses, themselves prisoners, gave unstintingly of their skill. But with few medicines available, too often their best efforts ended in futility. For the most part the old hospital served only to quarantine the sick and dying from the still-functioning members of our community.

From his job in the kitchen, Meredith was permitted today to take one hour off between breakfast and lunch. We had agreed that he would bring Sandra and the gifts to my bedside. Here, in this precious segment of time we would celebrate Christmas together. And though I was still very weak, my heart warmed with wonderful anticipation.

My gift for Meredith that Christmas was to be a well-thumbed, but still-sturdy copy of Matthew's Chinese-English Dictionary, a book he had long coveted but never felt we could afford. I had discovered it at the "White Elephant," a brick cubicle where outgrown and expendable commodities could be sold or bartered. The price was a full \$7. For us, that was a lot of money at any time, but in camp, where a rare "monthly" Red Cross allowance of \$5 was our only source of income, it was a fortune. I knew, however, that when the cash price for an item could not be met, the seller would often settle for the balance in acceptable barter.

What could I barter? I went to our little black footlocker, one of the two pieces of luggage we had been permitted to bring into camp. There in the corner was all that remained of our little store of goods. Quickly I took inventory, then took out a yard of new cloth and my prized last can of strawberry jam. I had two dollars in my pocket and felt sure a friend would loan me two more. With these I purchased Matthew's

Dictionary.

Now I heard Meredith's familiar footsteps approaching from the far end of the ward and looked up. He was wearing a rough plaid Mackinaw and too-short pants, both held together by patch on patch.

Sandra skipped beside him, her blonde curls bobbing, her brown eyes unnaturally large but glowing with excitement against her too-thin features. She wore dark blue overalls I had fashioned from upholstery material. Her coat had been made from the remains of a fellow missionary's tweed skirt. Together, Meredith and Sandra clutched the presents, all wrapped in used notebook paper.

"Oh, Mommy," Sandra shouted gaily, "isn't it wonderful! It's Christmas! And look, we brought presents!"

Meredith and Sandra sat beside me. A nurse thoughtfully procured the hospital's only screen and set it up against the foot of my bed for privacy. Now we were a family again. We were in our own world, and it was Christmas morning.

Meredith opened his pocket New Testament to the familiar account, "And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus

that all the world should be taxed.... " Then we prayed.

"Mommy, Mommy, can't we open our presents now?" Sandra's thin little fingers were pulling impatiently at the stiff wraps.

Her "big gift" that Christmas was a wheelbarrow which Meredith had made from an old soap box. The single wheel had been purloined from her baby bed. The handles were scraps of wood gleaned from who knows where. Cliff, our Chefoo adoptee, had decorated the front of the barrow with a sketch of a bushy-tailed squirrel and Sandra's name in big, block letters.

By any standard it was a crude contraption that would be looked upon with contempt by today's toy-surfeited youngsters. But to a four-year-old who had never seen a dime store, an ice cream cone or a dolly that opens and closes its eyes, it was a treasure!

Sandra got other gifts too. From a scrap of cloth no longer serviceable for mending garments, I had made a Humpty-Dumpty doll and stuffed it with bits of thread and material swept from the community



sewing room floor. And, before I was taken to the hospital, I was trying to put together something resembling a doll house. I had scrounged an old cardboard carton for the purpose and begged two pages of a book of wallpaper samples a neighbor had, for some unknown reason, brought with her into camp. These, with the aid of scissors and dabs of flour paste, were to have been fashioned into an exquisite doll mansion. But unfinished though it was, Sandra loved it.

"Okay, honey," Meredith said, "now come your presents. Go on, open them"

One by one I removed the sheets of notebook paper from my gifts, three small packages, all obviously the products of my husband's labor of love.

"It's a kitchen set," Meredith quickly explained, lest I had any doubt about its purpose. "How do you like it?"

Here I should tell you our "kitchen" consisted of a brick stove he had recently built in one tiny corner of block 14, No. 7 — the 9 by 12 room that was "home" to the three of us. At night, Meredith had secretly wrested bricks from the rubble of an old wall the guards had torn down from around the church. He, of course, had no tools with which to dig and made-do with any small piece of wood or part of a tree branch he could find. But the earth was packed solidly and was extremely hard. Sometimes he retrieved only one brick in an evening's work so it took weeks to gather enough. The stovepipe had been patiently assembled from 21 old tin cans. It was my job to collect those cans, which meant many trips to the dump heap and months to find them. We didn't get many cans in camp, and if one had a can, he had better keep it in case of future need or the possibility of trading it for something else. The burner, the most difficult part to procure, was a thick metal tile form. For it we had paid the exorbitant price of two full cans of evaporated milk. But what a difference that "kitchen" made! During the winter we would take our half-bucket allotment of coal dust, mix it with clay and roll it into small balls, baking them in the sun. Then we would buy whatever edible items there might be in the small camp canteen. Thus we managed to supplement the wearisome, half-palatable, mess-hall diet, which so often consisted of delights such as worm-ridden bread, fish soup and a dark porridge of kaoliang.

The first item in my kitchen set was a baking pan (not that anyone would have succeeded in identifying it as such). It had originally been an oversized sardine tin, of the sort our White Russian neighbors sometimes received in packages. The rough edges

had been lovingly smoothed, and small handles fastened at each end. Now, when our birthdays came and we got the promised two-cup ration of flour (though we seldom did), we could have a birthday cake!

The next implement was a spatula, made of real rubber. Meredith didn't tell me until later that it had been carefully whittled from a discarded boot heel, a bonanza he had discovered in the camp trash heap. Completing the set was a tea strainer. Afterwards I learned that the patch of screening from which the gift was devised was the remnant of a carefully scrubbed and well-boiled fly swatter!

My gift to Meredith was received with genuine amazement (though with a stern rebuke for my extravagance), but his delight repaid me many times over for my scheming.

The hour was over. Meredith kissed me and rose to leave. Sandra flung her arms around me. "Mommy, Mommy, hurry up and get well so you can come back home," she said. Then they were gone. Quietly I fingered the three objects on my bed — my kitchen set, my Christmas presents. Down the ward someone hummed, "Oh Come All Ye Faithful, Joyful and Triumphant." No carol had ever sounded sweeter.

God has given many blessed Christmases since that dark December day in Weihsien, but nothing we have ever received has been more precious than those crude gifts.

What made those inherently worthless bits so inestimably dear to us? It was much more than just their utility at a time when we possessed practically nothing. That Christmas, in the giving of those poor objects, we were really giving ourselves. Each gift, so painstakingly thought out and put together, eloquently said, "I love you, I love you." And this is the real meaning of Christmas, for in Jesus God gave the most precious gift of all. And in so doing He said to the whole world, "I love you"

And that's what Christmas is all about."

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#

ERIC

February 21, 1945. Our hearts are heavy today. Eric Liddell, one of our best-loved friends in camp, died yesterday morning.

"The remainder of this chapter is an adaptation of "Eric Liddell Remembered" which appeared in the November-December 1988, issue of Outreach Magazine.

The first time I saw him was shortly after our arrival in camp. I was standing with Dr. John D. Hayes. "Do you know who that man is?" he asked, pointing to a slightly balding missionary coming down a lane we had dubbed "Rocky Road." He was wearing his usual baggy knee-length shorts and bold-figured sports shirt (fashioned, we later learned, from drapery material he and his wife, Florence, had used in their Tientsin home). "That's Eric Liddell," said Hayes, "the Olympic 400 meter champion who refused to run on Sunday." Liddell was now in his early 40s but still walked with a spring in his step, his stride longer than most. His broad smile exuded confidence and hope, especially welcome in those dismal surroundings.

When Marcy Ditmanson first met Eric, he did not realize that this man was the famous 1924 Olympian. Modest and self-effacing, Liddell never mentioned his Olympic exploits nor his heroics on the rugby and cricket fields. After Tipton and Hummel escaped, the Japanese retaliated with a major reshuffling of housing assignments and Marcy found himself in the same room with Eric Liddell.

"Eric spoke with a charming Scottish brogue," Marcy remembers, "and more than anyone I have ever known typified the joyful Christian life. He had a marvelous sense of humor and was full of laughter and practical jokes but always in good taste. His voice was nothing special but how he loved to sing, particularly the grand old hymns of the faith. Two of his favorites were, "God Who Touches Earth With Beauty" and "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy."

He was no great orator by any means, but he had a way of riveting his listeners with those marvelous clear blue eyes of his. Yes, that's what I remember most about him as he spoke — those wonderful eyes and how they would twinkle."

Eric so lived in the Word that, when he spoke, it was with a sincerity that made you feel he was speaking directly to you. His illustrations were usually from everyday life. He loved to draw upon observations he had made in the chemistry lab, and often preached from the Sermon on the Mount emphasizing the importance of putting Christianity into practice.

Christine recalls one of Eric's illustrations: "He told of an evangelist in Australia who had spoken on Christ's triumphal entry. A young man had been faithfully witnessing to a friend of his who was a jockey and had invited him to attend this service with him. At the close of the message, the jockey

remarked, 'What wonderful hands this Jesus must have had. If an untamed ass's colt came through a screaming, palm-waving throng of people and yet arrived safely at the destination and without harm to a single person, the only explanation is the amazing hands of Jesus.' As a result, he committed his life to Christ."

Eric did more than talk about his faith. He lived it out in the most practical ways. He would volunteer for unpleasant tasks that others shunned cleaning the latrines or the filthy chore of making fuel by rolling balls of coal dust mixed with clay. When the camp teenagers broke their hockey sticks, he tore his own few bed sheets into strips to tape the splintered shafts, and for an adhesive used a foul-smelling fish glue. He was always careful to work at this task well-removed from the dwelling areas so the odor would not offend.

The youth and particularly teenagers were Eric's special love. From the outset he organized and managed youth activities, especially sports programs. The lone student in his chemistry class was Joyce Stranks, a Salvation Army girl of 16. Since they had no textbooks, Eric proceeded to write out an entire chemistry textbook by hand. He had taught that course in Tientsin and was an excellent instructor. She still has that book, penned in his meticulous handwriting, and values it among her most precious treasures. Of course there were no test tubes, chemicals or other equipment, but in imagination Eric and Joyce would perform all kinds



http://welshien-paintings.org/ChSancton/pages/p_EricLiddell_Cerrino.htm

of experiments. He would describe the mixing of certain chemicals, and then Joyce would have to explain the reaction.

At this time Eric was also writing his manual for Christian discipleship. It was later published under the title *Disciplines of the Christian Life*. His purpose was to provide youth with a practical guide for their spiritual growth. In the section on the morning quiet time, he suggested starting each day with six questions:

- 1) Have I surrendered this new day to God, and will I seek and obey the guidance of the Holy Spirit through its hours?
- 2) What have I specially to thank God for this morning?
- 3) Is there any sin in my life for which I should seek Christ's forgiveness and cleansing? Is there any apology or restitution to make?
- 4) For whom does God want me to pray this morning?
- 5) What bearing does this morning's Bible passage have on my life, and what does He want me to do about it?
- 6) What does He want me to do today, and how does He want me to do it?

The camp teenagers came so frequently to Eric's dorm, that his exasperated roommates finally devised a flip card sign reading, "Eric Liddell is in/out." By turning the card to "in" or "out" Eric could keep the youth posted as to his whereabouts.

I have a beautiful memory of Eric. Returning from the camp hospital late one night I passed the youth activity center. Eric was still there bent over a chess board teaching some of the boys the intricacy of advanced attack and defense. It was the youth, too, who most insisted upon visiting him in the camp hospital before he died.

The first symptoms of Eric's illness came in the form of severe headaches. Then he became forgetful. One doctor suggested he was having a nervous breakdown. This bothered Eric, who reasoned that Christians living as God intended, shouldn't have nervous breakdowns. In order to improve his memory and help him concentrate, he began to read and memorize segments from *The Tale of Two Cities*. In the book a memorable passage depicts Sidney Carton facing the guillotine in the place of his friend, Charles Darnay. Carton's long soliloquy, eloquently expressing his view of life, was a selection Eric memorized.

He was never one to solicit sympathy. Even after he

entered the hospital, few knew the seriousness of his condition. Joyce, his chemistry student, was one of the many teenagers who, to the annoyance of Eric's devoted nurse, Annie Buchan, would flock into the men's ward to visit their hero. Incredibly, in spite of the excruciating pain, he continued to teach and counsel the youth using his book of discipleship.

At this time in another ward of the hospital, Christine was recovering from her near-fatal bout with typhoid fever. On Sunday afternoon, February 18, just 38 hours before his death, Eric came to the door of the women's ward to borrow a hymnal. He was writing a letter to his wife, Florence, then in Toronto, and was quoting from the hymn, "Be Still My Soul." Characteristically he wanted to be sure of accuracy. Strange that he was in the midst of a letter to Florence. We didn't write letters in those days for there was no possibility of mailing them. And yet — yet, he was writing. Surely, he must have known it was to be his last word to his precious family. ---

"This letter was carefully kept and hand carried to Eric's wife in Canada five months after our liberation.

--- Eric spotted Christine, waved his hand and flashed the wonderful broad smile which even the pain of his final ordeal had not erased. It was the last time she saw him.

Joyce visited Eric the morning he died. In their study of his book on discipleship they had come to the portion on surrender. "Although I had accepted the Lord as a child of seven," Joyce says, "it was not until this time in my life when, as a result of Eric Liddell's influence, I personally surrendered to the full will of God"

That morning Joyce arrived at the ward ten minutes early, but impatient to see her friend and teacher, she entered anyway. As they went through the lesson Eric looked at Joyce intently and said, "Surrender, surren...." "Those were his last words. The next instant a terrible spasm convulsed his body. Alarmed, Joyce burst into tears and hurried into the hall, calling for his nurse. Annie came running, scolding Joyce for disturbing Eric, and quickly put a screen about his bed. Within minutes he was gone. A postmortem revealed a massive, inoperable brain tumor on the left side of his brain. Eric was just 43, and only 6 months remained before V.J. Day deliverance.

Funerals in the Weihsien prison camp were common enough during those dreadful days, but there was no funeral like Eric's. The wave of sorrow which swept over Weihsien was unbelievable. His was by far the biggest funeral held in the two and one half years of our stay in the prison camp. The church

LIBERATION!

By early August 1945, rumors of a pending peace began to multiply. A mud ball thrown over the wall, evidently from one of Tipton and Hummel's couriers, told of a super bomb which the Allies had dropped on Japan. We could hardly imagine the import of this "dawn of the atomic age." We also learned that Russia was entering the Pacific war, thereby strengthening the Allies' hand.

Now an Allied victory seemed only a matter of time but this prospect did not produce in us unmixed elation. Mingled with excitement was a measure of apprehension. The phenomenon of suicide pilots was a clue to an aspect of the Japanese character which, when desperate, will resort to extreme measures. And if, in the face of humiliating defeat, they thought so little of their own lives, what would stop them from taking a couple thousand Allied prisoners with them when they went? Yes, many agreed, Japanese defeat could very well mean a massacre at Weih sien.

On August 15 a message was smuggled into camp declaring that the war was definitely over. When our Administrative Committee met with the Japanese chief of police to make inquiries, however, his response was, "I can neither deny nor confirm this rumor." Later that day when a message was received from one of Tipton and Hummel's men (our most reliable news source), it touched off a wild, impromptu celebration. We feasted on food that we had been hoarding for a special occasion or "just in case" — a prized tin of jam, cocoa, or Spam.

For days silver specks flying at great altitudes had been spotted. Too swift for the lumbering Japanese craft in our area, dubbed "coal burners," we felt sure they were U.S. planes. Now we began to wonder from whence our liberation would come. Some suggested the Russians sweeping down from the north would reach us first. Others averred that Chinese Nationalist troops would be the agents of freedom, rather than the Americans.

On Friday, August 17, our day in camp began pretty much as usual. Then, at 9 a.m. we were startled by the thunder of a low-flying aircraft. I was in the kitchen making stew at the time. (Everyone in camp remembers precisely where he was at that moment.) We dashed out-side to see a most incredible sight.

A B-24, the Stars and Stripes emblazoned on its

accommodated 300 people and was full, but far more stood outside than could be seated within. The Reverend Arnold Bryson, of the London Missionary Society, conducted the memorial service. There were no long, flowery eulogies but sincere praise to God was voiced for this one who had such far-reaching influence. One of the missionaries testified, "His was a God-controlled life. He followed his Master and Lord with a devotion that never flagged, with an intensity of purpose that made men see both the reality and power of true religion."

Impressive was the fact that not only the missionary community attended Eric's funeral, but many others whose lives he so powerfully impacted. Among them were the usually cynical business people, city government administrators, and even prostitutes.

Unlike many missionaries, Eric seemed able to relate to everyone. Of course his celebrity status made him welcome in any conversation, but more than this, he had an unassuming naturalness that gave him rapport with almost everyone he met. Everybody regarded Eric as a friend.

It was a cold February day when they buried Eric Liddell. A piercing wind swirled patches of lightly falling snow. The simple casket was carried on the shoulders of eight missionary colleagues. Immediately behind was the honor guard, Eric's pupils of the Chefoo school, marching two by two.

Eric Liddell was dead, but the influence of this amazing man, who had somehow discovered the secret of living wholly for his Lord and for the sake of others, will continue to touch generations to come.

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Photograph of Eric Liddell and his daughter, Patricia
Council for World Mission archive
CWM/LMS, China, Photographs, Box 6, file 38



almost like gods to us. CIM missionaries recognized one of the men as Navy Lieutenant Jimmy Moore, a graduate of the mission school at Chefoo — and they were proud of him! A few days later we learned His

side and bearing the name, "Armored Angel," was circling camp so low it seemed about to brush the treetops. What emotions the sight provoked!

"I never thought of myself as very patriotic," one missionary recalls, "but when I saw Old Glory on the side of that beautiful silver bird, the tears began to flow."

En masse we began shouting, laughing, screaming and waving whatever old shirt or piece of cloth we were wearing. Some, who had hardly spoken to one another for months, were freely embracing. Our moment of deliverance was clearly near at hand. We found our hearts chorusing, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

We surmised that this was a reconnaissance mission and expected the B-24 to head back to Chungking, but as we watched it circled, climbed higher and then swooped even lower over camp. Twice they flew so low we could see "our men" up there. More pandemonium broke out — wild screams and jumping as though, with a bit more effort, we could touch them. Five times they flew over us and then in amazement we saw the door of the plane open and a parachute blossomed, then another and another — altogether seven of them. They were a sight of surpassing beauty as they drifted down into the field of kaoliang, adjoining the cemetery.

Now it was a contest to see who would be the first to greet our liberators. While most of the women and children headed for the gate, I joined several men who, by climbing a locust tree adjacent to the wall, managed to jump over the electrified barbed wire, landing in the soft earth on the other side.

Meanwhile, the paratroopers had taken a defensive position behind the mound-like graves in the cemetery. Guns drawn, they expected momentarily to be greeted by a Japanese patrol.

We later learned that all of them were volunteers for what, some judged, would likely be a suicide mission. These seven heroic men led by Major Stanley Staiger of Klamath Falls, Oregon, looked



Prisoner artist's sketch of Duck Team parachutists autographed by the seven liberators. Nagaki was the second jumper.

Majesty Hirohito, the Emperor of Japan, had issued an Imperial Rescript on August 15, 1945, calling for a cessation of hostilities and decreed an acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration. In turn, General Shimomura, Supreme Commander of the Army in North China, declared acceptance of the Emperor's High Edict. For this reason our camp guards offered no resistance to the seven parachuting Americans.

While the more agile men were carefully scrambling over the west wall in order to

get to the GIs in the kaoliang field, many of the women and some of the older male internees and children were moving slowly down the gradual incline toward the large front gate. Extending above and across the gate was an enclosed walkway with gun emplacements. From each of the three openings, the barrel of a submachine gun was pointed ominously in our direction. I (Christine) clutched Sandra's hand protectively, knowing that the hands holding those weapons belonged to our "enemies" who held lives, their own and ours, less than dear. We moved one step at a time, our eyes fixed upward, though we could not see the guards themselves, just their deadly guns. In thinking back to that time I'm very sure that the Lord Himself covered us and kept us all safe for we finally reached the gate, and with many hands were able to pull back the heavy bolt. Was this air on the outside really sweeter, fresher, than that we'd breathed a second or two before? Now by this time our "wall climbers" were reaching the fields in which the Americans had landed.

Upon hearing our delirious shouts of welcome (Meredith continues), the men put away their guns and emerged from behind the grave mounds. What a spectacle we must have presented! Barefoot, thin, emaciated, clad in tattered and patched garments, we

must have looked like something out of Robinson Crusoe. And in our eyes these courageous, broad-shouldered men who had, at great personal risk, come to save us seemed almost deities.

I was among the first to reach the flyers. We struggled to hoist them on our shoulders. It took five of us per paratrooper, but we formed a triumphal procession back to camp. Approaching the gates where the Japanese guards stood with bayonets drawn, it was clear that the airmen were apprehensive as they fingered their weapons. Then, in an instant, the tension broke as one of the guards raised his hand smartly in a salute. His cohorts reluctantly followed suit.

In the camp the men were mobbed by adoring women and children. One young airman, helpless in the embrace of an effusive female, called to his buddy, "Hey Joe, come help me get this woman off my neck!"

Another of the men savoring the moment commented, "I wouldn't change places with Clark Gable for all the tea in China."

Now the camp band, mostly Salvation Army personnel, struck up a thunderous welcome, a medley consisting of the national anthems of the various nations represented in camp. It was a joyous, triumphant symphony that few of us who heard it will ever forget.

No more than 20 minutes had elapsed from the time our liberators had landed until Major Staiger, accompanied by his interpreter, Tadashi Nagaki, an American-born Japanese sergeant, entered the office of the commandant. Those who accompanied the men later described the scene to us.

Staiger came through the door with both pistols drawn. Through his interpreter he asked for the commandant's weapons in an act of surrender. The man hesitated only a moment, and then slowly reaching into a drawer produced his pistol and samurai sword, laying them on the desk.

In a gesture that must have left the commandant confounded, Major Staiger returned the weapons to him, informing him that henceforth he and his men would serve under the U.S. command, to guard the camp and preserve order. Staiger realized that unruly Chinese in the area could well take advantage of the

situation, and a force of seven Americans could hardly maintain the security of the entire compound. One rumor had it that a Chinese bandit nearby planned to seize the camp and hold us hostages in return for food, arms and other considerations.

That afternoon the entire camp gathered on the softball field for a victory dinner. Stocks, long held back,

were now brought out and tables piled high. Stomachs which for two and a half years had seldom been free from hunger pangs were now indulged in a surfeit of wonderful food. Many overdid it and got sick. We quickly discovered the hazards of gorging stomachs that had actually shrunk during the lean camp years. We learned we must eat smaller quantities but more frequently.

One of the first freedoms we now enjoyed was that of sending a telegram and writing

letters to loved ones. Our telegrams were sent to my parents then living in Gloversville, New York, telling them of our liberation, another to Christine's parents in Virginia. Now that we were free to leave camp we began to flock into town, to roam the streets and markets savoring our freedom. With virtually no cash we found we could barter even old clothing for delectable fruits, vegetables, and sometimes meats we had so missed during our imprisonment.

Chinese, the most enterprising merchants on earth, seized the opportunity to do business with 1600 foreigners eager to buy or barter almost anything. Overnight an open-air Chinese market sprang up just

ATTENTION ALLIED PRISONERS

Allied Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees, these are your orders and/or instructions in case there is a capitulation of the Japanese forces:

1. You are to remain in your camp area until you receive further instructions from this headquarters.
2. Law and order will be maintained in the camp area.
3. In case of a Japanese surrender there will be allied occupational forces sent into your camp to care for your needs and eventual evacuation to your homes. You must help by remaining in the area in which we now know you are located.
4. Camp leaders are charged with these responsibilities.
5. The end is near. Do not be disheartened. We are thinking of you. Plans are under way to assist you at the earliest possible moment.

(Signed) **A. C. WEDEMEYER**
Lieutenant General, U. S. A.
Commanding

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a Cable Telegram or Cablegram unless its de-fined character is in-dicated by a suitable symbol above or pre-ceding the address.

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WM 35 WMUH258 GOVT DL PDWUX WASHINGTON DC 29 749P

MRS J H CAMDEN=

3401 EUSLO AVE RICH=

1945 AUG 29 PM 8 04

AM PLEASED TO INFORM YOU OF THE LIBERATION FROM JAPANESE CUSTODY OF MRS C C HELSBY AND REVEREND W MEREDITH HELSBY AND DAUGHTER SANDRA PHYSICAL CONDITION UNSTATED STOP YOU MAY SEND FREE THROUGH THE AMERICAN PRISONER OF WAR INFORMATION BUREAU THIS OFFICE A TWENTY FIVE WORD MESSAGE THE BODY OF WHICH MUST NOT EXCEED TWELVE WORDS THE REMAINING THIRTEEN WORDS ESSENTIAL FOR ADDRESS AND CODE SYMBOLS STOP EVERY EFFORT TO EFFECT DELIVERY THIS MESSAGE BEFORE RETURN TO UNITED STATES WILL BE MADE STOP

THE COMPANY
LEWIS THE PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL,

Telegram to Christine's parents after liberation.

outside the camp gates.

Sunday, August 19, was set apart for special Thanksgiving services which were held jointly by both Catholics and Protestants. Praising together, tears of joy flowed shamelessly down every cheek. Never, it seems, were hearts more grateful. At the services everyone who had any kind of uniform wore it. What a conglomeration of dress — uniforms and insignia of the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Rangers, military services of various countries, and of course the Salvation Army.

Three days after liberation we found ourselves again gazing with wonder into the skies at the approach of U.S. planes. These were B-29s, so huge they seemed to dwarf the B-24s that had come earlier. We guessed they were based in Guam, Saipan and Okinawa. Theirs was a supply mission. Again the huge bomb bays opened and a succession of multi-colored parachutes drifted down-ward. All were laden with a cornucopia of supplies, everything from food stuffs and medicines to clothing (but this again for men



レソゴウグンホリヨヘ

ALLIED PRISONERS

The JAPANESE Government has surrendered. You will be evacuated by ALLIED NA-TIONS forces as soon as possible.

Until that time your present supplies will be augmented by air-drop of U.S. food, clothing and medicines. The first drop of these items will arrive within one (1) or two (2) hours.

Clothing will be dropped in standard packs for units of 50 or 500 men. Bundle markings, contents and allowances per man are as follows:

BUNDLE MARKINGS

50 MAN PACK	500 MAN PACK	CONTENTS	ALLOWANCES PER MAN
A	3	Drawers	2
A	1-2	Undershirt	2
B	22	Socks (pr)	2
A	4-6	Shirt	1
A	7-9	Trousers	1
C	23-30	Jacket, field	1
A	10	Belt, web, waist	1
A	11	Capt. H.B.T.	1
B	12-21	Shoes (pr)	1
A	1-2	Handkerchiefs	3
C	32-34	Towel	1

BUNDLE MARKINGS

50 MAN PACK	500 MAN PACK	CONTENTS	ALLOWANCES PER MAN
B	10	Laces, shoe	1
A	11	Kit, sewing	1
C	31	Soap, toilet	1
C	4-6	Razor	1
C	4-6	Blades, razor	10
C	10	Brush, tooth	1
B	31	Paste, tooth	1
C	10	Comb	1
B	32	Shaving cream	1
C	12-21	Powder (insecticide)	1

There will be instructions with the food and medicine for their use and distri-bution.

DO NOT OVEREAT OR OVERMEDICATE

CAUTION

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FEEDING 100 MEN

To feed 100 men for the first three (3) days, the following blocks (individual bundles dropped) will be assembled:

3 Blocks No. 1
(Each Contains)

2 Cases, Soup, Can
1 Cases Fruit Juice
1 Case Accessory Pack

1 Block No. 5
(Each Contains)

1 Case Soup, Dehd
1 Case Veg Pursee
1 Case Bouillon
1 Case Hoap Supplies
1 Case Vitamin Tablets

1 Block No. 3
(Each Contains)

1 Case Candy
1 Case Gum
1 Case Cigarettes
1 Case Matches

3 Blocks No. 2
(Each Contains)

3 Cases "C" Rations
1 Case Hoap Supplies
2 Cases Fruit

1 Block No. 7
(Each Contains)

1 Case Nescafe
1 Sack Sugar
1 Case Milk
1 Case Cocoa

1 Block No. 10
(Each Contains)

3 Cases Fruit
2 Cases Juice

One of the leaflets dropped by U.S. planes.

only!). Many rushed out to receive this incredible "manna" raining down on us from the skies and in doing so very nearly met their doom.

Fifty-gallon metal drums had been welded together forming heavy tubes as large as sofas, all packed with goods. These huge pallets of supplies had evidently been assembled with haste. The parachutes which bore labels "not to exceed 350 pounds" were dangerously overloaded. Cords snapped and cargoes plummeted to earth with murderous force. Some of us came within inches of being hit by these "bombs" During the whole of World War II my most terrifying experience came at this time, when I and my crew of Chinese workmen were out in the open fields gathering up supplies. A second formation of planes came in, and heavily loaded pallets were landing all around me. I was frightened beyond words, running in circles, but finding no protection. One Chinese teenager was less fortunate. At the time he was a few yards from me in the kaoliang field when a heavy bedding roll broke free, falling directly on him, mashing his body into the soft earth. Though unconscious and badly bruised, he was not dead. We

carried him to the camp hospital where he eventually recovered from his injuries.

The supplies continued to come for several weeks averaging a drop every three days. Understandably the Chinese, intent on availing themselves of the goods, swarmed into the fields to lug off anything they could carry away. This resulted in some humorous incidents. One Chinese who had learned a few words of English was discovered devouring the contents of a tube marked "cream" a word he had learned. The fact that the contents did not taste like ordinary cream could be explained by the other word on the tube which was "shaving," an English word he had not learned. Another villager had copped a large bottle of vitamins. When he saw foreigners approaching, he feared they would confiscate his prize. Taking off the cap, he gulped down the entire contents of the bottle!

Many of the items descending on us from the skies we had never seen before. "What is ketchup?" one missionary was heard to ask. "Are you supposed to drink it or what?" DDT and band-aids were alike products we had never heard of.

Almost like Rip Van Winkle we were projected into a world from which we had been isolated for four years. So much had happened, of which we hardly knew anything. The world was full of new inventions. Even new words. To ease us back into civilization our liberators set up orientation classes. Using large maps, they charted for us the progress of the war leading to the signing of the documents of surrender on the Battleship Missouri. They also taught us a whole glossary of new terms — GI, jeeps, D-day, kamikaze, pin-up girls! Some internees judged that our liberators were a bit overzealous in their desire to propel us into American culture when

they roused us from slumber at 6 a.m. with blaring jazz and pop songs, broadcast over the camp's new RA system. One Britisher was heard to mutter, "We'll have to have war all over again in order to get some peace!"

One afternoon we were visited by a friend, Pastor Lee, who had traveled 150 miles, mostly by foot from his Tsinan Church to greet us. Most moving, he had brought with him a quantity of gifts from the church members, gifts certainly obtained at great personal sacrifice. He presented us with two pounds of sugar, ten eggs (by now far from fresh), half a dozen tomatoes, three apples, even a small watermelon. All this love poured out to us

though we had never met him or any of his congregation. But they seemed to know all about us and had kept us in their prayers. Someone had even made a pair of cloth shoes for Sandra, which became her prized possession. Added to this, he insisted on giving us a cash amount equaling U.S. \$78.95 — a loving gesture that moved us deeply for

most of our Chinese friends had suffered even more than we under the Japanese occupation.

Ten days after our liberation the seven-man special force of volunteers was replaced by a detachment of regular military who arrived by truck from west China bases. Now the time had come to think about packing and preparing for long-anticipated return to our home-lands.

First to leave were those with critical physical and mental needs who were flown out. After them, a group of 600 consisting of internees who wished to return directly to their home countries were farewelled. They traveled by rail to the port of Tsingtao where they were housed in the Edgewater Hotel until their repatriation ship arrived. They wrote back to camp describing the incredible luxury of the



Compound wall showing barbed wire and guard towers.

famous hotel with its carpeted floors and innerspring mattresses.

The last group being evacuated by railway had arrived at the hotel at night. The next morning upon awakening, one of the small children looking out his window at the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean shouted excitedly to his mother, "Mommy, Mommy, come here and look at this big cesspool!" For the youngster who had known only one world in his lifetime, and that, with-in the enclosure of the Weihsien compound, the camp cesspool was the only "body of water" he had ever seen.

As the several groups were moving out, the Lord began to make it clear that we should go back to Peking before returning to the U.S. We knew it would be some time before non-military personnel would be allowed to enter China, and there were many mission matters that needed immediate attention. So with much prayer, we asked to be flown to Peking.

#

August 8, 1944

COMFORT MONEY.

We have received the following information from Mr. Egger:-

- a) The exchange negotiations between the Governments concerned are concluded and effective from the 1st June, 1944, the rates are:-

\$1	=	F.R.B. \$16.9625
U.S. \$1.00	=	" 4.2121

- b) A message has been received from the U.S. State Department which reads as follows:-

"RATE OF EXCHANGE - U.S. State Department will decide at a later date regarding the exchange rate to be applied against relief loans granted to American citizens as from June 1st. Meanwhile, the Swiss Consulate General has been authorized to give the beneficiaries the assurance that a fair and equitable rate to both parties concerned will eventually be fixed."

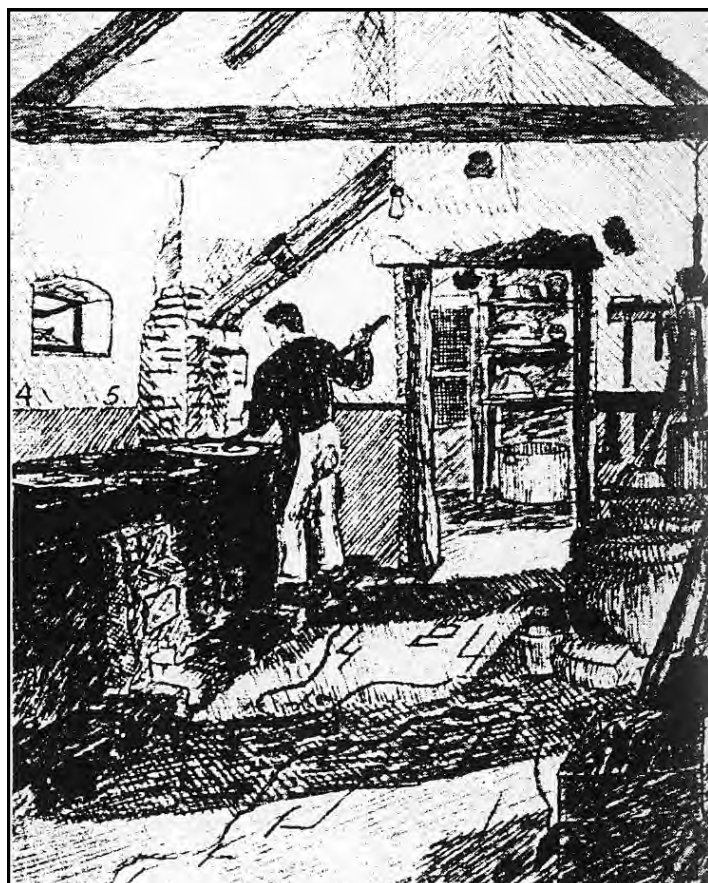
A reply from the British and Netherlands Governments is still outstanding, but their eventual decision will form the object of a further communication.

- c) "Comfort" money normally will be at the rate of \$360.00 per-person per month but for the month of June 1944 (payable during August 1944) the amount as explained in paragraph (d) below will be approximately \$200 to \$250 per person.
- d) A cash allotment for the month of June 1944 has been received by Mr. Egger out of which we have to reimburse him for "Comfort B" expenditure incurred during the period March to 24th July, 1944. We are also requested to deduct from this allotment a reserve to meet further supplies to be ordered against "Comfort B". We therefore propose to form a reserve of approximately \$30,000.00 for this purpose. The remaining balance is available for British, Canadian, Palestinian, American, Panamanian, Filipino and Dutch nationals as June "Comfort" money. We estimate that this will work out between \$200 and \$250 per head, but until we know the number of persons who wish to sign for June "Comfort" money we are unable at the moment to indicate the exact amount available per head.

Note:- "Comfort" money for Belgian, Norwegian and Greek nationals will be advised at a later date.

- e) "Comfort" money will as usual be credited to the Bank accounts concerned, but in no individual case must the present bank balance plus either the full amount or a proportion of "Comfort" money exceed \$1,000.00

Comfort Money Regulations



Inside Kitchen n°1 where Meredith worked ...

RETURN TO PEKING

After the first group of internees was repatriated, it was 19 long days before word came that we could leave camp. On October 14 we boarded Japanese military trucks for a four-mile ride to the newly constructed airstrip. Since the Chinese Communist Eighth Army had blown up railway bridges we would be airlifted to Peking rather than traveling by train. Our dear friends, Miss Mary Scott and Mr. Marcy Ditmanson, were also returning to Peking and again would live in OMS quarters since neither of their mission groups had work or housing in that area. We had left our Peking compound for Weihsien, a group of 17, and now 5 of us (counting Sandra) were heading back. What emotions surged through us as we made our final exit through the main gate of the "Courtyard of the Happy Way." We left camp with a small amount of luggage, far less than we had brought in, even though now there were some articles of clothing the U.S. military had given me. But no matter, our hearts were singing, as Martin Luther King, Jr. later expressed, "Free at last! Free at last!"

I thought of Psalm 126:1-3. Never, surely in our life-time, were those words more appropriate. It was as though they were written specifically for us: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion we were like them that dream."

On the tarmac we found a C-46 plane waiting for us, still wearing its olive-green and khaki-brown camouflage. Inside, canvas bucket seats were situated in long, uncomfortable rows along the sides of the plane. Our pilot took a special interest in Sandra, now almost five years old. After takeoff he invited her into the cockpit, and she spent much of the flight in his lap. In two short hours we were landing in Peking. What a contrast to that excruciating night-long journey (and into most of the next day) which had taken us, as captives, from Peking to Weihsien. Back in our "hometown" we felt as free as newly released birds.

On the ground, U.S. Marines were in charge and arranged a convoy of trucks for our transportation. In a remarkable turnabout the Japanese, who so recently

were our masters, were now cast in the roles of coolies, wearing tattered uniforms and handling our baggage. As the procession turned onto the wide Ha Ta Men Street, throngs of Chinese lined both sides of the intersection. With their right hands raised and thumbs extended they screamed, "Ting Hao! Ting Hao!" (number one, the very best).

--- Some months later while traveling in our car near Pittsburgh, we saw two hitchhikers beside the road with thumbs raised. Sandra looked at them carefully and then said, "Oh Daddy, look. Look at those 'Merican guys saying, 'Ting Hao.'"

The word spread quickly through the Chinese communities that the Americans were back. When we returned to the compound our old gate man, Lao Ting, was there to welcome us and resume his job.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 1945.

REV. HELSBY AND FAMILY LIBERATED; NEARLY FOUR YEARS PRISONERS OF JAPS

After spending nearly four years in China as prisoners of the Japs, the Rev. Willard Meredith Helsby and family have been liberated, according to a telegram received last night by relatives from the War Department. Rev. Helsby is the son of Rev. and Mrs. George L. Helsby, 34 Highland Terrace. His father is pastor of the Pilgrim Holiness Church in Gloversville.

No report was received as to the physical condition of the internees. Rev. Helsby was engaged in missionary work in China prior to the outbreak of war. He had with him at the time his wife, Christine, and their daughter, Sandra Kay, about five years old.

The Rev. Helsby upon completion of his theological studies became a missionary of the Oriental Mission Society, an interdenominational organization with headquarters in Los Angeles, Calif. Upon arriving in China the family located near Peiping in September, 1940. He was there during the Jap occupation of the city.

When war between Japan and the United States broke out December 7, 1941, Rev. Helsby and his family were interned in their home in Peiping. The family remained in their own home until March 24, 1942, when they were moved to an internment camp at Weihsien, China. It is understood that while in the camp Rev. Helsby acted as one of the cooks.

Rev. Helsby is well known in Gloversville. He spent his Summer vacations here while he was attending college and worked in the Robison & Smith laundry. Although they have no definite information, relatives are confident Rev. Helsby and his family will be returned to their home here.

While Rev. Helsby was interned, a brother, Lt. Robert D. Helsby, was serving with the U. S. Navy. He spent 18 months on P-T boats during the greater part of the campaign in the Solomon Islands.

*News clipping from
Gloversville (N.Y.) paper.*



<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/>



Our faithful cook, Sung Shih Fu, had survived the war and greeted us with a big smile, ready to return to his kitchen duties. While we were in Weihsien he had found a part-time job with the railroad. One Christmas he was given a tin of pineapple as a gift from his boss. This he carefully stowed away to serve us for this first "welcome home" meal. What dear, thoughtful Chinese co-workers the Lord gave us.

About three days later Lao Ting came leading an official delegation from the Japanese Embassy. Four of them, dressed in formal attire (gray-striped trousers and long, black, morning coats), were carrying large baskets of fruit and flowers. On ribbon streamers decorating each basket, including one for Sandra, were printed these words, "Congratulations, Well Done!"

Shortly after our return to the OMS Bible school campus, we had an unusual request. Our senior Chinese pastor, Reverend Chou Wei Tung, and two Japanese appeared at our door. At this time all Japanese were being rounded up and put into hastily constructed P.O.W. camps until ships were available for their return to their homeland. Our district superintendent, who had at one time studied in Tokyo and was fluent in Japanese, acted as our interpreter. The request that came from this delegation of our recent enemies was that 50 Japanese be permitted to reside in our student dormitories.

What a request this was, coming to us at that point when we were still recovering from the emotional scars and malnutrition of Weihsien. Yet I felt immediately that we should comply, thus sparing the men the hardship of the primitive P.O.W. camps. We did, however, make two stipulations. First, that those selected be civilians, and second, that every Sunday be a day of worship and all Japanese residing on our campus be requested to attend Christian services. They agreed to these conditions and for six weeks I had the joy of preaching salvation messages to them

through my interpreter, Brother Chou. More than a mere turning the other cheek, this was a practical way to demonstrate Christian love and show that we harbored no bitterness. We understood that most of these individuals were victims of a militaristic regime, headed by a few ruthless men intent on establishing "a new order" in East Asia.

While the Japanese were living on our compound, several came from time to time bringing gifts, personal things that were very precious to them. One old grand-mother gave Christine a beautifully carved, white coral pin, which she said had been a gift from her now-dead son. Another gave Sandra a Japanese doll, dressed in an expensive silk costume and enclosed in a 20-inch high glass case. One, a newspaper reporter, presented me with a samurai sword, which had been in his family for more than 200 years (the edict had gone out that absolutely no weapons were permitted to be carried or shipped to Japan). I could see in his eyes how precious this object was as he tenderly placed the weapon in my hands. It was made of finest steel and enclosed in a beautiful leather scabbard.

By the time we returned to the U.S. in late January, these people had become our friends. On the predawn morning we left, almost 50 were on hand to farewell us. Forming a circle about us they sang, "God Be With You 'Til We Meet Again" in Japanese, of course. We joined with them, in English, and they then tearfully bowed us out to the big U.S. Army truck that was to take us to the train station.

With our bank funds still frozen and our small supply of cash running out we were now facing a small financial crisis. Gratefully, however, we were able to file claims for reparations and receive funds from the Japanese Embassy while the FRB currency was still in use. During the war our homes had been used as barracks for the troops. As a result they were now bedbug infested and all the inner walls of our houses were marked with bloody streaks where the little creatures had been squashed. When the money arrived in huge packages of 1000 yuan notes, looking like it had just come from the printers, I made plans to restore our spacious homes to a livable condition. We hired workmen, who disinfected the rooms by burning sulfur; then painters painted the walls and varnished the woodwork. This project of supervising the restoration of our beautiful buildings brought special satisfaction.

The Peking American School, where OMS missionary children had attended, needed to be reopened as soon as possible. Miss Alice Moore, former principal, was now back in Peking and asked

me to help her recover the school's furniture and equipment which had been scattered all over the city. The main PAS building had actually been used as quarters for Japanese troops. Three trucks were allotted to us. Our search took us to all of the primary and secondary schools of the city. We found the piano in one place and teachers' desks in another. The students' desks were easy to spot for they were made of American oak and much superior to the Chinese ones. Soon we had a good portion of the school's property recovered and restored; however, the project was marred by one tragic incident. As one of our trucks, laden with furniture, turned sharply out of a narrow alleyway, a Chinese helper riding on the running board was crushed to death between the vehicle and a large stone pillar. Our hearts were greatly saddened. We gave the family twice the usual funeral expenses. This was quite a large sum of money and for postwar Peking amounted to a generous compensation — though, of course, no amount could make up for their loss.

In the first days after arriving in the city, a Methodist missionary, the Reverend Will Schubert, dressed in a U.S. Special Services uniform, appeared at our front door. He had been appointed by General Huang Jen Ling to do liaison work with U.S. military personnel. Later, in conferring with General Jones of the Marines in charge of all American forces in North China, Will learned that he was encountering special problems in managing logistics for U.S. Navy officers and enlisted men in the Peking area. A new batch was coming every day on three-day shore leaves. These men had excellent service records, and Will felt sure they would appreciate this ancient capital of China. He realized, however, that they would have great difficulty in communicating. His idea was to enlist the help of American missionaries to act as Navy tour guides. But there were very few missionaries around. Most upon liberation had returned to their homelands and, of course, no new recruits were yet able to enter the country. So Christine and I volunteered. We purchased the best guide books and memorized the appropriate sections.

Usually each day there were seven or eight truckloads of Navy personnel, up to 200 men. Early in the morning I went to the Wagonlit Hotel where Will and I met the men and had breakfast with them. We then traveled across the city to the Lama Temple, which perpetuated the lowest form of Tibetan Buddhism involving gross forms of idol worship, with images half animal and half human. (One of the side rooms was actually dedicated to the "fornicating Buddha") From these ornate buildings we went to the nearby

Confucian Temple. This represented quite a contrast. The rooms were kept scrupulously clean, and in place of idols was a single memorial tablet to Confucius, the great teacher of ethics. This was the only object of worship. In a side hall 72 plaques served as memorials to his disciples. In other buildings were classrooms for scholars who devoted themselves to memorizing the writings of the Great Sage, who before the time of Christ gave China the negative golden rule: "Don't do to others what you wouldn't want others to do to you"

By this time Christine had gotten Sandra off to school, planned meals with the cook and taken care of other household jobs. So around 9 a.m., the caravan stopped by the OMS compound to pick her up and continue on to other interesting landmarks.

On the weekends, of course, there were no kindergarten classes so Sandra toured with us all morning. This delighted the men and she was lovingly passed around from one "uncle" to another. Most of them had children of their own and longed to hold a child in their arms. When we stopped at the five tea houses, as we climbed and descended Coal Hill (so named because it was the source of coal supply for the Forbidden City), Sandra was transported up the incline and down on the shoulders of men eager to have her attention and entertain her with small talk. They called her "Little Limey" since she had acquired a British accent from her camp teacher, Miss Evelyn Davies, an English CIM missionary. You'd never know she had American parents!

Our procession then proceeded to the Forbidden City, China's premier museum and showplace. There we inspected the apartments of the Empress Dowager and the throne room where the boy emperor, Pu Yi, was overthrown in the Revolution of 1911 which ushered in the Nationalist government of the Republic. The treasuries of past dynasties were openly displayed and the men "oohed" and "aahed" over their beauty and their inestimable value.

The palace grounds covers 250 acres and encloses what were the living quarters of the court's multitudes of concubines and eunuchs. We toured the Palace of Imperial Peace, the Garden of Tranquility and the Throne Room of Complete Harmony. Finally descending the three marble terraces we exited the Gate of Heavenly Peace.

The last stop of our tour was the Temple of Heaven and the Altar of Heaven just across from it. Our convoy of trucks wound through the front gate, and two miles outside the city came to the six and a half square mile park, with the Temple of Heaven at its

老北京风俗地图 · 1936



FRANK DORN 绘 民国二十五年



28 huge red columns serve as main supports. No nails or metal were used in the temple's construction, and the number 28 is significant. The four nearest the center symbolize the seasons of the year. The next 12 in larger circumference represent the months. And the next 12, an even wider ring, represent the hours of the day. (The early Chinese divided the day into 12 hours, not 24.)

By the time the tour concluded it was well past noon. The two of us were scheduled to eat lunch at a small, but nice, hotel. They were happy to feed us once a day as part of their civic duty. After all, we were promoting tourism at a time when ordinary tourists were not allowed in their country. But often we accompanied several of the men to one of the nicer Chinese restaurants, usually ordering dishes we Americans most appreciate — Peking roast duck, velvet chicken, beef and green peppers, and delicious pork dumplings called chiao tzus. A few weeks of this and we were well on our way to recovery from prison camp

center. We recounted for the men that the Chinese from earliest history and until 100 B.C. were monotheists. Their emperors carried forward this tradition and even through the Manchus, who ruled to the end of the Ching Dynasty of 1911. Once a year, the ruler of China would go to the Altar of Heaven and pray to the Great Spirit for forgiveness for his own sins and the sins of his people. At this time he offered "clouds of incense." Then with his closest court attendants, he walked up to the Temple of Heaven situated on the top of three beautiful marble terraces. Only the emperor himself, however, entered and prayed for bountiful harvests. This unique building is cone shaped and rises 125 feet. The tiers are encircled and covered with deep blue tiles which date back to the Ming Dynasty (1500 A.D.). Inside,

malnutrition!

Each day following lunch, I (Christine) invited all who wished to shop to meet me in front of the hotel. At that time very few shopkeepers spoke any English and, of course, all street signs were in Chinese so it was difficult for the men to accomplish much on their own. Thus I would often have a trail of as many as 17 or more rickshaws following mine. Outside Chien Men (front gate) were favorite shopping alleys, featuring beautiful Peking rugs, carved furniture, embroidery and brassware, etc., which I delighted to "show off." Not only did I help them with their purchases but also frequently discouraged their purchasing for wives or girlfriends such "atrocities" as flimsy red robes embroidered with large purple, green and orange dragons.

Not long after our return to Peking from Weihsien, we received an invitation to attend the official flag raising at the American Embassy. It was a beautiful fall day. The Marine band played the Star-Spangled Banner and the very same flag which had been lowered on December 8, 1941, was now hoisted to the top of the tall flagstaff. What joy and pride surged through us, and what appreciation, as we remembered the great sacrifices that had made possible this moment. How magnificent the Stars and Strips looked waving in the breeze. We are truly a blessed people.

Later, Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek and Madame Chiang came to Peking and all representatives from Allied nations were invited to a formal tea. Many of the top officials in their dress uniforms, replete with medals and battle ribbons, were in attendance. The Generalissimo gave a very warm expression of gratitude for the help China had received from her allies. He then personally greeted each of us. It was a special honor to see this famous couple up close and shake hands with them. They were most gracious.

Our Christmas in Peking, after liberation, will always live in our memories. We did not have much money since accounts were still frozen in the banks, but with some remuneration from the U.S. Navy for our services as tour guides, we had enough for food and some new clothes. One of the Navy boys gave us six, beautiful, fresh oranges which he had thoughtfully brought from his ship. Roy Schlosser, a Nazarene friend working with the U.S. Army First Division, had brought a large can of powdered ice cream mix, along with other gifts. Roy, Marcy Ditmanson and I went to nearby Pei Hai Park and cut ice from the lake, brought it home, resurrected our old hand-cranked freezer from the storeroom, and late that night made homemade ice cream. What a treat!

Christmas was a bonanza of rediscovered joys under the banner of freedom. I remember Sandra's sheer delight with her small gifts. One serviceman, a captain, gave her the bars from his uniform. Another presented her with an eagle insignia. By January of 1946 more and more servicemen were going home and numbers on our tours diminished. By this time the U.S. Navy had also completed the repatriation of the Japanese in North China.

Towards the end of January we met a young sailor, Jack Shadd, who said, "If you will return with me to my ship, I'll introduce you to my captain and I'm sure he'll take you and your family back to the States" Christine had also received several similar invitations from captains who had toured and shopped with us.

By this time several cables had come from OMS headquarters urging us to "come home" We had also learned that OMS leaders, Bud Kilbourne and Lee Jeffries, had arrived in Shanghai to take charge of the resumption of mission activities in China.

So we felt the Lord was now opening the door, making our Stateside return possible. The next day Jack and I boarded a small landing craft which took us 17 miles out to sea, where a 7000-ton freighter was moored. Captain Peterson received me warmly and assured me that, if I could be back with my family in 48 hours, he would take us to San Francisco. When I explained our financial plight he suggested I go to the American Embassy and obtain a promissory note for the payment of our passage, amounting to \$250 per person and half fare for Sandra. This I was able to do, also receiving permission for our friends, Mary Scott and a Methodist, the Reverend Fred Pyke, to join us as well.

Early the next morning I went to the U.S. Embassy and had the necessary guarantees of fare payment notarized. At last we were going home. What excitement and scurrying followed. We packed all through the night. Everything had to be ready for leaving: drapes carefully boxed up, rugs rolled and protected with moth balls, books and mission records stored in metal files, all listed and placed in the storeroom. Early the following morning our group of five, accompanied by Jack, boarded the train and traveled those hundred miles to Tientsin. There we purchased train tickets to Takubar where we were to board ship. Once on the train, however, we noticed to our consternation that we were heading north toward Tungshan. We pulled the overhead emergency cord and explained our situation to the conductor. "No," he informed us, "this train was not going to Taku" So right there in the middle of the countryside we got off with all of our baggage, pondering what to do next. First we bowed together and prayed, asking the Lord's help and guidance. Jack suggested we go back to Tientsin and obtain the use of a jeep. But how to get back to Tientsin? We were several miles away and from where we stood, we couldn't even see a road. We continued to pray and began walking in the direction of what looked like a small house. There we also found a narrow, dusty road and within an hour an American weapons carrier came along. We flagged the driver down and he was glad to oblige. Jack and I boarded the vehicle with thanksgiving and bounced back over the terrible dirt roads to the U.S. car pool.

It was late afternoon when we got back to the rest of

our group still waiting in the open fields. By carefully arranging the baggage and passengers we managed to squeeze six large suitcases and five people into the jeep. The sun was just setting by the time we arrived at the dock. But then what discouraging news awaited us.

Since they had suffered some recent losses, the chief informed us no landing craft was permitted to go out to anchorage after sunset. What to do? The next morning would be too late because our ship would have already sailed. Then another snag. While we huddled in a tight group, discussing and praying, a sailor was sent to inform us that we would not be permitted to spend the night at Taku, since no female visitors were permitted at a military encampment after sunset. To make matters worse there were no hotels, inns, or homes within miles nor had we any transportation. Again we prayed. "We have done all we possibly can, Lord," we pleaded. "With Your help we have come this far, now please hold our hands and show us the next step. We're wholly relying on You."

A moment later an announcement came over the P.A. system that a landing craft would be going to the outer anchorage. Orders had just been received that one other freighter was to proceed to Korea and needed an escort. Praise the Lord! We had our transportation. We crawled over a number of smaller craft, up one side, down the other, and got to our designated LST with all our baggage. We first made

our way to the Korean-bound freighter and then on to our ship, the Carrier Pigeon. What a beautiful sight when it came into view dead ahead, riding high in the water. It was now just a few minutes before midnight, the time the ship was scheduled to weigh anchor. Floodlights illumined the side of the vessel. The only means of boarding was a long rope ladder up the port side. It was a tough climb. Our very sleepy, five-year-old Sandra climbed a slow step up at a time between Christine's arms. The sailors helped with the heavy baggage. At last we were safely aboard.

Our ship stopped briefly at Tsingtao to unload Coca Cola and beer and then headed out to sea, bound for San Francisco. We had been at sea about two weeks when one morning the ship siren sounded an alert. We hastily donned our life jackets and rushed on deck. A few feet from our ship we could see a rusty floating mine with all of its spines protruding. Our captain was embarrassed because the crew had confessed that they used all the ship's ammunition, target shooting at beer cans. However, he radioed our position to Honolulu and later a plane was dispatched to blow up the mine.

On February 19 we came within view of the Golden Gate Bridge. Nearby was a huge sign which read, "Welcome Home. Well Done!" Those words sent a special thrill through us. Of course, we knew they were not intended for missionaries, but somehow, we believed that the Lord put them there as an encouragement to us.

Once in the harbor our China colleagues, Harry Woods and Annie Kartoizian, boarded a small launch and came out to the anchorage of the Carrier Pigeon to welcome us. We were home again in the good old U.S. of A! To my knowledge and in all of OMS annals, we are the only ones who "hitchhiked" home by carrier pigeon and on a promissory note. How beautifully our God provides.

#



With friends, Mary Scott and Marcy Ditmanson, back in Peking after re-lease from camp.

LESSONS

The war and Weihsien compound brought us to a sudden and drastic alteration in the course of our lives. No one comes out of four years of house arrest and Japanese prison camp unchanged. Reflecting on God's dealings with us through those trying years, we have tried to set down some of the most important lessons He was teaching us.

Weihsien was a wonderful laboratory in which to observe the essential differences in human lives. Living, working, even bathing in closer proximity to our fellow-man than we ever would have chosen provided rare opportunity to observe our neighbors under every imaginable circumstance for a prolonged period of time.

The one word that differentiated our lives and those of our fellow believers, from the unbelieving internees, was "hope." Wealthy expatriates, who had come to China to amass a fortune and live in luxury, had at one fell swoop been divested of practically everything they held dear and gave their lives meaning. For the most part, these now disenfranchised souls lapsed into a morose despair. Some attempted suicide.

For us, this trial by fire provided an opportunity such as few Americans of our generation have, to put our doctrine of faith to the test. Most of the familiar props on which we had come to rely were knocked out. Our mission directors, who habitually had looked out for our welfare, were now able to do nothing for us other than enlist prayer support. The familiar circle of friends and relatives were far away, practically on another planet, and we were deprived of even the consolation of their letters. Our dear colleagues, after the first repatriation on the Gripsholm, were gone. As we watched them exit through the Courtyard of the Happy Way gate and climb onto the waiting lorries, we were struck with a sense of aloneness such as we had never before experienced. But what an opportunity for our Lord to prove to us, as He did to the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, that He would never leave us, nor forsake us.

This marvelous "Presence" sustained us and incredibly brought us joy in ways it is impossible to set down on paper. "Back of the Clouds," which we sang as a duet from time to time, was to us more

than a pretty sentiment. It was hard, bedrock fact on which we could stake everything. This hope sustained us up through the long months when all war news was bad and even a promising rumor was hard to come by; through the bleak incarceration of my solitary confinement; through Christine's hospitalization with typhoid when hourly her life hung in the balance. The words of scripture that ran continually through her mind during those awful days were, "My times are in Thy hands."

Two verses were charged with special meaning for me: "For Thou art my hope, O Lord God, Thou art my trust from my youth" (Psalm 71:5), and "But I will hope continually and will yet praise Thee more and more" (Psalm 71:14).

During these days Christine memorized a poem from the pages of Mrs. Charles E. Cowman's *Springs in the Valley*, the volume she had given us on the eve of our departure for China. It reminded us that walled in as we were there was no ceiling overhead that could obstruct our prayers.

NO WALL CAN SHUT HIM OUT

The devil may wall you 'round
But he cannot roof you in;
He may fetter your feet and tie your hands
And strive to hamper your soul with bands
As ever his way has been;
But he cannot hide the face of God
And the Lord shall be your light,
And your eyes and your prayers can rise to the sky
Where His clouds and His winds and His birds go by
And His stars shine out at night.

The devil may wall you 'round;
He may rob you of all things dear,
He may bring his hardest and roughest stone
And think to cage you and keep you alone,
But he may not press too near;
For the Lord has planted a hedge inside,
And has made it strong and tall,
A hedge of living and growing green;
And ever it mounts and keeps between
The trusting soul and the devil's wall.

The devil may wall you 'round,
But the Lord's hand covers you,
And His hedge is a thick and thorny hedge,
And the devil can find no entering wedge
Nor get his finger through;
He may circle about you all day long,

But he cannot work as he would,
For the will of the Lord restrains his hand,
And he cannot pass the Lord's command
And his evil, turns to good.

The devil may wall you 'round,
With his grey stones, row on row.
But the green of the hedge is fresh and fair,
And within its circle is space to spare
And room for your soul to grow;
The wall that shuts you in
May be hard and high and stout,
But the Lord is sun, and the Lord is dew,
And His hedge is coolness and shade for you,
And no wall can shut Him out!

— Annie Johnson Flint

A second lesson powerfully learned was the blessing and privilege of Christian community. I had come from a somewhat strict pietistic fellowship that tended to look with disfavor, if not condemnation, upon other Christians who did not subscribe to their exacting standards of holiness. This background had bred in me a suspicion of sundry churches and denominations, rumored to be liberal or tainted by modernism.

Even before coming to Weih sien, our house arrest environment created a glorious melting pot in which Christians of every stripe were thrown together and of necessity made dependent upon one another. Amazing and wonderful discoveries followed. Saints were found in the most unlikely places, and the Holy Spirit incredibly present as much in staid Anglicans as in fervent Pentecostals. Marcy Ditmanson with his liturgical Lutheran upbringing became perhaps my closest friend. Dear John Hayes from the "tainted modernistic" Presbyterians was discovered to be a prince of a man, whose friendship we held in inestimable esteem. Hard times, like disasters, draw God's people together in a fellowship which magnifies our commonalities and in which differences are so ignored they almost disappear. In this respect, Weih sien was for us a gracious broadening of our lives.

What suffering we experienced as prisoners of war bonded us to our Chinese brothers and sisters in a very precious way. God had called us to China to give our lives for that great people, and now the war took us out of our comfortable missionary ghetto and cast us into the same fires of suffering as our national Christians were experiencing. Though our ordeal in no way compared to their double affliction, first

under the Japanese and then under the Communists, it did, nevertheless, bind us to them in a special way leading us to return to Taiwan for 22 years of further ministry to the Chinese.

In 1981 when I visited Mainland China, our tour group met a number of Christians. When they asked us one day if we had ever suffered for our faith, I could say, "Yes, I know a little about that"

Thirdly, in an age of plenty and a lavish abundance that has made us a nation of too-vocal and discriminating malcontents, the "internship" of Weih sien was a wonderful schooling in the art of gratitude for small favors. After years of Weih sien bread and fish soup, it is easy to give heartfelt thanks for a simple meal of meat-loaf and a green salad. The Christmas of 1944 (our last of four as prisoners), with its crude little homemade gifts so lovingly fashioned, will always stay with us as a symbol of the true essence of gift giving.

I conclude here with a quote from a most improbable source, Langdon Gilkey who wrote Shantung Compound, in many ways the definitive book on our Weih sien prison experience. As a young man he entered camp imbued with a philosophy shaped by the evolutionary hypothesis and liberalism of the day, which boldly declared that humankind is innately good, would continue to improve, and presently usher in a new world of peace and goodwill. Commenting on the profound insight he gained through the Weih sien experience he writes:

"The only hope in the human situation is that the 'religiousness' of men find its true center in God and not in the many idols that appear in the course of our experience. If men are to forget themselves enough to share with each other, to be honest under pressure, and to be rational and moral enough to establish community, they must have some center of loyalty and devotion, some source of security and meaning, beyond their own welfare.

"This center of loyalty beyond themselves cannot be a human creation greater than the individual but still finite, such as family, nation, tradition, race or church. Only the God who created all men, and so represents none of them exclusively, only the God who rules all history, and so is the instrument of no particular historical movement, only the God who judges His faithful as well as their enemies and loves and cares for all can be the creative center of human existence.

"The ultimate concern of each man must raise him above his struggles with his neighbor instead of making these conflicts more bitter and intense. Given

THE AFTERYEARS

an ultimate security in God's eternal love, and an ultimate meaning to his own small life in God's eternal purposes, a man can forget his own welfare and for the first time look at his neighbor free from the gnawings of self-concern.

"From this we can perhaps now see what the man of real faith is like. He is a man whose center of security and meaning lies not in his own life, but in the power and love of God; a man who has surrendered an overriding concern for himself, so that the only really significant things in his life are the will of God and his neighbor's welfare. Such faith is intimately related to love, for faith is an inward self-surrender, a loss of self-centeredness and concern which transforms a man and frees him to love."

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Fifty years have now sped by since our Weih sien prison camp days, and in so many ways these years were only possible because of the hammering, molding and refining effect of the earlier days of deprivation. They provided us with an armor for meeting the difficulties; they were an object lesson proving that perseverance wins in the end and God doesn't fail — even in the roughest of times. As we emerged from our years in camp it was with a much deeper reliance upon God and the certainty that He fulfills His promises!

The first morning, after arriving at OMS

headquarters in Los Angeles, we were invited to tea at the home of OMS President, Mrs. Lettie B. Cowman. How godly and gracious she was. She looked at my pea-green army jacket, khaki shirt and trousers and particularly noticed my army boots. In the course of conversation she asked, "Would you object if I sent Lydia Bemmels (her nurse and companion) with you to buy a new pair of shoes?"

"No, of course not," I replied. Afterwards she requested that I give the old shoes to her, and later we heard she actually took up missionary offerings using those army boots as offering plates.

We were booked on one of the nicer trains from Los Angeles to Richmond, Virginia. Once, while sitting in the lounge car, the hostess came and visited with us. When there was a lull in the conversation, Sandra took

her hand and while looking intently at her vividly painted fingernails asked in a plaintive tone, "Do they really hurt you very much?" We had five years of catching up to do.

In Richmond we were royally welcomed by Christine's family, relatives and church friends. We were made to feel special in that God had wonderfully protected us and spared our lives even in times of great danger. The Lord so helped that there was no thought of "pity poor me" or "what a difficult time we have had" but only praise for deliverance. How much we had for which to be thankful. After about ten days, we went by train to Gloversville, New York, where Mother and Dad were pastoring. They



Furlough 1947, with baby, Gery, preparing to return to China.

rolled out the red carpet for us. In short order Dad, knowing our need, scouted around for a used car. OMS had by this time sent a check for back allowance and so we had money in hand. In a providential set of circumstances we were led to a dealer who had a demonstrator, which he sold to us for \$850 a '46 Ford V-8 sedan. In the immediate postwar months, this in itself was a small miracle.

OMS granted permission for further graduate study if I would do weekend deputation meetings and Christine would take meetings in Virginia, West Virginia and North Carolina. She would travel by Greyhound bus, even though pregnant with our second child. In September, 1946, I entered The Biblical Seminary in New York. I was eager to learn the inductive method of Bible study to teach in our school in China. Late in April I received a phone call informing me that Christine had entered the hospital early that morning. I hopped the first train to Washington, D. C., and then took the next bus to Richmond. When I phoned Mother Camden, she broke the news that a healthy baby boy had been born that afternoon. I exclaimed, "A boy! Wonderful!" All in the waiting room got the announcement, with grins all around! That year I finished two-thirds of the requirements for my Master of Sacred Theology degree. But completion of the project would have to wait until our furlough of '61-'62.

Just as soon as final exams were written I left with two students for Winona Lake, Indiana, driving all night. Then, almost immediately, I went on to Asbury College because my brother-in-law, Dr. Eugene Erny, was the speaker for missionary day just prior to graduation. The night before commencement, however, I awakened with the hemorrhaging of a duodenal ulcer and was rushed to Lexington's Good Samaritan Hospital. For two days my life seemed to hang on a fragile thread. Christine came quickly from Richmond, leaving six-week-old Gery with her mother. Many were praying and Asbury students volunteered to give enough blood for nine transfusions. Slowly I began to recover, but for six months it was necessary to live on a diet of milk and strained baby food.

Thus, our return to the Orient was delayed until April, 1948. And, of course, we wanted to get back to „our people — our work.” But, our returning at that time was very difficult for me (Christine). Some weeks before our projected sailing date, my mother had had a mild heart attack. She remained at home but needed a great deal of bed rest. We had planned to drive across the country and sell our car in L.A. Now as the time of our departure drew nearer, I

began "suggesting" to her that Meredith and Sandra would go on schedule, and I would keep ten-month-old Gery and help there at home. But each time I mentioned such a change in plans, she became agitated, saying we were needed in China and she would not even think of our delaying. I talked with her doctor, and he, too, encouraged me to go, saying her primary need was a time of worry-free rest. In praying for the Lord's guidance, I could find nothing (but my heart) that would warrant my staying. So with a tearful farewell we left. Ten days later Dad phoned us in Los Angeles, saying Mom was in the hospital. Then I knew I must have the Lord's clear word for going or staying. Gery was teething and irritable, and I was trying to get clothing for the four of us washed and ironed for the just over three-week voyage. I found very little time in our cramped quarters to get alone with the Word. But I prayed morning, noon, and night. Whatever else I was doing, I was praying. And, as always, He gave a very definite answer — "Leave your mother with Me." So we sailed and, of course, no message reached us while we were aboard the ship. We were in Nanking seven weeks before the cable came. Her funeral had been the week before. Yes, sometimes He asks hard things of His children but never, never, without the promise of His loving Presence.

Our new assignment was Nanking, central China (Meredith continues), where the Uri Chandler family and we were commissioned to rebuild the OMS Bible Institute. (The former Shanghai school had been bombed and burned during the war. Now it was decided to relocate in Nanking, the capital of the Republic.) We embarked upon our work with enthusiasm, started Bible classes in rented quarters, and located property for a new seminary campus. Then things began to fall apart. Chinese Communist troops started to roll down over China like a tidal wave, and soon we were hearing the big guns booming just across the Yangtse River from us. We had been back only seven months when evacuation notices came from the American Embassy. In 48 hours we packed all we could. The U.S. brought a destroyer up the river, taking Christine and our two children along with many other Americans to Shanghai, from where they sailed on the S.S. General Gordon to San Francisco.

Uri and I stayed on to close up that center of work. Stoves, desks, refrigerators, files and an assortment of mission equipment were crated and shipped out. We sold a few articles, but nobody wanted to buy anything with the prospect of a Communist take-over any day. The rate of currency exchange at that time was \$2,000,000 Chinese to \$1 U.S., which meant that

when we sold a living room suite for 10 million we were getting only about \$5 in our money. The pressures were great and varied. Would we be prisoners again? My ulcer became active and I was having stomach spasms. In spite of crowds fleeing the city, I managed to squeeze on a train bound for Shanghai and on New Year's Day checked into the China Inland Mission Hospital there.

After two weeks of bed rest, soft, bland diet and milk, I was told I could proceed to Canton. I made a booking on a war-vintage C-46. One engine sputtered and died, but we landed safely in the south China city.

Four months of recuperation followed, during which I enjoyed fellowship with the OMS group — the Howard Hills, the Dale McClains, and the Loren Sparks families. My new appointment arrived telling me to go to Allahabad, India, where I would fill in as academic dean for Wesley Duewel who was doing doctoral studies at the University of Cincinnati.

So in mid-May of 1949 I left Canton by bus for Hong Kong. The next stage was a flight in a non-pressurized DC-4 to Calcutta. The 90 of us aboard gasped for breath as we climbed to 13,000 feet over the mountains to land in Rangoon for the scheduled overnight stay.

Rangoon was hot and humid, and we had little time to clean up before the dinner hour in our hotel. Upon checking in I hurriedly hung my suit coat in the closet, washed, and went down to the evening meal. It had been a long eventful day, and soon after dinner I retired. At 6 a.m. we were called, and after a quick breakfast left for the airport.

When our bus was halfway to the airport, I suddenly remembered my suit coat hanging in the closet. The bottom of my world seemed to drop away as I realized that my passport, traveler's checks, and instructions from Eugene Erny (then India's field director) were in the pockets of that coat. What could I do? My mind became a cauldron of confusion. To cancel my flight would mean waiting in Rangoon for another week. In my imagination I could hear Christine saying, "You need a wife, Dear!"

At the airport we were soon called to board the plane. I filed in with the other passengers, found my seat, and fastened my seatbelt. One by one the engines came to life . . . except the fourth one. Grinding away on the starter, the pilot had no success. Finally the stewardess announced, "As you can see, we're having a minor problem with motor four. Passengers will please return to the waiting room. As soon as repairs are made we'll proceed to

Calcutta."

Was the Lord working on my behalf? Running to the nearest phone, I tried to call the hotel. It was a long distance call and with insurgent troops operating near the city, the connection was extremely poor. When I finally got through, I yelled into the mouthpiece to be heard but the receptionist offered little hope. "The taxi drivers are not honest," she insisted, "and the hotel will take no responsibility for the coat or its contents"

"But, please," I begged, "send the first available taxi and tell the driver I'll make it worth his while."

The suspenseful moments dragged by. Each ten minutes seemed to be two hours. I paced back and forth in front of the airport looking for the taxi, while lifting urgent requests heavenward.

Finally, a rickety vintage cab chugged up in a cloud of dust. The driver had my coat with all of the contents in place! My heart did a tango as I paid that Burmese cabby liberally and thanked the Lord over and over.

Within minutes I heard, "Repairs are completed and CNAC's flight will proceed to Calcutta." We re-boarded and soon looked out at the fluffy, cumulus clouds over the Bay of Bengal. Settling back I reveled in a new understanding of a caring Heavenly Father who delayed a planeload of passengers long enough for a poor, forgetful missionary to retrieve a very important coat.

India was a tough assignment. This was 1949, shortly after India's independence, when all white faces were viewed with suspicion. When I stepped from the plane in Calcutta it was like entering a steam bath — high humidity and temperature above the 100 degree mark. The OMS Bible Seminary, for North India, is located in Allahabad at the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna (now Yumuna) Rivers, one of the most sacred spots in all of the country. Classes began the first week in July, and I immediately plunged into class preparation and lectures. It was not until late August that word came informing me that Christine and the children had obtained a booking aboard the S.S. City of Lucknow, a British freighter, and would be arriving in Bombay in late September.

To be sure, I traveled to Bombay to meet them. We had been apart almost ten months; and in the meantime she had crossed the Pacific, gone from west to east in the U.S. with two small children, and kept house many months for her father in Richmond, Virginia. Finally, space was found on this particular ship sailing out of Montreal, crossing the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Indian

Ocean. Then, to my dismay, I learned that because of crowded docks the ship was anchored far away in the outer harbor. I managed to hire a small rowboat and got out to the S.S. City of Lucknow. What a joyful reunion, but our son didn't even know me!

Our India assignment lasted till 1954. These were five years of growing and learning with heavy class responsibilities for the 30 or so students. I especially enjoyed teaching New Testament Greek (with the aid of J. Gresham Machen's textbook) while Christine taught Old Testament. Dr. Eugene Erny was elected president of OMS and in February, 1950, he and his family departed India for Los Angeles headquarters. That year he bequeathed to me the job of editing Revival Magazine and the writing of a correspondence course on the Book of Acts. These proved to be labors of love, and I greatly enjoyed the many hours of study and the proofreading of each month's magazine. The press facility was extremely poor and type was hand set. Yet the letters of appreciation and of spiritual help and blessing were a great encouragement to Christine and me.

An enjoyable part of our assignment was to lead youth sings at a private school for Anglo-Indian students. Most Monday mornings Christine or I played the piano, led in the singing of choruses, and then she gave an object lesson. We loved those young people and were grateful for the privilege of telling them more of His love.

The annual Spiritual Life Convention was a high point of each year. This provided opportunity to reach out to the whole community and enjoy the ministries of outstanding evangelists. Five hundred people and more would pack out the shamiana (tent pavilion) erected in front of the school's administration building for those eight days of special meetings.

We witnessed, and had part in, the beginnings and rise of the Evangelical Fellowship of India. This annual convocation brought a whole new perspective for cooperative evangelical missions in India. It was an encouragement to us, who were working in areas where few were willing to cut off their chutia (the long lock of hair at the base of the head) and step out as witnesses for Christ. One family actually committed their son to an insane asylum rather than permit him to take Christian baptism.

On September 25, 1950 (the 10th anniversary of our sailing to Peking), Sheryl Lynn was born. Christine was in an Anglo-Indian clinic where conditions were far from ideal. This arrival of our second daughter and third child was cause for rejoicing.

Visitors from the U.S. brought great uplift to help us when the going was difficult. Miss Lois Richardson and Miss Carrie Hazzard came as choice servants of God. Dr. Stanley Tam and the Byron Crouses brought great encouragement on a tour that marked the beginning of the Men For Missions movement in OMS. Dr. and Mrs. Dwight Ferguson followed shortly thereafter, and we caught their burning vision to involve laymen in the task of carrying out the Great Commission. During the three-years that Garnett Phillippe was directing the North India work, an agreement with Bible Churchmen's Mission Society was effected whereby B.C.M.S. would provide us faculty members and their students would train along with OMS young people. We greatly enjoyed fellowship with the Reverend Sam and Mary Esther Burgoyne and the Reverend Robert Brough.

During our time in Allahabad a tragedy occurred during the January, 1954, Kumbh Mela, the greatest Hindu festival which is held every twelve years. It had rained the night before and the ground was muddy. At dawn; just following the coming of the Sadhus (holy men) up from the Ganges River, throngs of pilgrims began pushing and shoving to get into the water for a sacred bath. Timing was of vast importance because of the belief that the water was now more sacred, more efficacious due to the Sadhus recent presence in it. This brought on a stampede of immense proportions, and people were trampled to death. A police inspector with whom we talked said he counted more than 1000 bodies, their noses and mouths packed with mud. They werestacked up like cord wood at least eight feet high. The following night our sky was aglow as a huge funeral pyre lighted the whole area. What a grim demonstration of false worship — with so many precious ones suddenly ushered into eternity.

Furlough time had come. In Bombay we boarded a P. & O. liner for England where we spent a few days visiting friends and then reveled in the amenities furnished on the S.S. United States to New York. While in London we received the news that Dr. C. P. Culver, OMS home-land director, had suffered a heart attack and passed into the presence of the Lord. His death would greatly alter our plans for further graduate study.

We were in India when the mission revised its regulations concerning missionary support. Before that time everything came out of the "same sock" — the general fund. Now, we were told, missionaries would be responsible for raising their own funds to cover allowances, travel, equipment, etc. Support requirements were calculated in terms of \$5-a-month



*On furlough
1961. Children:
Sandra and Gery
(standing) Sheryl
and Gordon
(seated).*

units called "shares" and the total number depended, of course, upon the size of the family and the living costs on the various fields.

Due to the death of Charles Culver, we were asked to stay in the U.S. two years instead of the usual one, to help in homeland ministries. I was appointed head of the Prayer Circle Department and worked out of the Winona Lake office, while Christine and the children lived in Wilmore, Kentucky.

That year we had practically no deputation services. Then we moved to Winona Lake and I knew that the time had come when we must face this share challenge head on, if we were to get back to the Orient.

Now it was quite an easy and simple thing when we were in meetings to appeal for support for other missionaries but considerably harder to ask for funds for ourselves. And I'm afraid that what we said often sounded like, "You wouldn't want to help support the Helsbys, would you?" Needless to say, we had very few takers.

Thus "raising support" loomed before us as a huge obstacle. We had been assigned to Taiwan and the required number of shares for us was nearly 100. Wonderfully in this furlough time the Lord had blessed us with a full complement, for with the happy arrival of our second son, Lee Gordon, we now had two boys and two girls. So now we were in need of shares for six: Christine recalls that every day as she knelt by the bed, she found it almost impossible to

pray for the Taiwanese, to whom we were being sent, or for any other request for her eyes were riveted on the devil who, seated on the opposite side of the bed, was holding high a placard on which was written in enormous letters, 100 shares ? 100 shares — 100 SHARES. This went on for weeks until she felt truly defeated.

Then after one final night of tossing and turning and viewing these impossible placards, she knew she must find the Lord's answer. Ever since college days she had looked to the Word for guidance. So she covenanted to stay in the Bible until the Lord gave her a settling promise that this share requirement was of Him and, therefore, He was in this with us. By finally reaching this point of determination in the matter, in less than a week He definitely put His finger on II Chronicles 25:9, "But what shall we do for the hundred talents [which she, of course, interpreted shares], and the man of God answered, the Lord is able to give thee much more than this." And He did!

God has never failed us. His promise was fulfilled and on August 31, 1956, we arrived in Taiwan to resume our ministry among the Chinese.

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TAIWAN, 1956-1978

Our China colleagues, Uri Chandler and Mildred Rice, were on the dock in Keelung, Taiwan, waving us in. Our family now was Gordon, 10 months; Sheryl, almost 6; Gery, 9; Sandra, soon to be 16; Christine, 40; and me, 42. With China mainland and India in our back-grounds we were supposed to be "seasoned" missionaries, yet we felt like babes in a new culture. Although Mandarin is the official language in Taiwan, the Republic of China, we had been away from China long enough to have forgotten much of what we'd learned in that first war-interrupted term. Certainly we were far from fluent.

The prospect of staying very long in Taiwan was uncertain at best. Mao Tse Tung's troops were clearly preparing for an invasion of the island. All of us were urged to locate near a bomb shelter and required to have one suitcase packed for immediate evacuation. As our ship approached Taiwan we could hear the booming of the big guns on the mainland as they shelled the tiny island of

Quemoy, a thorn in the side of the Peking regime. I remember going next door to the U.S.

M.A.A.G. (Military Advisory and Assistance Group) compound to attend "evacuation strategy sessions." From our position in central Taiwan, U.S. Army officers agreed that the best means of evacuation would be by helicopter. Lists of U.S. citizens were drawn up indicating those who would leave first in the event of an emergency. Would we have one month, one year, to work? No one dared guess.

Taiwan was the Chinese provincial designation adopted after World War II because the former name, Formosa (Island Beautiful), had colonial overtones. Taiwan means "terraced bay" and is descriptive of the island's landscape. It's a tropical island, 90 miles off the coast of China, with a land area about the size of Maryland. The anticipated invasion never took place and the Lord permitted us to have 22 years of service in Taiwan. Here we saw all four of our children receive their high school diplomas from Morrison Christian Academy. Over these years the island moved from a poor "agricultural economy to a strong industrial state, with the same environmental problems which plague Western nations. Huge



developments of textiles, electronic components, petroleum, plastics, fertilizer, export processing zones and auto assembly plants changed the whole landscape. Many large U.S. corporations had subdivisions in Taiwan, thus taking advantage of the cheaper labor market.

From the outset, OMS had a three-fold policy evangelism, leadership training, and the planting of indigenous, self-supporting churches. In the early years (1927) Pastor Abbi came from the Japan OMS work and did a commendable job of evangelization in Taiwan. A number of churches were built and thrived until forced to close their doors during the difficult World War II years. When we arrived in 1956, nine churches were in the OMS association and they were struggling. Parishioners depended greatly on the distribution of relief clothing, cheese and powdered milk.

Lowell Williamson joined the OMS Every Creature Crusade in the early '50s, and with a team of Taiwanese evangelists held a series of tent meetings largely in Pingtung and surrounding areas. As a result additional churches were started. Ed Erny came in '58, delaying his wedding for two years, and with a team steadily did Every Creature Evangelism in Yuanlin, Toulieu, Hualien and Wufeng. He saw new churches established. Ed made our home his home base when not out in meetings, and fellowship was most enjoyable, particularly on occasional evenings of Scrabble.

Under the free enterprise system, the economy of Taiwan aided by the Lend-Lease program began to improve — so much so that it had the rare distinction of being a nation which has paid off all indebtedness to the U.S. incurred during the Lend-Lease era.

The one facet of the OMS strategy which most gripped our imagination was the training of young men and women for the ministry. An earlier Bible school, in the northern city of Hsinchu, established by Reverend John Wang and Mr. Peter Keene, now merged with the school in Taichung. The Taiwan Holiness Church, working in cooperation with OMS, designated the newly built campus their official training center.

Elmer Kilbourne, first principal, became acquainted with the mayor of Taichung and on occasion played tennis with him. The mayor made a seven-acre former Japanese property available to OMS for a price far below market value, about \$5000 U.S. In the four years prior to our arrival, the campus had been developed with spacious lawns, flowering shrubbery, an administration building with classroom/office space, and dormitories for students. Four homes for

missionary families and two apartments for single teachers were constructed. Ample housing for Taiwanese staff was provided. The faculty, largely transplanted from Peking, included the Woods, Chandlers, Rices, Miss Annie Kartoian, Wesleys and Helsbys.

In time, the Elmer Kilbournes were reassigned to Korea, and Harry Woods was named Taiwan field director. In China he had been our mentor, and we



With our inimitable colleague, Mildred Rice, at Christmas Dinner in Taichung, Taiwan, 1976.

had not forgotten those initiation days in Peking (1940-1943). Though Harry could at times be rigid, to us he was a father figure with whom we could always talk over our problems. We will always remember his sense of humor and his contagious laugh at a pleasantry or wry pun. We also enjoyed good fellowship with Uri and Edna Chandler. Uri was the organizer, the business manager and treasurer. He spoke fluent Mandarin and both taught and preached in Chinese. Much of the responsibility for funding and developing the first Morrison Christian Academy campus, just north of the Taichung city limits, was on Uri's shoulders. One of my early experiences was wading around in the waist-high weeds and driving stakes for the first building (the girl's dorm) on the land which became known as the No. 100 Morrison Road campus.

In the early years of the Bible College few students were high school graduates, academic requirements were lower, and diplomas were given at the end of a three-year course. Soon we realized the curriculum needed to be upgraded. A three-year preparatory course was initiated to give young people high school equivalency, and also a four-year "upper course." The

school's name was changed to the Central Taiwan Theological College, and the curriculum broadened to include more college subjects. The quality of our faculty gradually improved and by the 1970s students were graduated with a B.Th. degree. The student body was not large, usually between 30 and 40, and yet these became key pastors and church workers. We always tried to view the classroom as a workshop for molding character and developing leaders who would be the means of bringing living water to their people.

Next a program of extension study was devised for early graduates. By attending a series of seminars these Christian workers could earn 32 hours of further credit, upgrading their diplomas to the B.Th. degree. Outstanding professors from abroad came and gave freely of their time. Among them there were Dr. John Keith, Dr. John Cho, Dr. Hattori, Dr. Charles Carter, Dr. Everett Cattell, and others. This continuing education gave our workers greater credibility among the people to whom they ministered.

Upon our arrival in Taiwan leadership changes were imminent. In 1959, the Chandler family was due for furlough and returned to the U.S. Uri, who had a back-ground in construction, took the assignment of helping develop the Greenwood, Indiana, OMS headquarters property. The main office of the mission was now to be moved from Los Angeles to a more central location. Due to overwork, Uri came down with flu which was complicated by kidney failure. What a great sense of loss came to us when in September 1965, we learned that he had passed through heaven's portals. Shortly thereafter, the furlough of the Rolland Rice family arrived. While itinerating in the midwest, Rolland suffered a severe heart attack. Though he recovered and returned to California for recuperation, two years later a second attack took his life.

Since the Harry Woods family had retired earlier, our Taiwan field faced a desperate need for leadership. I was asked to take the position of principal of our seminary, which office I filled until our retirement in 1978. In 1972 the Seminary campus was redeveloped under the Reverend Lowell Williamson's supervision. Just over one acre of the property was sold, and nine new more functional buildings constructed.

The OMS principle of developing young pastors and evangelists for important positions remains valid. In 1978 we bade farewell to Taiwan with many tears. The baton was passed to Dr. John Su (Shao Hsing) who was elected president of Central Taiwan



Celebrating Meredith's parents 50th wedding anniversary. All children, their spouses and grandchildren were present.

Theological College.

Though we are now retired from the work in Taiwan, the ministry goes on and young people continue to be trained for the building of His Kingdom until He returns.

So we were back in the States, but there was something different "in the feeling." For the first time since becoming part of OMS in '39, I (Christine) was not shopping for the next five years. The mission office booked us in deputation meetings for 18 months which finished out 40 years of service. But as we traveled and spoke, meeting old friends, I had to constantly remind myself that I didn't need to be always on the lookout for sales, shopping for supplies for another term. We weren't going anywhere. What a sobering thought.

But our loving Lord always has a way of smoothing the bumps ahead as He leads His children. And He didn't have to remind me of a promise He'd given me some two years earlier while in Taiwan and praying about that huge difficult word, retirement, which seemed to bring the future so near. His word to me in both I Corinthians 17:10 and I Kings 2:24 was He would "build a house" for us. I'm so grateful that over the years when the Lord has given me a definite

promise I can accept it and hold on to it as "very truth" When I shared this promise with friends, however, not all seemed to rejoice with me. I could see from their facial expressions that they were thinking, "How can poor missionaries with hardly a dollar to their name expect to build a house? Christine's really gone off the deep end this time." But still I knew and so we began looking for property.

We felt led to start our search in North Carolina, though we were acquainted with only six people in the whole state. In between meetings in New York, Pennsylvania and other states we'd get back to seeking that "just-right" spot which He had chosen for us. He had seen our four children through college, but now we simply had no money. Still I held tightly to His Word. When we inquired about a housing loan at the banks, the reply was very blunt, "You just don't qualify."

However they didn't know what we knew, that it's far better to qualify in His sight. We were able to borrow a few dollars from friends, and Christian builder, Jim Hicks, agreed to start the foundation. So when the foundation got about three feet above ground level I began asking for a name for this, His house — one which would elicit questions and thus



The OMS family in Taiwan at a mission retreat at Sun Moon Lake, 1977. (Meredith and Christine, back row center.)

give opportunity to testify to His provision. Ten days later the name came clearly to me during my morning quiet time. "I will build him a 'Sure House' " (I Samuel 2:35).

Then perhaps He wanted us to be sure, sure that He was really able to do what He had promised. All funds exhausted, work on the house stopped for six months. When He wants to bless us there are always periods of testing. I needed and made more time in the Word, with Him. As if to rebuke any rising doubts He gave the verse, "What is the thing the Lord has said unto thee?" And the Word filled my heart with fresh assurance. In August 1980, Sure House was completed. So if any of you are traveling in this direction, come, rejoice with us over His handiwork.

My thoughts often return to the promise He gave us as we entered prison camp, "When He puts forth His own sheep He goes before them" (John 10:4). That precious word continues to hold true. God never revokes His promises.

#

Celebrating our 50th anniversary with children and grandchildren — September 1989.



Cutting the cake at our fiftieth.





Helsby siblings with spouses: (L to R) Eugene and Esther Erny, Philip and Helen, Meredith and Christine, Bob and Colene, 1983.



Retirees.



"Sure House" Highpoint, N.C.

Gery and our beloved Spiz, Taichung, Taiwan, 1959.

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OMS INTERNATIONAL

OMS International (formerly the Oriental Missionary Society) was founded in 1901 by two Chicago telegraphers, Charles E. Cowman and E. A. Kilbourne. Their work, initially in Japan, became noted for its then unique focus on:

- (1) training national workers,
- (2) establishing fully indigenous churches, and
- (3) placing the Word of God in each home.

As a result OMS now ministers in 15 countries: Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Indonesia, India, Greece, Spain, France, Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, Haiti and Mexico. Today 475 missionaries work in partnership with over 5600 national co-workers. A total of 2577 organized churches tally membership of some 703,000. The mission operates 19 Bible seminaries and institutes whose graduates number more than 8800. Secondary, primary, and vocational schools are conducted, along with camps and night classes. Through door-to-door visitation, 138 Every Creature Crusade teams establish an average of three new congregations each week.

Radio 4VEH, owned and operated by OMS, reaches into many countries from Haiti. Ministries of compassion provide — in cooperation with the national church — care for orphans, widows, and delinquents; the digging of wells; and cottage-industry training. Medical teams treat over 26,700 patients annually.

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