

THE CHILDREN OF WEIHSIEN

1943 — 1945

Book 1

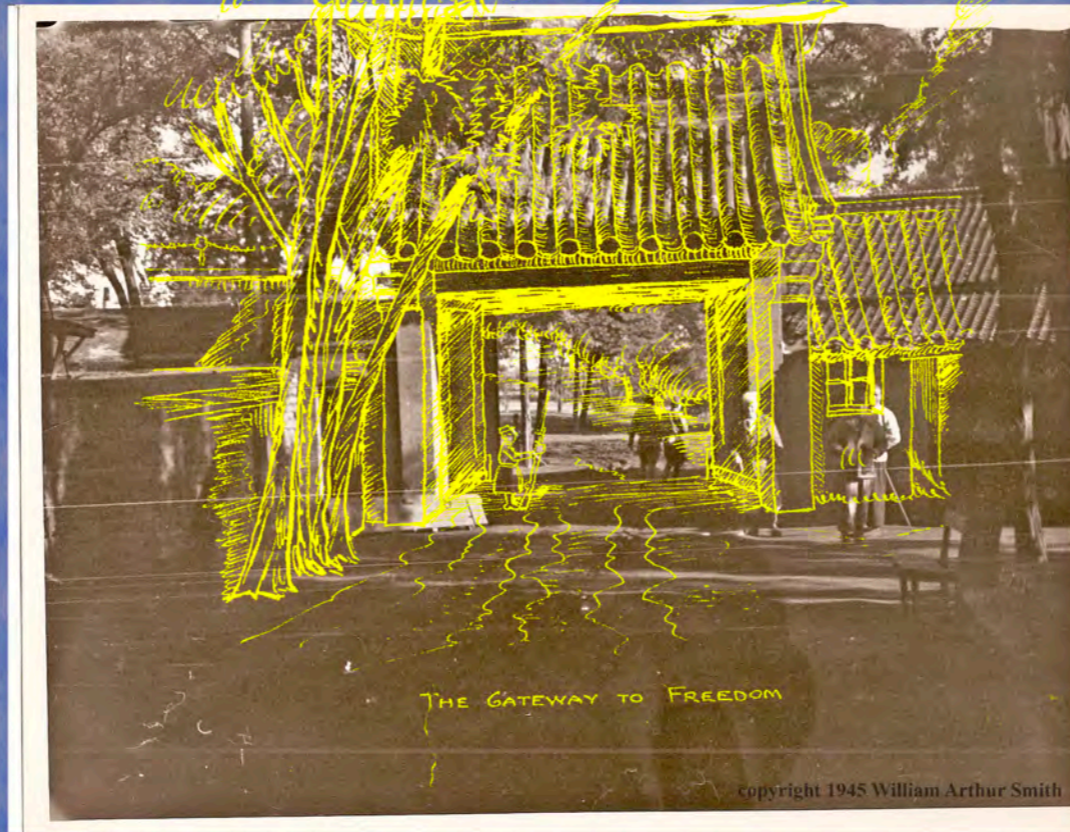
(private edition)

© All the children of Weihsien, ex-prisoners of the Japanese during World War II in China.
Excerpts:
<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org>

		age in 1945
David	Allen	11
Peter	Bazire	14
David	Beard	16
David	Birch	13
Joyce	Bradbury née Cooke	17
Ron	Bridge	11
Mary	Broughton née Hoyte	15
Brian	Butcher	5
Kay	Canning née Allan	3
Norman	Cliff	20
Eddie	Cooke	13
Anne	de Jongh	14
Albert	de Zutter	13
John	de Zutter	15
Fred	Dreggs	19
Judith	Hamins	24
Emmanuel	Hanquet	31
Alison	Holmes	8
Estelle	Horn née Cliff	16
Georgeanna	Knisely née Reinbrecht	12
Janette	Ley née Pander	7
Pamela	Masters née Simmons	18
Stephen	Metcalf	18
Raymond	Moore	10
Leonard	Mostaert	5
Audrey	Horton née Nordmo	12
Stanley	Nordmo	18
Leopold	Pander	4
Natasha	Petersen née Somoff	18
Teddy	Pierson	10
Mary	Previte née Taylor	13
Kathleen	Rictor née Nordmo	15
Christine	Sancton née Talbot	3
Alexander	Strangman	16
Gay	Stratford née Talbot	14
Peter	Talbot	7
James	Taylor III	16
Stanley	Thompson	14
Sylvia	Walker née Tchoo	7
George	Watts	14
Dwight W	Whipple	9

Children are often the innocent victims of the various and incomprehensible conflicts originated by "grown-ups." This is as true today as it was then -- all over the world.

THE CHILDREN of WEIHSIEN - 1943 - 1945





I remember that I had a dream.

World War II was over. I had this nightmare that came back to me, night after night — always the same dream and just before I wake up, I see myself bare footed, almost naked in the middle of a light brown dirty slope, surrounded by big dark grey stones, under a blue sky without clouds and the sun shining bright.

People running all over the place.

Collective hysteria.

I don't understand what is going on. I am completely panicked. Somebody picks me up — that is when I wake up.

It happened in Weishien one hot summer day of 1945! We were on the point of being liberated



I remember using slates and chalk for some subjects and activities such as maths, but we also had a few notebooks which we used until we got to the end of the book, then we turned the book upside down and wrote between the lines. There was a pot belly stove in the middle of the room, but fuel was difficult to get. We were able to scrounge coal dust and, learning from others in the camp, we mixed the dust with dirt and water, then formed them into briquettes. They didn't burn very well, but had to do.

*

It was basically 'social gardening'. I can't remember who else was involved, apart from the teenage White Russian girl from N.E. China. We enjoyed messing around with seeds and plants, trying to get things to grow.

There was some sort of thatched enclosure nearby, in which we took breaks from gardening if the sun was too hot, as it was quite often. Jim Taylor has informed me that some of our school staff, keeping an eagle eye, it seems, on our activities, were concerned lest there was some sort of hanky-panky going on in there at these times! Can anyone else better describe the 'thatched enclosure'?

*

I Remember eating gao liang and lu dou for breakfast in Kitchen #1?

*

I remember that day, when, lying on my mattress in mid-morning, I heard the drone of an airplane far above the camp. Racing to the window, I watched it sweep lower, slowly lower, and then circle again. It was a giant plane, and it was emblazoned with the American star. Americans were waving at us from the windows of the plane! Beyond the treetops, its belly opened, and I gaped in wonder as giant parachutes drifted slowly to the ground.

*

I remember that when we were in the camp - emaciated from the small amount of food which we were allowed - my dad used to climb the outside of the tower that the Japs used to sleep in. He would climb onto the roof, in a hole and quietly wring the necks of a pigeon or two. He would then drop them over the side to my mother who caught them in her apron. I am still amazed that he would risk so much to feed us kids.

*



I remember the garden patches out that way, as I often visited my Dad who did the book binding. Don't tell me you never got a wiff of that horrible fish glue he used? Just before you came to 58 and 59, there was the women's sewing room, if memory serves correctly, and Dad's stinky little workshop was either attached to it, or very close by. Incidentally, I thought the vegetable gardens looked great. Of course, it could have been because anything green and edible looked great to me in those days!

*

I Remember when we lived on gao liang (broom corn) and lu dou for breakfast? (Can you believe I've found lu dou here in a health food store?) Lunch in KITCHEN #1 was always stew, stew, stew. "S.O.S" we called it: Same Old Stew. I remember one day when the menu board listed T.T. Soup for lunch. TT Soup turned out to be turnip top soup.

*

I remember — the Menu Board on which the cooks used their creative writing skills to describe the coming meal in the most exotic terms. You would think that you were in the grandest hotel in the land. What was actually served was bread porridge for breakfast, watery stew in the middle of the day, and whatever was left over for the evening meal.

*

I remember the endless pursuit of bed bugs. These were pandemic and their total destruction was a constant fantasy. They seemed to hide in the cracks in the wall plaster during the day, and then when these warm bodies were comfortably settled in their beds on the floor, over would trot this army of bed bugs and proceed to graze all night on the ready supply of blood that was available. If you squashed them in the night, they left streaks of blood on your sheets and a strong and distinctive smell behind them. During the day we would use boiling water and pour it into any available crack, and use other means to block up cracks, but if we were at all successful it was hard to see the results of our efforts.

*

I remember our dormitory in Block 23. That's where our teachers made us stand while they spooned powdered egg shells onto our tongues. *I remember* gagging and coughing and trying to wheeze the grit out. Remember? Oh, horrors! Prisoner doctors made everyone save egg shells (from eggs bartered through the black market) and grind the shells up for us children to eat as pure calcium.

*

I remember playing a version of basketball outside the hospital (Block 61) with my good friend Torje Torjeson.

*



I remember the accident that killed one of the boys in our Chefoo Boys' School. He had been with the others for the morning roll call near the hospital where they lived, and had jumped up to touch a low electric wire that had been loosened in the wind – possibly as a dare. Unfortunately it was very much alive and he was electrocuted.

*

I remember getting up before daylight and going to the ash piles to look for clinkers, coal that had not burnt completely?

I remember walking up one of the main streets of the camp and seeing the very spot where a young man had fallen from a tree and been killed just the day before.

*

I remember helping the cooks of Kitchen 2 --- it was hard work, but fun. Cooking in the Diet Kitchen taught me to cook without a recipe. Laundry duty at the hospital was horrible - bloody sheets etc., and not enough soap. My hands were red and rough for the duration of my laundry duty. I believe that the most unpleasant duty was to wash out and to disinfect the latrine. I smoked my first cigarette up at the bell tower. I enjoyed school, but am amazed that our teachers were able to hold classes and teach us.

I remember mainly the things that broke the monotony. A couple of times we got Red Cross parcels and the main item of interest to me was the powdered milk that we could have. It was only a tablespoonful, but I still remember the beautiful taste of that powder mixed with a little water and eaten a lick at a time from the spoon. I also remember when we actually got pieces of meat you could recognize as meat. It was – I was told later – horse or donkey or some such animal. My fellow Prepites were not very impressed and so I was able to enjoy some extra pieces on that occasion. I think we may have had peanut butter sometime in those three years, because I remember walking around to the little yard behind Kitchen One and finding a man with a meat grinder, carefully grinding peanuts into peanut butter. I talked to him for a while, hoping that I might be lucky enough to get a lick, but it wasn't to be my lucky day.

*

I remember that we were all in groups of six or eight and we collected can labels from the cans that came in packages or from the trash the Japanese soldiers threw out, which could still be the cans from packages to the internees. The group I was in had collected 650 labels by the time we were liberated. Perhaps, after the drops if we had continued to collect them we would have made 5000, huh?

*

I remember using soap to brush my teeth.

*

I remember once being fed horse meat and later told it came from a horse that had died of illness. 'She said they closed their eyes and ate what they were given,' Rachel Anthony said. 'They needed their nourishment, no matter how it tasted.'

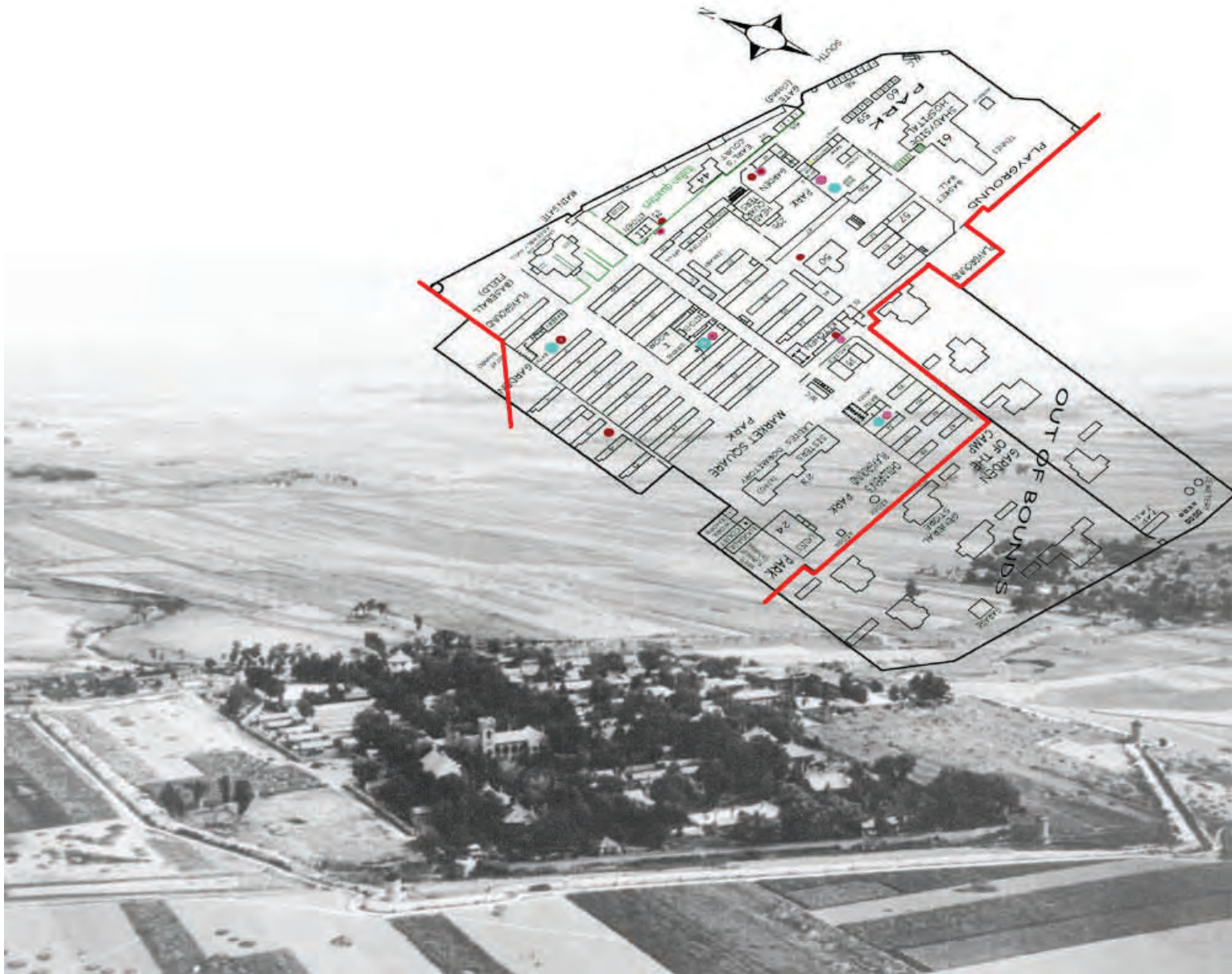
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I remember the first night in Wehsien. Some slept on tatamies (?) some on the floor. I know that I was not with my father that night, and cried myself to sleep.

*

I remember joining the long line-up for slack coal and carrying the heavy coal scuttle back to my dorm during the viciously cold winter months.

*





I remember scrounging for partially broken furniture that had been piled up somewhere in the compound. The early spring was very cold, and I kept my head under the blanket. For a very short time, my father and I supplemented our camp diet with tinned food that we had brought. Unfortunately, our supply soon ran out.

*

I remember learning how to play baseball (softball) in which we boys were coached by our well-loved master, S. Gordon Martin! The day that I caught a high flyball and heard Goopy shout At-taboy David is forever etched in my memory!

*

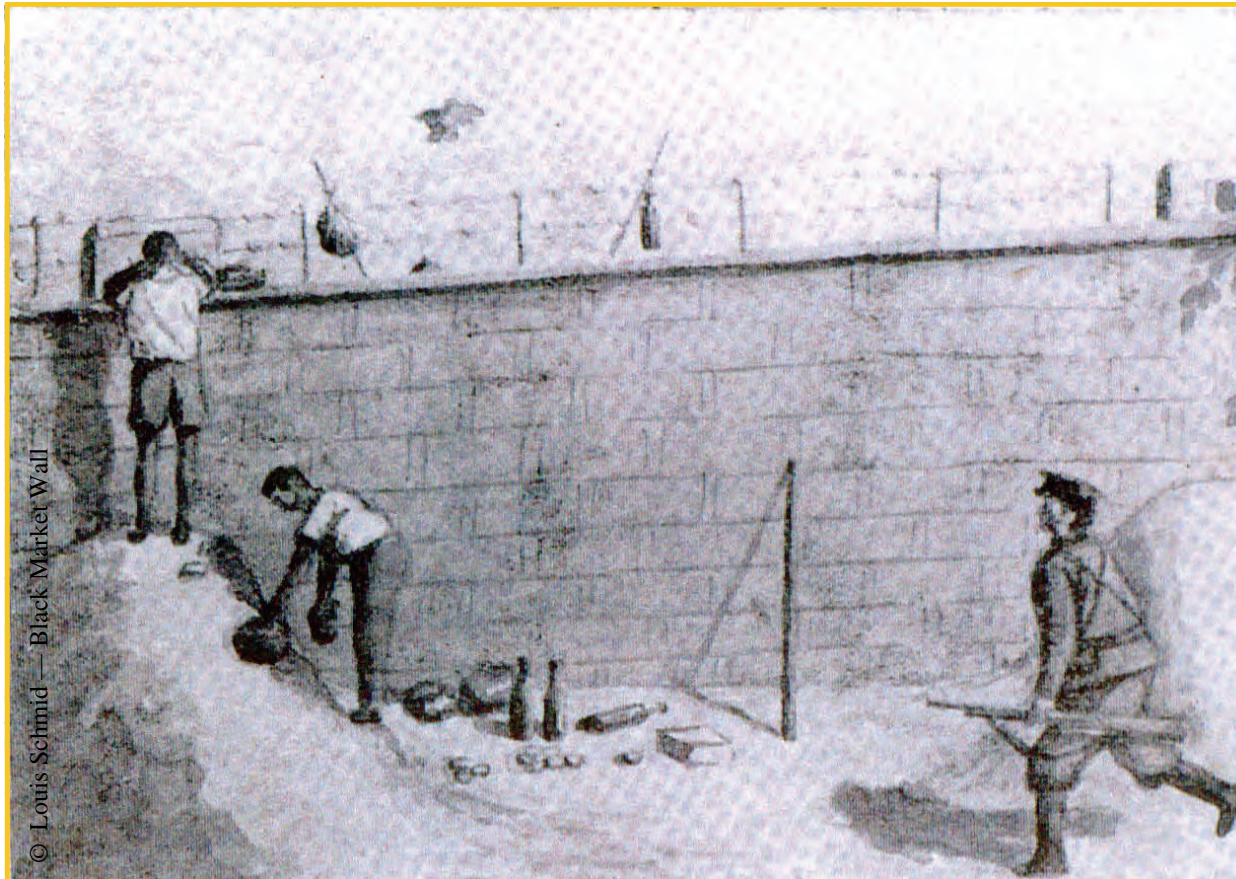
I remember - that Mr Hubbard was a well-known authority on birds. When I was twelve or thirteen, I attended an evening lecture given in Kitchen One on birds of China. I think that Mr Hubbard was the man who gave us this intensely interesting talk. If he was indeed the man whom I heard that evening, probably in 1944, he told us of his experiences in observing (up close) some fascinating breeds of birdlife! One that really caught my attention was the story of how he approached a very large bird which was most dangerous to come close to. He said this bird would attack if it felt threatened and that its sharp beak could penetrate right into a human being's lung. The bird may somehow have been held in a trap. I think Mr Hubbard had to throw a dark blanket or tarpaulin over the bird so that he could rescue it.

*

I remember, there was also ——— The Two Pineapples: George Kalani and George Alowa (darned if I can remember how they spelled their last names) who were guitar players. Kalani played conventional guitar, and Alowa Hawaiian guitar. There is a kinda cute story here, that never got into "The Mushroom Years." One evening, George Kalani, who had a very short fuse, smashed his guitar over George Alowa's head. I mean, it was totally wrecked and beyond repair. I forget who remembered that I came into camp with a huge concert guitar, which I played sometimes in the quiet of my cell. Anyhow, they told Kalani about it, and he came to me, all contrite, and asked if he could buy it off me. What could I say? Without his guitar playing, Saturday nights dances would never have been the same ... so I sold it to him for 5 dollars American! After that, every time he got mad and started to swing at Alowa, someone would grab the guitar and shout, "HOLD IT!"

As to where we danced : In the winter months, and in rainy weather, the dances were held mostly in #2 Kitchen, steamy and stinking of leeks, but in good weather we danced wherever the ground was smooth and the band could set up. As the music was mostly loud and rambunctious, we always tried to steer clear of the classical concerts and lectures that were also being held in the different compounds.

*



© Louis Schmid — Black Market Wall

I remember, "Pineapple," the musician I recall very clearly, was a renowned softball umpire! He was quite a loveable fellow, and in spite of semi starvation at Weihsien quite a rollypoly lad! I remember him mercifully calling the batter "OUT" in many a softball game in Camp! He'd roll around behind the catcher and holler:

O - U - T ! ! !

--- And chuck his hand back with the thumb extended over his shoulder!

*

I remember my father was blackmarketeering with Mr de Zutter keeping watch but when the Japs came he forgot to say the warning phrase, "Well good night" and he left. Dad (Pop) heard the guards and ran back into the room with two bottles of bygar, planked them on to our table and jumped into bed fully clothed. Mum gave him hell the next morning because had the Japs entered they would have found it. I remember my 10th birthday wrist-watch was used for barter.

*

I remember while my father was stirring our watery "stew" in kitchen No. 1 a pigeon flew in through the window and dropped in to the large gwoh whereupon it was immediately fished out, plucked and brought to our room for my brother Eddie was very ill at the time. Dad always said that pigeon saved his life.

*

I remember one lady brought tinned foods into the camp with which she paid my mother to do her share of the peeling etc but when the tins ran out my mother refused to do her share so she had to do it herself.

*

I remember a very well-muscled young man, probably about ten years older than I (so he'd have been in his mid-twenties) named Aubrey Grandon. He was an amazing softball player and I can remember him batting some remarkable home runs by sending the ball right over the camp wall. I sort of hero-worshipped Aubrey G. To me he was "larger than life!"

*

I remember going to classes in a room facing south in Block 24 with Mrs. Moore of the Peking American School and Sister Hiltrudis of St. Joseph School in Tsingtao.

*

I remember that room as the one where we boys met evening and morning for Prayers (Chapel) led by the "Master On Duty."

*



I remember the boy (me) who raised a brood of 4 Peregrine falcon chicks, in camp, to full fledged adulthood? Yes, by begging for definite discards of meat to feed them from K1, no less.

*

I remember killing 21 flies at one swat back of kitchen I and counting them into my bottle. Maybe your brother John might remember some of these details.

*

I remember the Saturday night dances.

*

I remember the table also held a large bowl where Mr Bruce kept a quantity of pieces of stale bread which we could help ourselves to in order to fill our bellies when we were hungry between the skimpy camp meals. I remember that I regularly availed myself of the snacks of stale, dry bread.

*

I remember Sister Donatilla and Father Keymolen who taught us French. Some of our class were in the dining room and others under a tree where we sat on a bench and on the ground in the Summer.

*

I remember FrAloysius Scanlan who was put in the guard house for smuggling (for the benefits of the children etc) by the Japs and released after driving the commandant mad with his chanting of prayers.

*

I, too, remember being hungry.

*

I remember my first job. When I turned 14 years. I was given a bucket and told to get hot water from the boiler room, and also given a brush and a bottle of Lysol. My uncle Bob Cooke had to teach me how to clean the toilets. I became very good at it. I am sure you will all remember the toilets.

*

The only night I can remember that Auld Lang Syne was sung, was at the last dance in camp, in October of '45 -- and we didn't have a curfew anymore!

Lord, it's funny how often I think of that last dance, and that old favorite, when New Year's Eve comes around...

*

I remember the camp well. I did not see any beauty in the surroundings, nor can I forget the scorpions, bed bugs and a few rats. Freezing in Winter and terribly hot in Summer.

*

I remember having to borrow a decent white dress and shoes for my graduation ceremony from Mrs. Wolfson and then having to give it back.

*

I remember hearing the clanking of the Japanese swords and the ever present fear particularly during the incessant roll calls that we were about to be annihilated.

*

I remember two slices of bread per meal.

*



I remember the lovely mimosa trees. There were also many plane trees and of course locust (or acacia) trees with their beautiful fragrant blossoms.

In the same area were delightful flower gardens thanks to a diligent Englishwoman, Mrs Jowett who probably had one of the greenest thumbs I have ever known.

*

I Remember how hot Weihshien got in the summer?

*

I Remember King Kong! Not complimentary nicknames — but certainly nicknames that helped us to see our imprisonment with some humour.

*

I Remember the dizzy euphoria you felt on August 17, 1945, when these angels dropped out of the sky into the fields beyond those barrier walls?

*

I remember that boat trip to Weihshien as I put my foot out through the railings of the boat and one of my shoes dropped off, good leather shoes, imagine!

*





I remember tennis being played at Temple Hill in Chefoo. As an eleven-year-old I watched games being played their in front of the Prep School house.
At Temple Hill, a far smaller camp

than Weihsien, we had a remarkably intimate relationship with our Japanese guards. I distinctly recall Japanese guards playing against some of the older boys and staff members.
*

I remember "yellow" jaundice. I'm another Weihsien student who was alleged to have had "yellow" jaundice in the camp. That's one of my memories of the Chefoo Lower School Dormitory (LSD) in Block

23. And because of it I, too, have never been allowed to give blood.

*

I remember giving Douglas's mother one of my chocolate bars from the Red Cross.

*



I remember that August 17 was a windy day.

*

I remember vividly the pantomimes that were put on and I remember the electrician's daughter was the fairy and she was all lit up with lights. I also remember when the American planes flew over to liberate us. I was very scared as they seem to touch the roofs of our little huts — and there was so much confusion (at least in my eyes) as everyone was running around. I remember running out of the camp — the guards just standing there as everyone ran out of the compound.

*

I remember every evening Léopold and I were given a glass of milk and a spoon of cod-liver oil, both tasted horrible! but I very well understood the importance of the ritual and of course if I swallowed all with good grace and a smile, well so then did my baby brother! I too remember being sent to the hospital dining room and being taken care of by a Mrs. Dyer who tried to make me swallow food I never knew existed with a thing called a fork, I was most interested but couldn't keep anything down, it was such a pity, I was sent back home! we were liberated just in time, only later did I learn that I became anorexic through lack of eating (not of food) our parents were too busy with our new baby sister...

*

I too remember the bed bugs but does anyone else remember all the scorpions inside the mosquito nets?

*

My memory of the flight from Weihsien is mainly of lounging around in the plane on a heap of used parachutes that were being transported with us - rather we were being transported with them! I don't remember the movie itself, but I have fond memories of sitting in an outdoor picture theatre to watch it. I seem to remember seeing some cartoons for the first time and have been a Disney cartoon fan ever since. I have also been a Coca Cola fan ever since, as I remember one of the airmen taking me to a machine that served glasses of Coca Cola on tap. I loved it - still do. I can still remember the smell of toothpaste as I watched the airmen performing their ablutions.

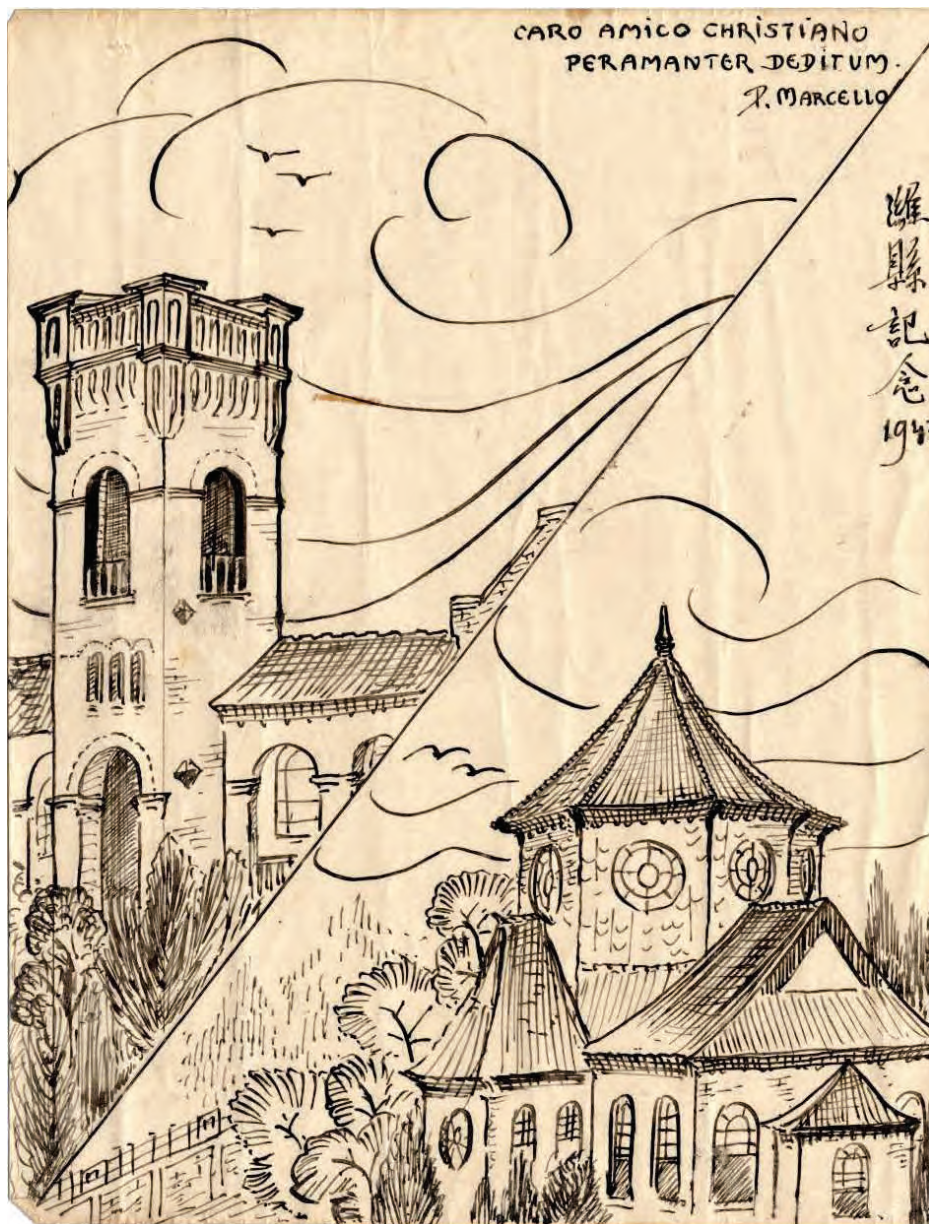
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I remember the day well, I was actually casing the Japanese compound for what I could pilfer from there that night. I saw this glimmering sight of an airplane and I knew immediately that it was our salvation. It was beautiful! I immediately ran to the north gate and just about made in the rush to get out to the field and bring back those wonderful GI to the camp.

*

"Do you remember where you were on December 7, 1941?"

*



I remember thinking "I am too young to die. I don't want to die yet there are some many things I want to see and do" Was I alone in my thoughts?.

*

I remember the ladle used to dish out our watery stew being very small. Was it the size of a small baked bean can?

*

I remember the makeshift stoves prisoners built inside these rooms? Our teachers -- Miss Carr, Miss Stark, Miss Lucia -- constructed a stove for cooking right in the middle of the LSD dormitory.

*

I remember that eggs also supplied egg shells -- for calcium. As decent food diminished and threatened our health, I remember the Chefoo teachers lining us up at the door of the dormitory and spooning powdered eggshells onto our tongues -- a primitive calcium supplement. Horrible! Horrible! It felt like chewing sand.

*

I remember that we heard that one of the parachutists had been slightly injured, and wondered if he had known that the kao liang was 12 feet tall when he made a landing. I remember hearing that one the guys had his 45 out as he listened to the noises converging on him and only put it away when a crowd of jubilant kids burst through the kao liang."

*

I remember standing at the top of the outside staircase leading up to the room where our family of four had spent the last 2-1/2 years in that Japanese prison camp in China, and seeing the sun sparkle off the aluminium body of this unknown airplane as it turned in the distance and started back toward us, dropping altitude. It grew larger and larger and the roar of its engines grew stronger and stronger, until finally it was almost directly overhead and we saw the insignia on its wings.

*

I remember our sitting on heaps of used parachutes all the way from Weihsien to Sian? I had carried on board with me that day a small bundle of treasures which I intended to drop out of the airplane window to my Chefoo dorm mates below.

Wrong!

*

I remember the concerts and plays such as Androcles and the Lion which had been put on. With all the executive talent in camp, it was no wonder that the place was so well managed by the internees.

*

I remember the many meetings that went on for hours, but I couldn't understand a word of it.

*

I remember Sgt Bu Shing!

*

I remember the team of heroes who risked their lives to rescue us in 1945.

*



I remember picking alfalfa with some girl and as we were laughing facing the setting sun, a Japanese guard went by and was so angry with us for laughing, rattled his sword and came to slap us on our faces.

*

I remember the smell of bedbugs sizzling in candle flames?

*

I remember with pleasure your Dad's cornet playing - as I'm sure does everyone wherever there was music, there was Capt. Buist. I confess that I was especially fascinated by the way he drew air in at the side of his mouth while playing!

*

I remember Mrs. Eileen Bazire, one of our Chefoo teachers. Mrs. Bazire was a musician and artist. Among her duties, she made magnificent drawings and watercolor posters announcing cultural events in the camp — concerts, lectures.

*

I remember our teachers reading Les Misérables to us.

*

I remember the one egg a week ration each had the shell crushed between two spoons and fed to children — I was one.

*

I remember the roll-call in the middle of the night after some of the internees escaped and we all had to stand outside our hut and be counted!

*

I remember the azaleas in bloom along the contour paths.

*

I remember the roll-call in the middle of the night after some of the internees escaped and we all had to stand outside our hut and to be counted!

*

I remember the Girl of the Limberlost because there was a scene where there were pink and gold water lilies in a bedroom with pink and gold counterpane and someone said Very French! and when-ever I see pink and gold together I mutter under my breath Very French.

*

I remember joining a line-up outside Kitchen #1 (I think it was), and receiving an informal welcome to Weihsien from friendly camp 'veterans.'

*

I too, still remember the words of "God Bless America" and remember how we were saved in Wei-Hsien.

*

I remember the tower that the Japs lived in and their dogs, which I imagine to be Alsations

*

I remember almost nothing other than what I have been told. Unfortunately my parents didn't talk a lot about the camp so I have been left with a thirsty appetite for information.

*

I remember Dr Robinson who looked after inmates in the camp.

*

I remember the wall and the ditch outside.

*

I remember him taking me into the tower and showing me his sword and also letting me play with his dog. One day he gave me two eggs.

*

I remember that I had never seen an egg before and I was probably not yet three years old. I took the eggs back to our room and when my mum saw me she was so excited that I threw them onto the floor and ran over for a cuddle. My mum told me that she scraped them off the ground, complete with the earth and dust and cooked them anyway.

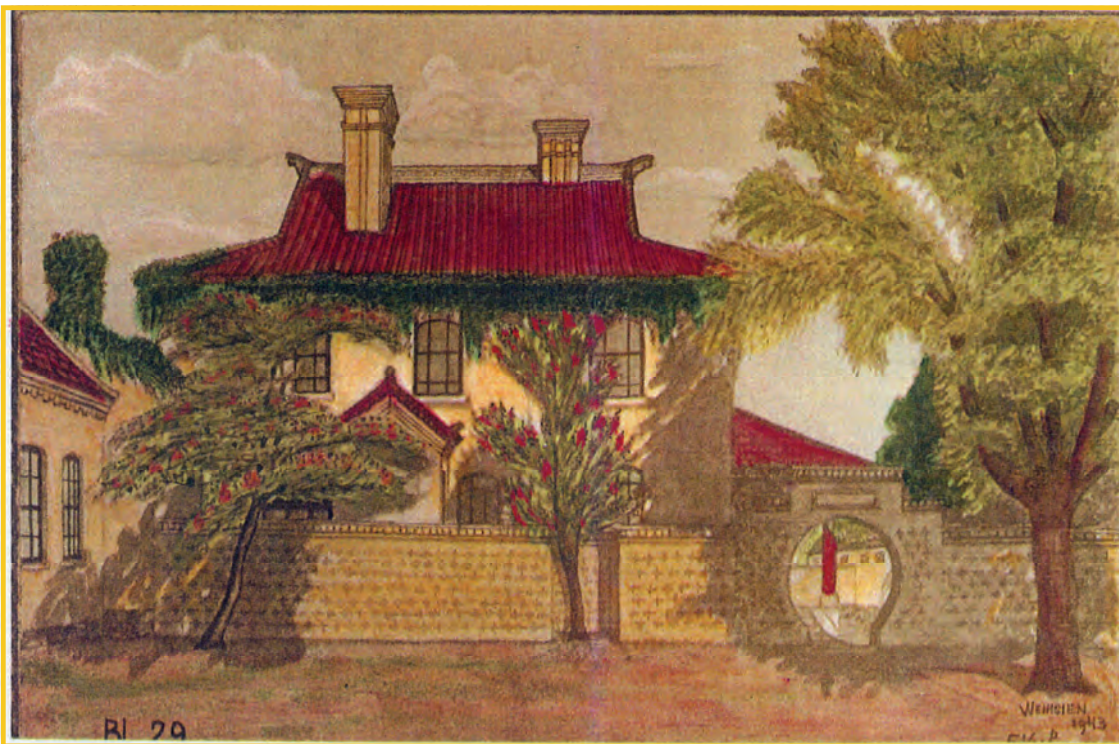
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I remember when our Chefoo teachers stopped us from calling one of the Japanese guards "Cherry Beak"

*

I remember the Dutch woman who hoarded loads of goodies in her room.

*



I remember the cess pit kid! I only have a small section of parachutes but I do have one signed by the original seven that landed.

*

I remember the tunnels at Weihsien. I remember playing in them.

*

I remember being in the Hospital under quarantine because I had the Chicken Pox and all the kids sending me a get well card.

*

I remember eating dandelion greens. I had broken out in hives, and the doctor told me to eat as many greens as possible. The greens were not particularly tasty, but it was better than the rash. I do remember not being full, and eating a lot of bread, but I do not remember near starving. I was one of the servers, dishwashers, and special help to the cooks. Many did not want the greens, and we had much left over.

*

I remember having warts on my hands in our Weihsien days

*

I remember Roy and George used to make a potent brew from sweet potatoes

*

I remember my mother massaging me with hot blankets

*

I remember sleeping with China's millions -- bedbugs.

*

I fondly remember the outdoor dances.

*

I remember vividly walking around for hours with this horrible mass in my mouth which would not go down as egg shells are just soluble in water and just sit there waiting for little bite to go down slowly through their own initiative. It was truly terrible.

*

I remember that I sat next to Frennie Dhunjshah (block 42), and that classes were held at the first floor south end. Every morning all activity stopped by the screams of a pupil being dragged along by his mother to attend school. He screamed very loudly and we could hear him coming from a long way away.

*

I well remember enjoying dried-out bread (a bit like Melba toast or rusks) that Mr. Bruce kept in a bowl for us boys who lived in the attic of Block 61 (the fine old Presbyterian hospital overlooking the Wei River valley).

*

I remember getting periodic news briefings in the camp

*



20. The Church

Wilder

I remember my grandmother talking about grinding up eggshells for calcium, but I believe she said (or else I imagined) that they were mixed with food, or baked in bread.

*

I remember the acrid smell and sizzle as they (the bedbugs) dropped into the flame of the match)

*

I remember our chief of police. His name — he was known a little disrespectfully as "King Kong" by some.

*

I remember that although we were hungry at times, we never starved as so many others did in Japanese and German camps.

*

I remember that we were served leek soup, corn flour and waster custard (didn't we call that blanc mange?), dry bread and tea that day.

*

I remember having a pretend sword fight with Alec Lane, one of us with the sword and the other with the scabbard ! This guard also let one boy over the wall to retrieve any ball that would mysteriously land on the other side of the wall.

*

I remember standing and facing the wall, when I heard the sound of the Aeroplanes that dropped our saviours. Being so close to the window to look out, I had this wonderful view of the parachutes coming down.

*

I remember Mary Scott? When men in the softball league fizzled, too weak to finish a game (the Priests Padres, Peking Fathers and the Tientsin Tigers), they would let Mary Scott come in to play — the only woman ever allowed as a softball substitute, as I recall.

*

I guess we all remember the egg shells. Our family ground them up and put them in our "porridge" along with orange peels, I think. The egg shells were a little gritty but with the mixture, not too bad.

*

I remember the washboards.

*



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

I remember the food that we had been given before the war.

*

I remember coming down in the corn field and all the people running out there.

*

I remember the air drops of supplies and trying to keep the people out of the way from getting hit."

*

I don't remember anything of Weihsien (or so little).

*

"I remember my amazement. We didn't know what was in the camp. I expected (P.O.W.) soldiers. What we found in the camp — civilians and children."

*

I remember some women running onto the fields and wrapping themselves around the men who were landing.

*

I remember that the toilets were the only place visited by the Chinese coolies with their wooden buckets.

*

I remember that a very kind gentleman came to our room and built a small stove from bricks, with an empty kerosene tin as an oven.

*

I remember how the Japanese counted and counted and counted us over and over again at roll call when they discovered that two men had escaped.

*

I remember you as a dark-haired shy little boy.

*

I remember the peanut oil lamps but I only recall using them after lights out at 10pm.

*

I remember studying by that dim light after 10pm cramming for my final school exam late 1944.

*

I remember well lighting the Chefoo School Lower School Dormitory (LSD) in hospital with the peanut oil lamps

*

I remember an old gramophone playing Harry Lauder Roamin' in the Gloamin.

*

I remember their pasting paper seals with Japanese writing on the desks, chairs, equipment, saying that all of it now belonged to the Emperor of Japan.

*



I remember after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese bringing a Shinto priest onto the ball field of the Chefoo School and doing a ceremony that said that our school now belonged to the great Emperor of Japan.

*

I remember the arm bands they made us wear — with "A" for American and "B" for British.

*

I remember it says in there about Weihsien that supplies were few and many people began starving to death. I remember the supplies being few etc. and our limited diet. etc.

*

I remember how good those pancakes tasted in comparison to the regular fare of camp food.

*

I remember the last Christmas [1944, I guess]. There were no Red Cross packages, no money and nothing to buy, so we all decided to get into our trunks, yes, the same ones we had put our clothes, books and treasures into the night before we walked to concentration camp.

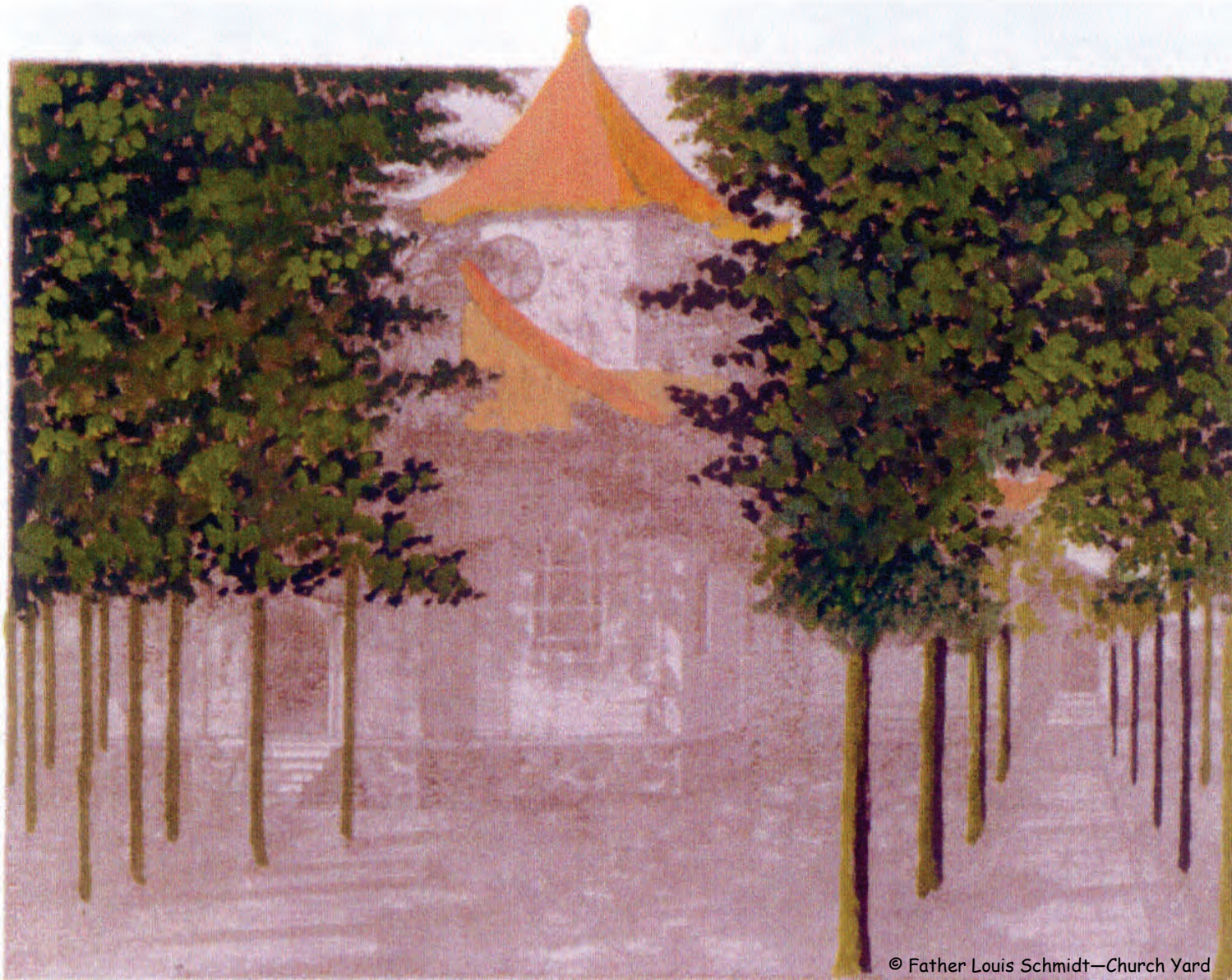
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I remember what we children called "YAH" practice, when they suited up with padded body armor and face masks and practiced bayonet attacks.

*

I remember a quotation from Hitler ""What good fortune for governments that the people do not think.""

*



© Father Louis Schmidt—Church Yard

I remember being hungry. We kids used to argue over the crust of the bread because that filled us up better. Our Dad (now almost 98 years old) lost about a lot of weight, as did most adults, I imagine.

*

I remember the kindness to us of two American Free Methodist missionaries -- we called them Aunt Kate and Aunt Neva -- who were in Weih sien when we arrived with the Chefoo Schools. They had served with my parents in Kaifeng, Honan province. I'm not sure how this all fits together.

They were repatriated a few days after we arrived.

*

. As a six-year-old I remember witnessing a brutal beating of a Chinese boy by the Japanese. The boy was tied to a post, his mouth stuffed full so he could not cry. The memory still haunts me. War is not nice.

*



© Mrs. Eileen Bazire— Weihhsien Camp, Main Gate

I remember our school classes were under the trees in the church yard.

*

Remember - Japan had occupied the coastal plain of China in 1937 so the whole matter was in an area where they had total control. The Shanghai Camps opened with Haiphong Road for those considered a Threat to Japan in Nov 1942 (There had been a number of key Allied personnel held in Bridge House Goal Shanghai and the former US Barracks Tientsin from immediately after Pearl Harbour, but by January 1942 the few engineers still under arrest were moved the former Masopnic Hall on race Course Rd Tianjin,) with the bulk of the 8800 inmates going into camps during the second half of March 1943. Contrast these facts with what happened where there was fighting.

Hongkong where Stanley Camp opened on 5th Jan 1942 (it had fallen on 25 Dec 41 and Singapore where Chaingai opened on 5th March 1942 (Singapore surrendered on 14th Feb 42.

*

I remember how good those pancakes tasted in comparison to the regular fare of camp food.

*

I remember the great baseball players - Haazi Rumfph (sp) Aubrey Grandon and others.

*

I remember my mother used to make bread pudding pancakes with the bread and water pudding from breakfast.

*

I remember the 'rolly polly' ump. And I think he was one of our Hawaiian band members

*

After the war ended I remember, in Shanghai, our parents running after us kids, with a bottle of cod-liver-oil in one hand and a little spoon in the other trying to make us swallow our daily ration of this stinky sticky stuff. After that, Janette and I making a dash towards the bathroom to spit it all out into the sink and turning the water tap so our parents wouldn't see it. !! Many years later, our Mother often reminded us that, when the camp days were over, our Father said, "Never more should his children be hungry again".

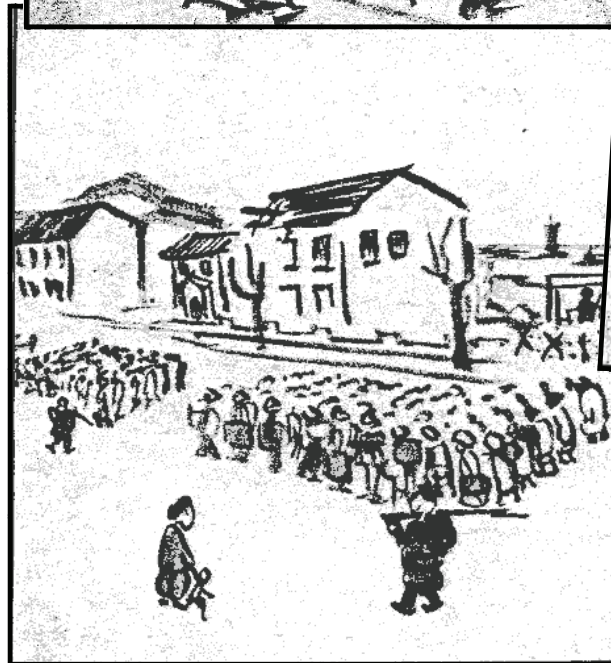
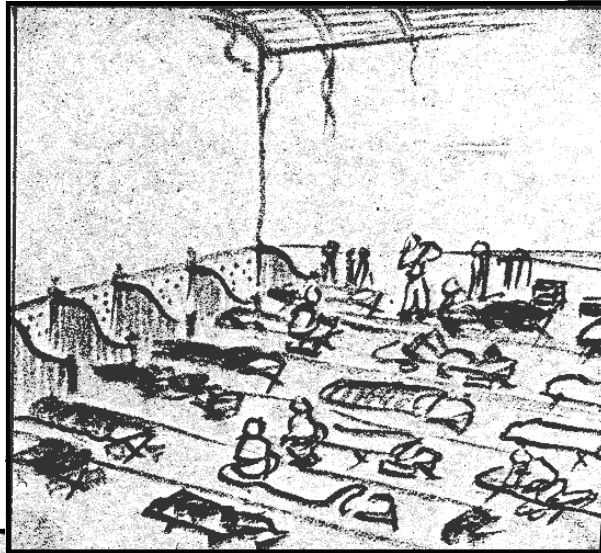
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I remember Mrs. Kerridge who helped me make newer clothing out of old clothes. Shoes were a problem. In warm weather many of the younger internees went barefooted. Most of us did not iron. The clothes hanging out to dry were usually smoothed out by the wind.

*

I remember we slept in the hold of the ship, crammed in like sardines. The lorries trucking us to Weihhsien were almost a relief.

*



I do not remember hearing the adults voicing their fears etc. We went to school, joined the many and various clubs and classes, tried to keep up with the difficult task of washing with little soap and in cold water, making coal balls for the winter, working at various tasks given to us, etc.

*

I am sure that the older ones knew what was happening, and what terrible things could occur.

*

We were very lucky that we had doctors, teachers, and dedicated leaders.

*

When I first came to the States, I tried to talk about Weih sien, but soon realised that people reacted to me very strangely, they seemed to want me to break down.

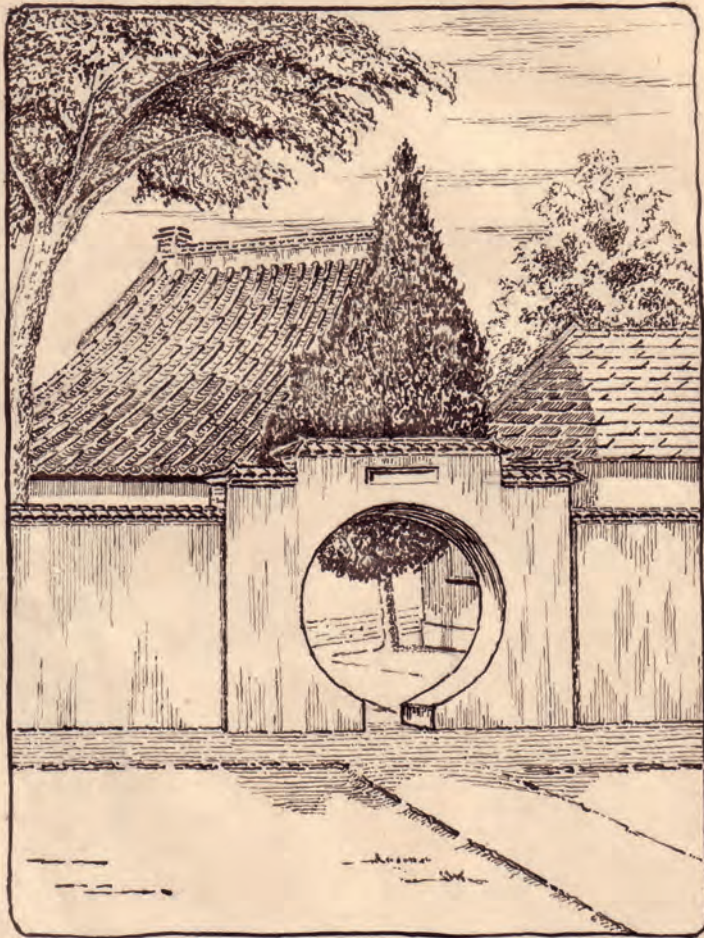
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After almost three years in Japanese concentration camps and after 5 ½ years of not seeing Daddy and Mummy, what does a hungry, 74-lb., 11-year-old remember of liberators? I remember the B-29s brought candy and chewing gum. I stuffed about five sticks of gum into my mouth all at one time and chewed them all day until my jaws ached and then saved the wad so I could chew it all again.

*

I remember bushes certainly by Block 23 and trees lining the main drive and down by where the Quakers lived, but it all looks so incredibly pastoral when we remember the hardpan ground where we had roll call daily.

*



*The Moon Gate,
Weihsien, June, 1944.*

B. J. Jouel

© Brian Butcher— The Moon Gate

I remember that Elena Howell was quite younger than her husband. They were always very pleasant with everyone. I also remember that after Mr. Howell died, Blanche Kloosterboer and I did the Weejee (?) Board calling on his spirit. We asked that his spirit move a rug that was on the floor to prove that it was present. We "saw" the rug move, and ran out the room, scared to death. Al Voyce lived on the same block, and was the interpreter for the Japanese guards. I believe that he lives in Hawaii. He was older and probably remembers more about the Howells than I.

*

Mr. Whipple was a good pianist, and I remember him, even today, playing the piano in the large church on Sunday at Weihsien Camp.

*

I, too, have been remembering the "snacks" bought from street vendors. Does anyone remember the wonderful designs of "poured" melted sugar and flavour onto a metal surface. As I remember, it seemed to take just a short time before the wonderful crunchy beautiful design became hard, and was ready to eat.

I am sure that if we now bought and ate any of the "snacks" we would become quite sick. In China, we had cast iron stomachs, that helped us not get ill both in Weihsien and on the outside.

I still love the wonderful smells of the foods being cooked and displayed in the China towns of the U.S.

*

I remember our school days in the church/assembly hall.

*

The Japanese showed their cruelty when they severely beat up Arnic Balianz in Tsingtao Iltis Hydro Camp, I believe because he, as a fluent Japanese language speaker refused to spy for them. I saw his terribly bloodied and bruised body when he was brought back from the beating. His wife asked my mother to lend her some cushions to help ease his pain. I remember he was beaten up about three times again after arriving in Weihsien. He did survive the war and a few years ago I discussed his mistreatment with his wife Tsolik in San Francisco. I also saw a Chinese beggar boy being used for Kendo target practice. There were other instances of cruelty at the Iltis Hydro. I do not know whether the guards responsible for these atrocities were ex-consular guards. Like many others I had been in Japanese custody from Pearl Harbour day to one month after we were liberated in Weihsien

*

I remember Miss Evelyn Davies (now Huebner) of Chefoo-- said she taught kindergarten in Weihsien.

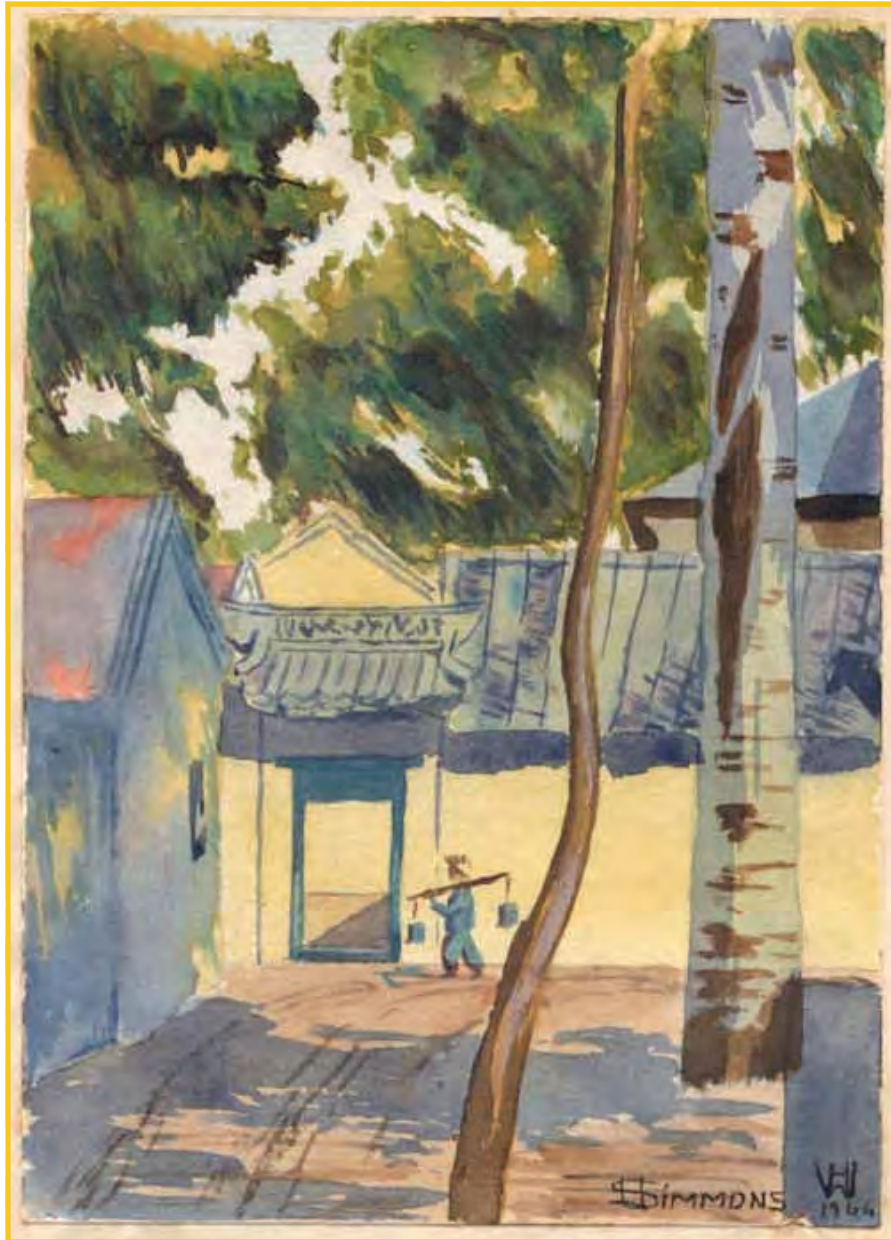
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If I remember correctly she said these were happy and contented students.-- something to that effect. It didn't matter that they didn't have the toys etc.

*

I thought she said they were the happiest children she had taught.

*



I well remember that no rice was issued to us in Wei-Hsien. I also remember trying to masticate the sorghum and my mother entreating me to try harder to swallow it because it was all we had. It was almost impossible to chew. The peanuts which were ground into a paste by the inmates were very nourishing and I have been told since that peanuts undoubtedly saved the health of a lot of children as they are very nourishing. Today, many children cannot eat peanuts due to allergies, including my own 38 year old son but I do not remember anyone in the camp being so afflicted. My main memories of worms (maggots) were when the Jap Officer's horse died and we were forced to eat it after the Japs left it to rot and become infested and then telling us we would get nothing else until it was eaten. My father showed us how to pick out the floating maggots as we were eating. It was made into a watery stew although I remember getting a small morsel which tasted lovely at the time. At that time we had not had meat for a long while.

*

Weih sien! Oh, my sakes! All I remember is retching, retching, retching into the sea -- and more retching, more retching, and more retching. Whether it's true or not, I always say that we hit the tail end of typhoon on that trip.

*

I do remember that night. We were told that there had been an escape....however...we did not know who they were. I remember it being so very cold.....I also felt very apprehensive at the situation...wondering what was going to happen next. As for the roll call...it seemed like it would never end that night.

*

I remember Gerry Thomas's show in which his stepdaughter Tisha and I participated. It was called "Professor Thomas and his Stewdents" (sic) In it I remember singing a solo 'Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow' ! and a duet with Tisha, "September in the rain" as we sat on the grand piano which was in the church. I do not remember anyone asking for an encore! I met Tisha in London about three years ago and we had gaotse and gorged ourselves in a Chinese Restaurant.

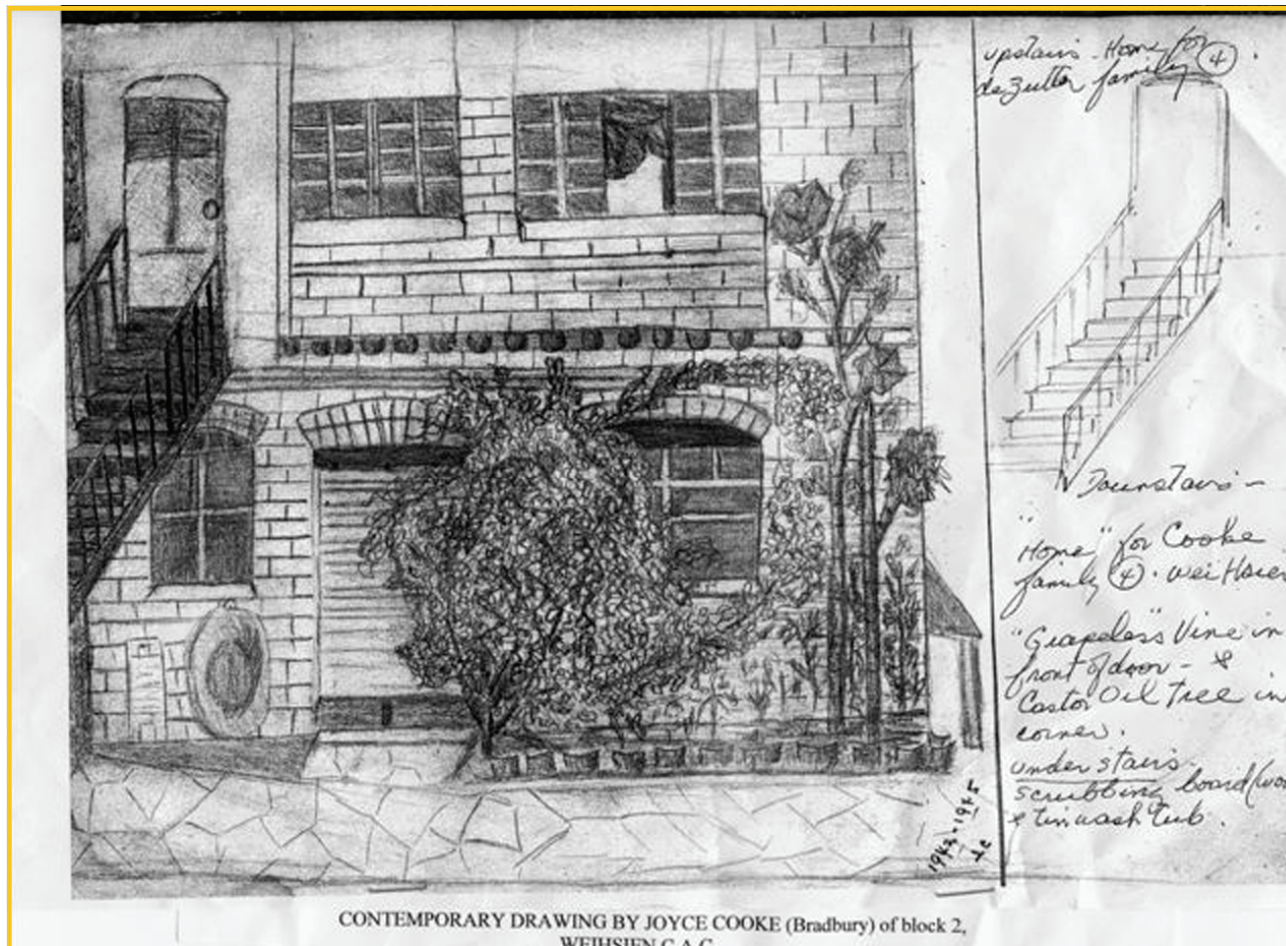
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I remember --- the Chinese honey pot men coming with their buckets to empty the night soil from the latrines and cesspools next to the ladies toilet. Didn't a little boy fall into one of those cesspools?

*

I remember the marvellous Tong-shee (malt syrup) that was spread on our sandwiches, along with creamy peanut butter made from locally grown Shantung peanuts!

*



CONTEMPORARY DRAWING BY JOYCE COOKE (Bradbury) of block 2, WEIHSIEN, C. A. C.

I remember your father, John McLorn, in Temple Hill camp. He was tall and well spoken.

*

Miss Davey was wonderful, I remember her as a young smiling dark-haired woman full of energy. She had a

"big girl" to help her out who wasn't always present nor always the same. When we weren't using pencils or reading, Miss Davey had us play vocabulary and counting games ("I spy with my little eye...") she read stories out loud and we lis-

tened in rapture, we learnt poems (Wordsworth's Daffodils) sang songs (Swallow tell me why you fly) played round games outside, just at the bottom of the hospital steps, learnt to skip, hop, jump, run... most of all learnt to relate to one another...

*

I remember my dad cutting thin slices of spam for us after the laborious opening of the metal box which contained it.

*

I remember August 1945

.....

*

I remember a B-29 flying over so low in the fields with that never forgotten rumbling roar. People were talking about flying angels, well no, --- the wings weren't right, --- it was a bird --- but was it a bird? Could a feathery bird become a silver angel? I remember feeling a bit funny and quite scared. Of course, just a little later I and my friends ran around yelling: Plane! Plane!

*

I remember my little brother Leopold often played with Billy, same age, real daredevils! As time went by they grew quite wild, no one minded too much, they couldn't go very far off as the walls kept them "in" --- till liberation day when the gates opened wide and let them "out"! The men had to bring them back by the scruff of the neck, but I bet they had a good taste of being finally free!

*

I remember that behind the headquarters' house there was a small park.

That was (and still is in my memory) a very peaceful place. I fell in love with the moon gate.

*

I remember that a young Japanese guard with his bayonet kept watch at the end of Lovers Lane. His duty was to stop anyone from straying into this out-of-bounds lane. Our bunch of kids must have taunted him, --- he went mad with his bayonet. We were very frightened.

*



I well remember the ship, which carried us from Chefoo to Qingdao. And I recall that its name was the 'Kyodo Maru 28.' I remember trying to get to sleep on a woven straw mat on a sloping covered deck floor about one level below the main deck. I don't remember having any blanket to keep me warm. I was twelve and a half at the time. But it was all a great adventure. In those days most of us children did not know enough to feel any fear of what might happen to us. I did not know until recently that all of us were in very real peril, at the end of the war, of being shot as the last act of



the Japanese before taking their own lives. Truly God, and our wise teachers and other staff, were good to us. Interestingly, a vessel which might have been a 'twin' of the Kyodo Maru 28 was exhibited in Vancouver at EXPO 86, when this 'world's fair' was held in our city here. I had the opportunity

to board this Japanese vessel in the summer of 1986 and to walk in the very 'hold' which corresponded to the one where I'd passed a restless night or two back in 1943.1943! Nostalgia time! Sixty years ago this very year!

Do you remember that at the beginning, before they were sent to another location, we had 5 bishops in the camp?

I would like to know if anyone remembers me. My job was pumping water at Kitchen #1. I was also a Boy Scout and a hockey player. I attended school and did my share of stealing from the Japanese compound, particularly books from one of their mansions.

. I remember a time, at about age 12, when I was kept in bed in our room even though I remember feeling OK. Someone got me something to read; it was a fat book called "The Family Mark Twain" published by Harper & Brothers in 1935, with ochre cloth-covered boards, a brown spine and about 1500 pages of a smooth crisp paper. (you can tell that I found a replacement copy ! It is a substantial volume that weighs almost 4 lbs. I wonder who brought it to Weih sien in their luggage !) How I loved that book ! I read more than half of it that week including Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn and Connecticut Yankee.

I, too, have been remembering the "snacks" bought from street vendors. Does anyone remember the wonderful designs of "poured" melted sugar and flavour onto a metal surface. As I remember, it seemed to take just a short time before the wonderful crunchy beautiful design became hard, and was ready to eat.

I am sure that if we now bought and ate any of the "snacks" we would become quite sick. In China, we had cast iron stomachs, that helped us not get ill both in Weih sien and on the outside.

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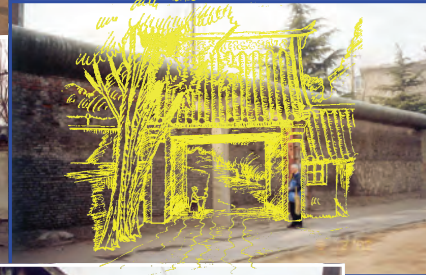
On one occasion my little sister Julie, age three, walked out the main gate at Weih sien with her little Norwegian friend (I think her name was Astrid), and they were a ways down the road before they were noticed and a guard ran after them bringing them back into camp, one girl on each side all of them holding hands.



I remember Weihshien with nostalgia. That was the gift the grown ups gave us. They thought us to make games out of hardship. They preserved our childhoods. I hope all of you have read Langdon Gilkey's SHANTUNG COMPOUND, Harper and Row, 1966, still in print after almost 40 years.



I remember Tom and I would "sneak" up on them, knock off their caps and run as fast as we could to get away. They would chase us and laugh about the whole thing.



I remember, this is the route we took from our Lower School Dormitory (LSD) to dine at Kitchen Number One . This

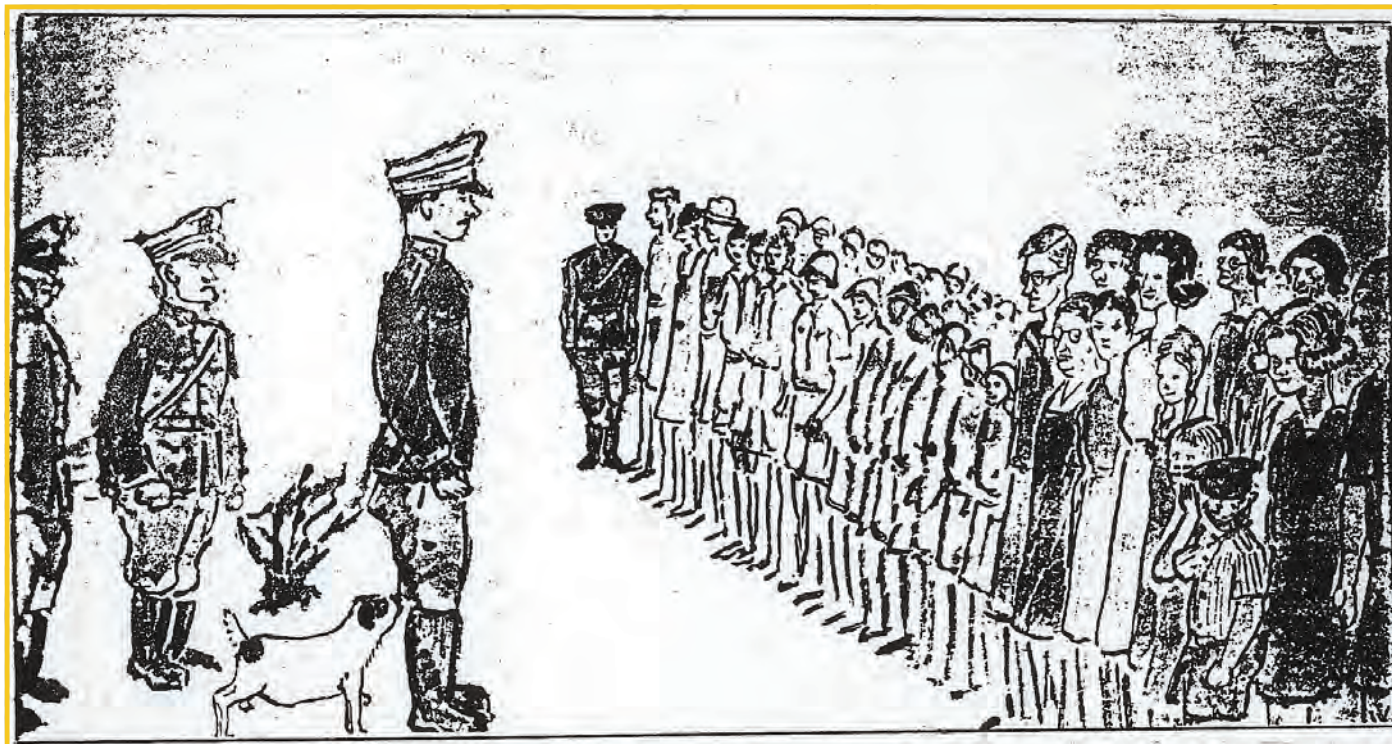


is where Mrs. Bazire's concert or lecture announcements were posted -- or -- HORRORS! -- do you remember the notices posted when we were to get inoculations? I get goose bumps remembering.



I'm not that old that I can't remember how it was for us, who had the 'privilege' of being INTERNED by the Japanese.

My childhood memories of all of this (I was seven years old) are happy and adventurous.



Who can remember all the delightful diversions we used to fill the long waits at roll call time in Weih sien?

*

I remember being hungry. Yes. In fact, there are times even today when I am always eating.

*

I remember that I saw Brian Thomas catch an electric wire during the daily roll call. He died electrocuted.

*

I REMEMBER PRACTICING THE SEMAPHORE AT ANY TIME OF DAY...ANOTHER MEMORY WHEN YOU MENTIONED THE LITTLE STOVES WAS THE STOVES WE HAD IN OUR BUILDINGI REMEMBER THAT WE WOULD SIT ON THE STOVE TO KEEP IT WARM AND WOULD HAVE A GOOD LAUGH. I AM NOT SURE THAT WE HAD A SONG ABOUT THAT OR NOT. WE DID MAKE UP SILLY SONGS ALOT. I DO NOT REMEMBER THE DIVERSIONS THAT WE HAD DURING ROLL CALL...MY MIND IS BLANK WHEN IT COMES TO THAT

*

I remember rushing out of the church to the roll call ground/ baseball field and being delighted to see those leaflets which were then followed by the seven men with their brightly coloured parachutes.

*

I remember ringing the hand bell from time to time to wake the camp for morning roll call. I remember the roll calls..ichi, ni san, chi, etc.

*

Langdon Gilkey's response to seeing Gertrude Wilder's paintings was amazement that she found so much beauty in a place that he remembers as cramped, crowded, dusty and dirty. Of course, that's what artists do. Many people have spoken of the constant hunger due to inadequate food, the heat and discomfort of standing in the sun for constant roll-calls, bedbugs, etc.

*

I remember --- roll calls. Standing in pairs, we Chefoo children always numbered off in Japanese --- ichi, nee, san, shee, guo, rogo, shichi, hachi, koo, joo. Waiting for the Japanese guards to come to count us. Sometimes we played leap frog. Sometimes practiced semaphore and Morse Code for our Brownie and Girl Guide badges. I remember that awful evening when Brian Thompson touched the electric wire during roll call -- a grown up beating the wire with a deck chair to dislodge Brian's hand clutching the wire. Brian died.

*

I remember another occasion, we sneaked to that tree. We had to creep along the ground so as not to be seen. We loved staying hidden in the branches -- until the Japanese commandant came along with a book to read and sat under the tree. Of course we had to stay put. However, after about 30 or 40 minutes, we knew we were in trouble because afternoon roll call was approaching. We dropped from the branches. With hardly a glance from the commandant, we dashed away as fast as we could. He must have had a benign disposition, because no one pursued us.

*

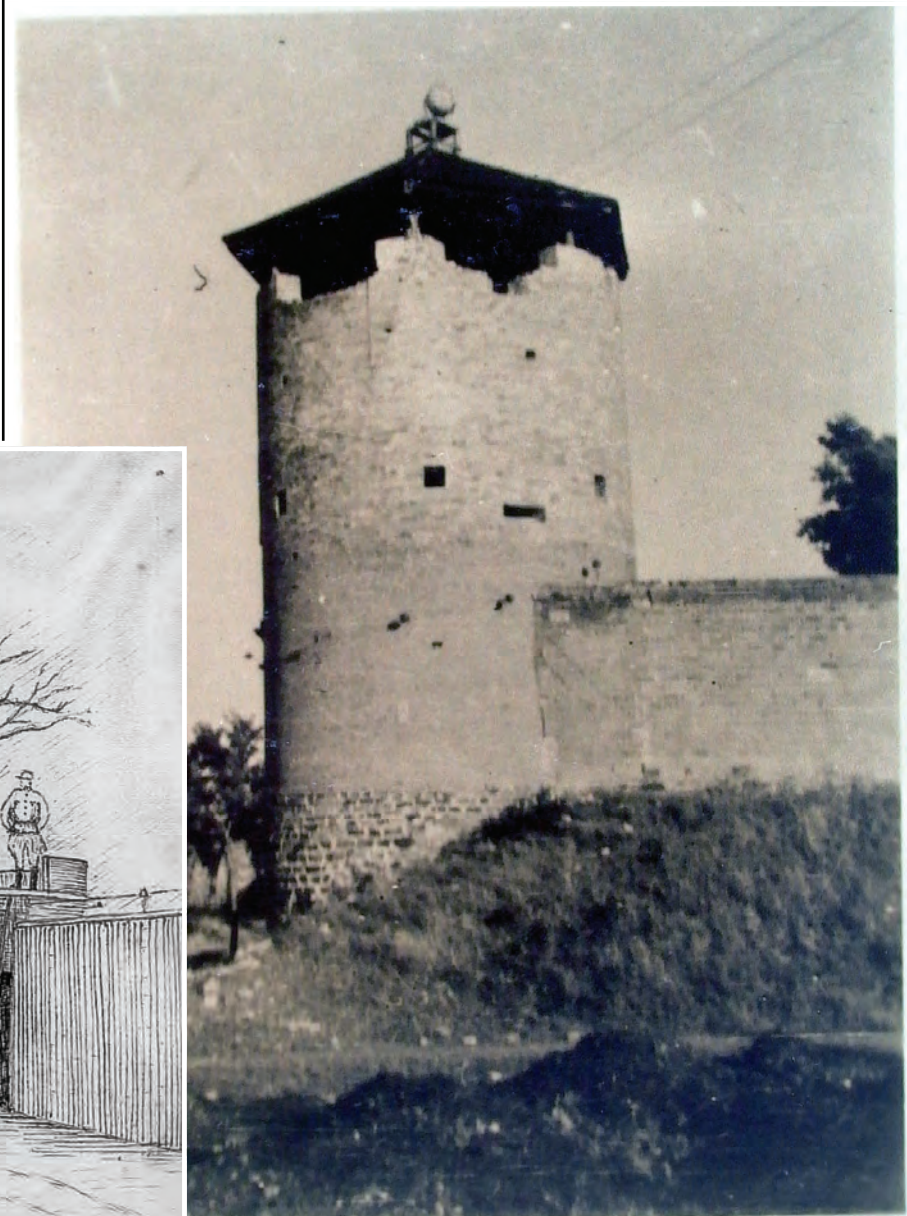


I remember that once I begged for, and got, a precious piece of white chalk from the Japanese guards' blackboard. Next time I was aggressively shoed away. No third time.

*

I remember the park very well but never stayed long, --- it was too close to the Japanese side of the camp.

*





I remember --- summer evenings when the men played softball -Tientsin Tigers, Peking Panthers, and the Priests Padres. The only woman allowed to play was Mary Scott --- but only as a substitute when a man dropped out from exhaustion.

*

I remember that it was here that I lived (block 56) with 5 other Samist fathers and other priests. We were berthed on the ground floor. Other young bachelors also lived here from the summer of 1943 to October 1945. I still remember Tipton and Porter.

*

I remember --- on September 10, my sisters and brother -- Kathleen, Mary, John -- and I left through The Gate to be flown to a U. S. air base in Xian for a reunion with our parents the next day -- September 11, 1945. We had not seen our parents for 5 1/2 years.

*

I remember one day when two of us sneaked into the Japanese quarters to climb trees. It was such a thrill to climb a tree. We hadn't done it in a long, long time. But this tree had a bull tied to it. We'd been up in the tree for a while and the bull seemed docile, so we took turns sitting on it. That bull died a few days later.

*

I remember that when I went through my "begging" stage, I begged sugar from the Catholic Fathers. They were very kind and patient. I most remember a very ancient Father, he sat in the sun, small and withered, all wrinkles and smiles, with a black Chinese cap on his head and with a long, very long and pointed white beard. He looked at me in wonder. I was very sorry when almost all the Fathers left.

*

I remember that one night I was watching out for the Japanese guards while CB was stealing a whole bag of sugar from the Japanese storehouse. We smuggled the sugar in small bags to the families for the children.

*

I remember that I went with Father Palmers, on the early dark winter mornings to switch on the current without anybody's permission. The Japanese finally caught Father Palmers red-handed. He was punished for that.

*

I remember that during a whole winter I had to chop wood from very hard roots to provide wood for burning in the hospital's kitchen.

*

I remember that I watched Langdon Gilkey play tennis.

*



I remember that on the night of their escape, I waited for Tipton and Hummel --- We were, however, very anxious to avoid any mishaps, and had previously arranged with them for a recuperation procedure if ever they missed the "contact" at the scheduled location. That is why, between 6 and 7 in the morning, the following day, I had to be waiting for them near the boundary limits not very far away from our bloc n°56 at a place, behind the wall that was invisible from the watch towers. I hid myself just behind the morgue ready with a thick strong rope. If ever I heard the cry of the owl, I had to thrust the rope over the wall to help them back into the compound. ""

*

I remember two of us were catapulting pigeons on the roof of the church. A Japanese guard shouted at us and gave chase. I ran between two blocks where four people were outside playing cards. I don't know how, but they knew I was being chased. They pulled me down under their table and between their legs. For about five minutes I was surrounded by four pairs of shins. When it was all clear, I crawled out and slunk away.

*

I remember when Chefusian Alvin Desterhaft was to be repatriated, he gave his trumpet to me. I taught myself to play it and then joined the Salvation Army Band. We practiced once a week and played marches and hymn tunes a couple of times a week. On a bitterly cold day in February, my lips were chapped and I couldn't wear gloves because the trumpet valves are to close to play with gloves on. The Salvation Army Band gathered outside the hospital window to play for Eric Liddell -- Finlandia -- "Be still my soul, the Lord is on thy side." I think Eric died the next day. I have that trumpet still.

*

I remember that it was behind this part of the wall that I waited for Tipton and Hummel's probable return --- should their escape had gone wrong. Fortunately, they succeeded and I put the ladder and rope away before the Japanese guards saw anything.

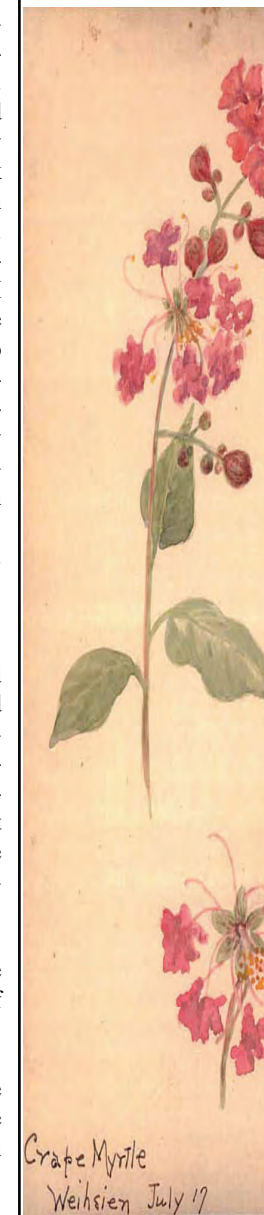
*

I remember that I watched the children queue for their ration of eggshells.

*

I remember that it was in June 1943, that I listened to a De Scheut Father play the accordion while others were singing.

*





I remember how we were liberated by a team of seven "angels" composed of 5 Americans, 1 Nisei and a young Chinese who served as an interpreter and who parachute-jumped for the first time on this particular mission.

*

I remember being quite awed by the strength and range of Jacqueline's soprano voice. It was rumored that she could actually crack a glass tumbler with her high notes.

*

I don't remember many of the children's names, but I did have Margaret MacMillan, Mickey Paternoster, a Janette, and a Gillian Pryor, and Andrew (Cess Pool) Kelly.

*

I remember some sort of problems with the distribution of the Red Cross parcels, what was that all about?

*

I remember that it was on March 29, 1943 --- I was 4 and ½ years old. When we arrived, the people of our convoy were lined up along the walls of the future base-ball field. I remember that we were anxiously waiting for the first roll-call --- just on this spot. There were swings and a jungle-jim on the playground. A few days later the Japanese had them taken away. I then realised: all was not well in this world.

*



I remember my dad cutting thin slices of spam for us after the laborious opening of the metal box which contained it.

*

I remember "My" tree, full of catkins that first spring. Sometimes, looking up, there was a flash of golden oriole wings, and looking west, I watched the sun set way beyond the wall. Once, a mushroom grew on it's trunk. Mr Churchill ATE it, Daddy didn't dare!

*

I remember Block-22, where we lived. Zandy played the accordion on his doorstep next to ours. My best friend was Francis, my age. Mr. Shadick was surrounded by Chinese books. Mr Churchill wrung a chicken's neck, he said he was going to EAT it! Margaret had curly-russet hair ---

*

I remember Summer 1943. Hollyhocks. A forest of hollyhocks double my height! A year later there wern't any left.

*

I remember that in the mornings I sometimes wandered into the bakery, a favourite place with a yummy smell, and if I thought that no one was looking, I could put my finger into the huge vat full of dough and lick my finger clean. (Today, I'm sure the bakers looked the other way!)

*





I remember Market Square was a permanent playground for marbles, knife throwing, rope-jumping, follow-the-leader, hopscotch = nothing as precious as a heavy flat stone! I don't remember playing with India-rubber balls.

*

I remember the basket ball field where our kindergarten teachers taught us singing and skipping games.

*

I remember that one day in my wanderings; I met my Daddy pumping water. He was almost bare, and his skin was very wet.

*

I remember that the trees in Lover's Lane were full of magpies. I remember being with a bunch of kids running after wild geese flying south, very high in the sky in their autumn "V" formations. We yelled "geese! geese!" frantically only to find ourselves stopped by some silly wall. No way out. Just up, up and AWAY.

*

I remember my heroine: --- Dolly, a lady who played base-ball with the men! And of course I remember Eric Liddell, on game-days. We little kids trailed him around, the bigger kids had all kinds of races and the men played tug-of-war.

*

I clearly remember being taken with my family and others by open truck to Tsingtao Railway and then on the floor of carriages without seats but with tatami mats on the floor. On arrival at WeiHsien, as Ron says, on to open trucks to the camp.

*

I remember the crowd of prisoners inside the gates watching us as our large contingent arrived. I can only guess their dismay at knowing this many new arrivals would be sharing their already crowded space.

*





I remember my half hour shifts pumping water at three pumping stations - sometimes at the bakery, sometimes near the shoe repair shop near the hospital, and sometimes near the ladies' toilets next to Block 36.

*

I do remember always being hungry. My memories were of "soup of the gods"...hot water, scallions and the odd piece of bread.

*

I remember when Mama became very fat with my sister-to-be Marylou, she sat down with a big hat to shade her from the summer sun, and chopped vegetables at a table outside Kitchen No.1, with a lot of other ladies.

*

Many of us will also remember at least one Japanese guard who went out of his way to be kind.

*

I remember Chefoo Christmas mainly because my parents arranged for my Auntie Jessie (Moore - soon to marry David Bentley-Taylor) to buy me a bicycle. It was, as I remember it, a full size one and I used to ride it with some difficulty around the "quad" in the Prep School. It was quickly commandeered by the Japanese at Christmas 1941.

*



© William A. Smith — The Hot Water Queue



I remember --- in the room on the first floor where girls in our Lower School Dormitory (LSD) lived. Our Chefoo teachers cooked scrambled eggs for us on a small stove they had built in the center of the room. Before we left the dormitory in the morning, they spooned ground eggshells into our mouths --- pure calcium, the doctors said. But it tasted like gravel. We would try to blow and cough it off our tongues.

*

I remember --- each of us 13 girls in the hospital's Lower School Dormitory (LSD) scrubbed her patch of floor each day. I remember playing two songs on a hand crank gramophone --- Roamin in the Gloamin Harry Lauder and Go to Sleep My Dusky Baby.

*

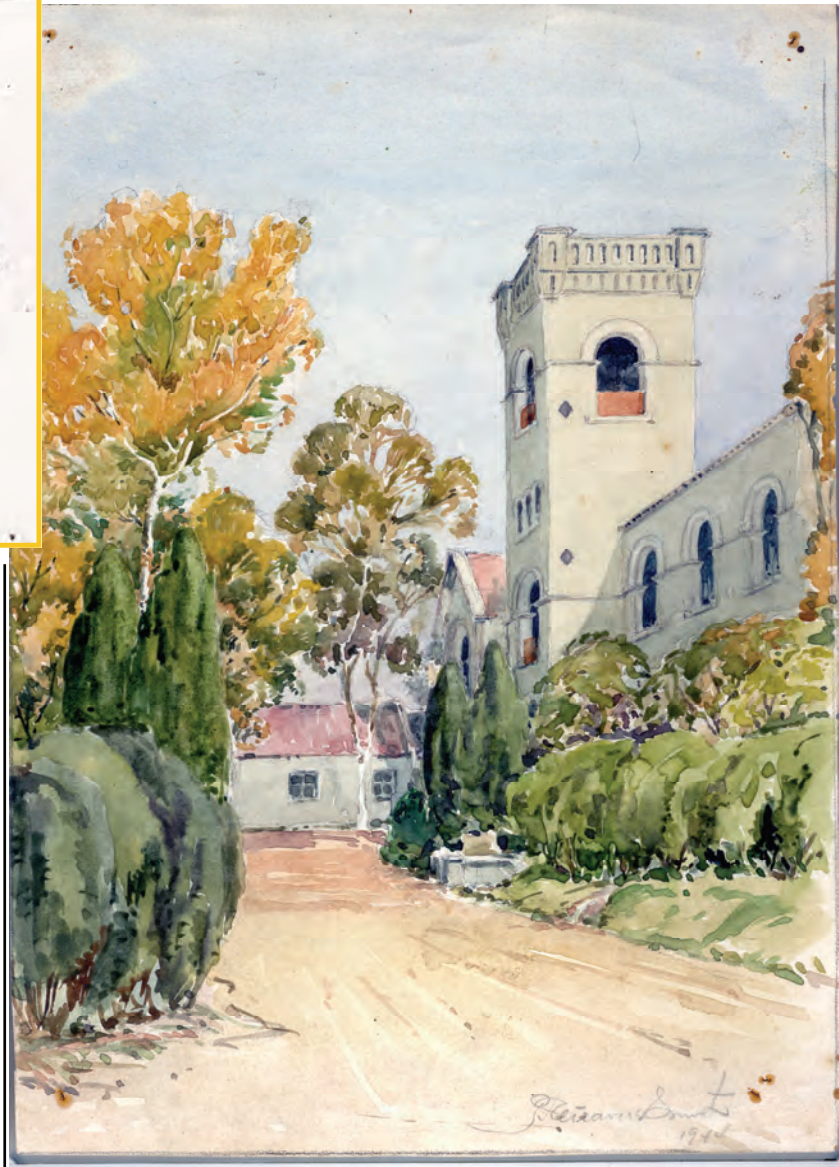
I remember --- when we Chefoo girls made a game of carrying coal buckets from the Japanese quarters --- girl, bucket, girl, bucket, girl --- we hauled the coal dust from the Japanese quarters back to the dormitory in the hospital, chanting all the way, many hands make light work.

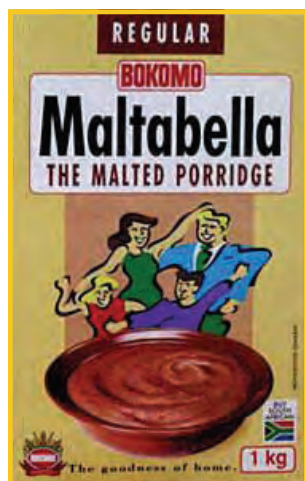
Then, in the biting cold, with frost cracked fingers, we shaped coal balls out of coal dust and clay. Grown-ups swapped coal ball recipes. Winter sunshine baked the coal balls dry enough for burning.

*

I remember --- the Battle of the Bedbugs every Saturday in the summer. With knife or thumb nails we children squished bedbugs or bedbug eggs in every crack and cranny of the steamer trunks we slept on and in every seam of our poogai and pillows.

*





Remember gao-liang? It grew tall in the fields beyond the barbed wire and those barrier walls. And, yes, we ate it -- boiled animal grain.

*

Her package arrived in New Jersey from England by Royal Mail. Inside the insulated wrapping, a yellow cardboard box said "Maltabella, The Malted Porridge." The package showed a happy family gazing adoringly at a bowlful of something reddish-brown that looked like -- gao-liang!

Remember gao-liang? It grew tall in the fields beyond the barbed wire and those barrier walls. And, yes, we ate it -- boiled animal grain.

"Maltabella porridge has been a trusted favourite with South

African families for over half a century," said a notice on the newly-arrived package. It also said "tasty breakfast."

It looked like -- gao-liang.

"Maltabella brings home the good rich flavour of malted grain sorghum..." the package said.

I knew it! Gao-liang!

Bless my soul! Cooking instructions told me how to cook it the convenient way -- by microwave. No one made gao-liang by microwave in Weih sien. Remember the giant metal guos heated over coal dust fires? And no one served it with milk and sugar -- the way I served myself today. But it flooded me with memories.

I remember marching with young girls from the Chefoo Lower School Dormitory into Kitchen Number One carrying my spoon and my white, chipped enamel bowl.

I was one of the lucky ones. Lots of folks ate out of empty tin cans with the lid fashioned into a handle. I had a bowl. At the breakfast serving line, someone would ladle me a scoop of gao-liang gruel -- sometimes cooked smooth, sometimes cooked un-ground and rough.

I didn't like gao-liang. But I liked hunger less. So while our Chefoo teachers were watching someone else at those wooden tables, I'd let a classmate spoon her gao-liang into my white enamel bowl. And I'd eat it -- just as I ate the green lu dou bean gruel -- which I hated even more.

At a very proper reception last month at our Weih sien celebration, I found myself sitting on a couch, side by side with the mayor of Weifang in a roomful of government dignitaries all dressed in very proper suits and ties.

What do you talk about in a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity like that -- one American woman in a roomful of important Chinese leaders?

I said thank you, of course, for their exquisite generosity that had brought a whole group of us from around the world to Weifang as their guests. I talked of my wonder at the tiny, country town called Weih sien 60 years ago -- turned now into a thriving, beautifully-landscaped metropolis called Weifang.

I talked about Chinese students competing successfully in American universities with the

best-of-our-best. I talked of Chinese friends eating Thanksgiving dinner turkey at our house in New Jersey for more than twenty years and our eating a Chinese New Year's feast at their house every year.

And I talked about -- gao-liang.

I put my hand on the sleeve of the Mayor. "Do people in Weifang still eat gao-liang"? I asked him. I had switched too quickly from the sublime to the ridiculous. He needed the translator to repeat my question.

I laughed as I told them the story of how watery gao-liang gruel helped keep us alive in Weih sien.

Do we eat gao-liang today? Well, not gao-liang like that, the Mayor replied. Today, people of Weifang eat gao-liang -- as dessert!

A few minutes later, I was ushered into our reunion's opening banquet. Amidst all of the elegance of the tables and the exquisite bounty -- course after course of this sumptuous Chinese

feast, I saw on a plate by each of our wine glasses an unfamiliar, cupcake-shaped, reddish-brown -- uh -- lump.

"Gao-liang," my host said.

For my pleasure and to satisfy a childhood memory, they had rushed out and bought gao-liang -- the 2005 version. I felt overwhelmed with wonder -- as I did throughout our visit. What unexpected thoughtfulness!

And, my! How gao-liang has changed! In pure delight, I walked it around from table to table of former internees. It was my evening's "show-and-tell."

Try as I might to like that delicacy on the elegant China plate at that opening-night banquet just a month ago, and try as I might to like the steaming Maltabella porridge in my breakfast bowl today, my memories of long ago get in the way. Every bite is seasoned with memories of crowded wooden benches and wooden tables in Kitchen Number One and hungry children struggling to stomach -- gao-liang gruel. #

*



I remember Henrietta de Jongh:

In the seventies she wasn't married, she was very close to her brother Frans who wasn't married either at that time, she had a job in psychology and social work, (thanks to Weihsien experiences I suppose).

I very much loved the de Jongh family in Weihsien, Frans was my age, and I too have splendid memories, above all of Mrs. de Jongh who kept her family together with such art and grace, and FED them all every noon and evening, God knows how she did it, and what she fed them but they had to be present, they all said grace, and relished what they ate! My first pangs of jealousy were felt at just those precise moments!!!

Mr de Jongh was a stamp collector, I suppose he had to leave all behind, so in camp he collected cigarette boxes and match boxes and put their cardboard pictures in home-made albums, I remember them being all so beautifully arranged!

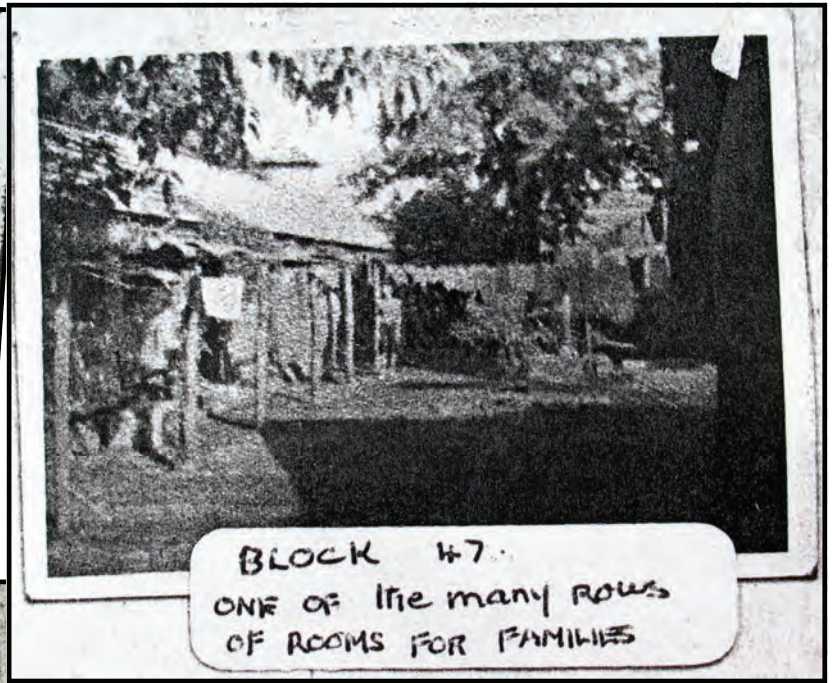
Mrs de Jongh and Mummy had bought plenty of soap to camp, and Daddy had a whole bottle of precious glycerine

(for our throat-sores, mixed with a drop of iodine) so we spent an afternoon making soap bubbles, glycerine to make the bubbles last, I don't remember how we made the pipes, (paper?) but I very well remember the frothy bowl into which we plunged our pipes, then blew ever so softly to get the bubbles going, growing, glowing, ah all those colours! till they were gently set free and up they went... well the sky was blue, the air very warm so they floated higher still than the acacia trees, we couldn't even see them burst so high up they were, I remember thinking they're so beautiful they don't even have to go over the Wall!

*

I remember that Santa used to come in late on Christmas Eve, after we were all asleep, and leave a stocking at the end of each bed, which we would discover the next morning - early! I remember that I received gifts, apart from the stocking which was mainly edible, of lengths of rope, pen knives etc. I can remember singing carols on Christmas Eve around the area to other European families. I can remember Christmas services - but not very clearly.

*



I remember my Dad acting in Androcles and the Lion. And Fr. de Jaeger (was it?) being the lions roar.

*

Gosh the bed bugs. I remember being sent to get the boiling water, carrying it and spilling it all over...yes! Then getting myself painted blue with Gentian Violet.

*

I remember Androcles and the Lion, my dad was the christian who was willing to do anything to avoid being killed by the lion. I was so upset. Either getting ready for my first communion, or just had it.

*

I remember my dad with the swarming of bees in the hospital.

*

I remember walking on the corrugated tin roofs of the Japanese compound with (Leo? Leon?) older than I, and our feet were burning on the heat and we caught two fledgling pigeons for food. he cooked them and I brought half back to my family. I cannot remember who he was except that he was (Russian?).

*

I remember, Sister Eustella(?) was that her name? She played softball, was an American, and was a nun.

*



I remember the counting. Three times a day, a.m. I also remember meeting with Japanese later on in 1973 who asked me how come I could use chopsticks so well. When I told them I was in China and had been in a Concentration camp, none would admit to being in the military. Ah well we did business anyway.

*

I remember stealing coal from the Japanese compound with my late brother Mickey. We had our pockets full of coal and were walking just outside and he threw an Acacia tree seed pod up into the air. Wouldn't you know it, it hit a guard and he came around the trees and took Mickey into the guard house. I ran like a scalded cat...with my coal. My Dad had to go and get Mickey and apologise for him. It took all afternoon.

*

I also remember going in the Japanese compound in summer walking on the corrugated tin roofs with bare feet and it was so hot. I was with someone whose name now escapes me. An older boy and we were after pigeons to eat. He caught one and we cooked it later.

*

I remember being hungry.

*

I remember the horror of eating powdered egg shells and how they didn't get wet in your mouth.

*

I remember the B29s flying over and the crates and drums falling from the bombays and the 'chutes never opening. I remember when the 7 jumped from the B24 and we ran out of the gates.

*

Carol Orlich, Peter Orlich's widow, phoned me today from New York -- bubbling with delight at the printouts of these memories about Pete that I've been mailing to her. She said that Pete wasn't supposed to be parachuting because he wore glasses. But he wanted to be on the rescue team. So when he lined up to be tested with other volunteers, he slipped his glasses into his pocket and listened carefully to the men in front of him reading the letters from the eye chart. He memorized the letters so he could pass the eye exam. On his first practice parachute drop, his glasses flew over his forehead and he couldn't see. So for the drop into Weih sien, he taped his glasses to his head.

*



© Gay & Christine Sancton



I remember my Dad, Frank dancing a pas de deux with Betty Lambert. I remember my Mom, Ruby, playing soft ball complete with chatter.

*

I can't help remembering the energy we expended, whether it was working and manning the PUMPS or PLAYing in our various sports, with the running, jumping and 'tug a war' of the Empire day games, as well, AND don't forget all THAT DANCING we did, and I can't help wondering ???

How did we do all that on our empty stomachs?

*

I remember the Japanese withholding food and leaving it exposed to the elements until became rotten and then releasing it to us.

*

I remember the horse that died which was allowed to become maggot ridden before releasing it. I have nothing to thank them for. They have not even deigned to apologise to us.

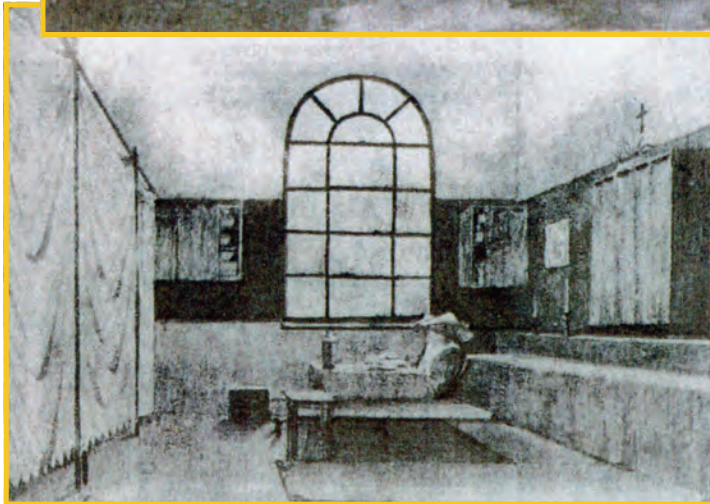
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I remember that Joyce and I together raised a little ball of yellow fuzz to a full grown pigeon by chewing up bread and allowing it to put its beak and sometimes even its whole head into our mouth to feed. We named it "Peter" and painted the name on the underside of its outspread wing. Peter was very tame-too tame in fact- and would come when called by anybody and finished up, we believe, as someone's meal!

*



© Father Louis Schmidt



I remember a lot about Temple Hill, but cannot remember celebrating Christmas there. And when I came to try and remember Christmas's in Weihsien, my mind is a blank.
*

I remember that one of those courageous Cesspool coolies paid for his valor with his life. He was shot! What about his poor widow and children? The enemy may have made life difficult for them!
*

I remember playing it, it was group tag. There were two teams that were trying to catch each other. When caught, you had to go behind their base line as a prisoner. But if someone from your team could tear down the field and touch the caught ones, they were released. The aim was to get everyone as prisoners and so it was a pretty never ending game if you could release prisoners back into the general fray/. I was known as the 'little steam engine' as I chugged down the side to rescue the desperate prisoners! Ah me...the rescuing impulse is still strong!

*

I CAN REMEMBER PRACTICING THE SEMAPHORE. I ALSO REMEMBER THE TINY STOVES.....I REMEMBER THAT WE LAUGHED ABOUT SITTING ON THE STOVE TO KEEP THE STOVE WARM.....

*

I was in our compound when I heard the Liberator and I clearly remember reading the name on it which was "Armoured Angel" which indeed it was.

*

I well remember Mr McLaren and his little notices on the Camp's bulletin boards; although I did not know the man personally.

*

Another thing I remember about our liberation is from my father who told me he saw Tad Nagasaki walk up to the Japanese guard at the main gate, slap him on the shoulder and say, "Now what do you think of your Nagasaki?" The guard did not reply. I do not know whether the guard had heard of Nagasaki at that time. I know I had not heard of Hiroshima either. I now know that there was a hidden radio receiver in the altar of the church which begs the question "Did anyone in the camp know before the Liberator came that the war had ended and that an atomic bomb had been dropped?"

*

I still have trouble remembering how we celebrated Christmas in camp.

*

Does anyone remember the Christmas pudding the cooks in Kitchen Number One made? They must have hoarded the sugar. After our steady and dwindling diet of boiled lu-doh and gaoliang, the pudding almost made me sick. Much too rich. I kept it on a shelf in the dormitory until it gathered dust.

*

I am sure most of you will remember Langdon in WeiHsien as a lovely man, always friendly and helpful.

*



I remember --- I hated the dogs. You could play with the Japanese guards, but never their dogs. The dogs were trained to kill. I wondered, how did a guard get to be friends with a killer dog? I remember the screaming terror of the night the Alsatian dog killed Miss Broomhall's kitten, Victoria Snowball. Tucked under my mosquito net, I heard a terrified, yowling, shriek rip the stillness, clashing with a guttural barking muffled by the tiny ball of fur between those bloody teeth. I buried my head in terror and stuffed the pillow around my ears. They cleaned the mess by morning --- perhaps our teachers, perhaps our brothers. Miss Broomhall, always sensible and very proper, walked a little slower after that. In all my days in Weihsien, that is the only time I remember being afraid.

I remember Kitty telling about what a problem it was feeding her baby on the train leaving Weihsien to go on the Gripsholm. I suppose the baby was you!

*

I don't remember any other animals in the compound, except on one occasion when a rabid dog came in the gate and ran wildly around the place.

*

I do not remember any teacher putting their arm around me or showing any kind of physical affection to me.

*

I remember --- we girls ground peanuts into peanut butter, using a hand-crank grinder. Marjorie Harrison ground the tip of her finger into the grinder. Our teacher bought the peanuts with Comfort money.

*

I remember the hole that we slept inwe kept the lights on because of all the bugs.....I remember feeling very crowded....

I also remember the roll call on deck each day....

*

She remembered once being fed horse meat and later told it came from a horse that had died of illness. 'She said they closed their eyes and ate what they were given.

*



I can remember at the age of about 8 or 9 playing Robin Hood and his Merry Men. There was a great crowd of us in the playing field of the Prep School. And we were having a wonderful time - just racing around capturing the evil Sheriff of Nottingham and other scoundrels! No special rules to the game or anything, just innocent childish make believe!

*

I remember another game I participated in, as I recall, was one in which we impersonated the ancient Greek gods of Mt. Olympus. I chose the role of Hercules I remember. I only recall playing "Greek gods" once however. Miss Carr had a friendly chat with me after the game. She quietly and kindly reminded me that these Greek gods we were impersonating were heathen gods. I had not even thought of it that way but realized at once that she was right. There's only one true God. So I never played that particular game again - although it had been fun.

*

I DO REMEMBER THE GAME PRISONER'S BASE. ALSO THE GAME SEVENS WITH THE BALL....

*

I remember some nicknames, "Muscles" Brandon who I believe is immortalized in a muscular statue somewhere around the World.

*

I remember that I was in the care of two female teachers from the Chefoo School, a boarding school for missionaries' children, and I don't remember having any great emotions of grief at the parting. This is just the way life was. That's how I faced the next five years.

*

The US Flying Tigers will be remembered forever for their valuable help to China, and their valiant and heroic deeds.

*

I remember when we were visiting the camp in 1986 I had difficulty finding some places because there seemed to be many more buildings than originally and as the newer buildings were built in the same style it was difficult to orientate myself. Is it possible to indicate the camp's dimensions? We did find the church and hospital of course but the present (1986) main gate was quite close to the hospital. I think the original main gate had disappeared.



The Gateway to Freedom
(with annotations in
the original photo for
the above photo)



8. In the hospital yard *Triller*

I remember --- boys and girls of the Chefoo Schools singing Christmas carols in one of the bedrooms upstairs.

*

I remember --- the frequent S. O. S. sign on the menu board. Our teachers told us S. O. S. meant Same Old Stew.

*

I remember --- Nazarene missionary Mary Scott teaching us girls how to play softball. In my book, Mary Scott ranks high on my list of those I call the Weihsien spirit team.

*

I remember --- writing our letters to Daddy and Mummy --- 100 words printed in block capitals to make reading easy for the Japanese censor. Few of those letters reached home until after we arrived home.

*

I still remember those trails of bedbug bites across my arm or chest or leg.

*

I remember --- our two-girl teams of stokers lighting the fire in our little stove that warmed our Chefoo Schools' Lower School Dormitory. Marjorie Harrison and I won the daily rivalry of who stoked the fire to turn the sides of our stove red hot most often. With coal dust and coal balls for fuel, this didn't happen often.

*

I remember --- we girls would throw our ball over the wall on purpose then signal desperately to the Japanese guard in the tower that we HAD to get over the wall to find the ball. (Balls were VERY scarce.) The guard would hoist us up and drop us over the wall for delicious moments of freedom while we searched for the ball. Someone tattled. When our Chefoo teachers found out, they stopped our ball-over-the-wall escapades.

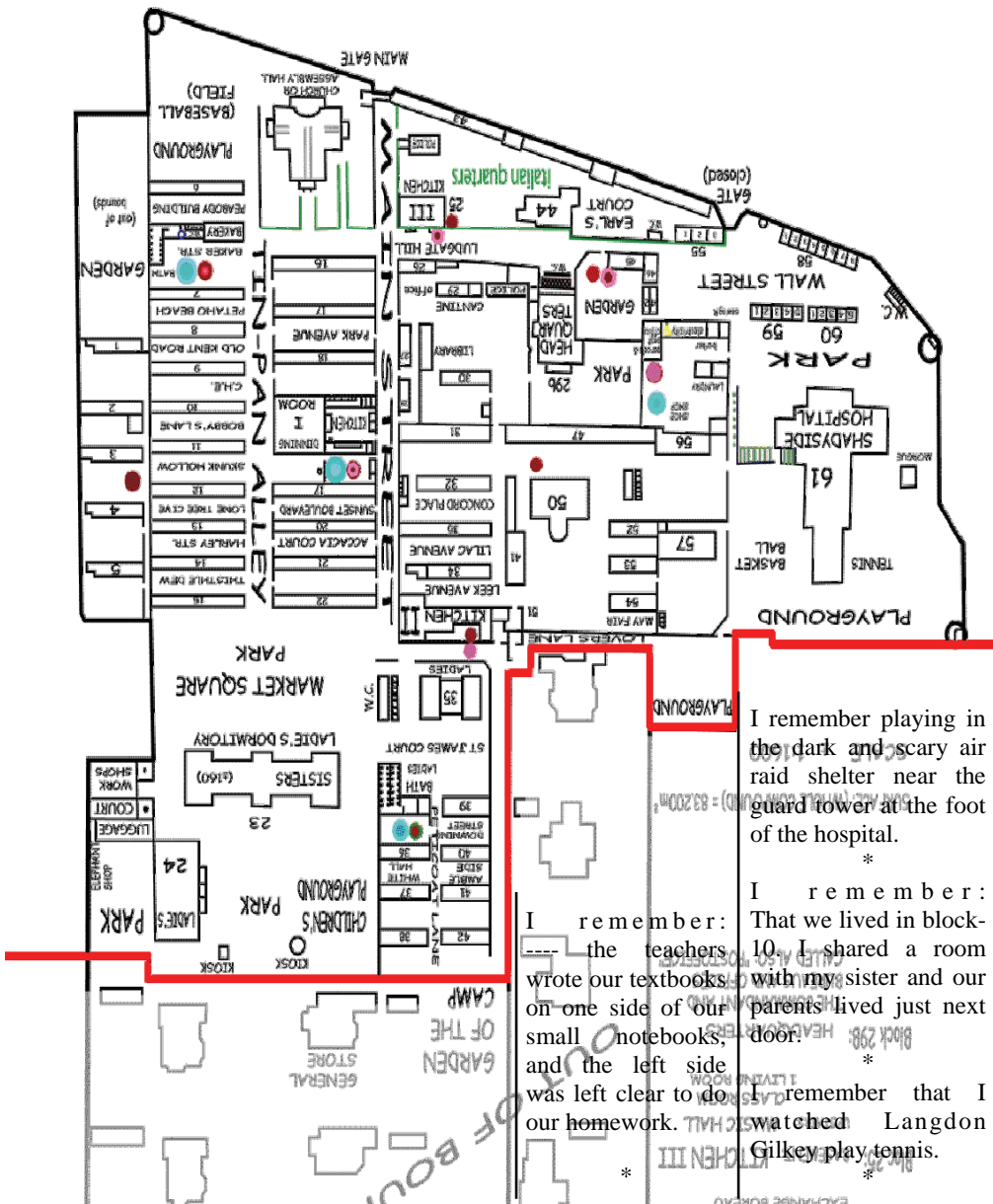
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I remember our Chefoo teachers lining us up for inspection every day: Were we clean? Were we neat? Did we have our mending done? On weekdays, our teachers scheduled us for "session" -- a time for mending holes in our socks or clothes. Where did they get the thread to mend our clothes? For sure, even in internment camp, our patches were always proud. No Chefoo student was allowed to look like a ragamuffin.

*

I remember --- the Chefoo Schools arrived in Weihsien on my eleventh birthday, 1943.

*



I r e m e m b e r :
 ---- standing arounding #1 kitchen, when Father Scanlan got out of solitary confinement for black marketing. We all sang For He's A Jolly Good Fellow. He had been let out after a couple of days (instead of two weeks) because he sang outloud every morning when he woke up EARLY, and he was right under the guards house.
 *

I r e m e m b e r :
 ---- sitting in the church for class. We would line up in a pew, smartest at the left, and Miss Rudd would be facing us in the pew ahead. She would quizz us on the lesson, if the one answering missed, they would go to the bottom of the line and the rest would move up - we loved it. Especially, if Wies de Jongh or, I think Eddie Cooke, failed to answer correctly. They were the smartest, when they went to the bottom of the line, we had a chance. Never took them very long to get back up!!!!
 *

I remember that I was a cook here. I started at the bottom rung of the ladder to become "chef". That lasted for 6 months in 1944.
 *

I remember the "Swat the flies" campaign. Wasn't the first prize a rat's skull with curved fangs.
 *

I r e m e m b e r :
 ---- the American Salvation Army band playing God Bless America while they brought the 1st paratroopers into camp on the men's shoulders. The British thought they were playing God Save the King.
 What excitement!
 *

I r e m e m b e r :
 ---- Eric Liddell (of Chariots of Fire fame) teaching us basketball on the same basketball field. He was an amazing, patient man. He turned us into good, competitive sportsmen - and women.
 *

I r e m e m b e r :
 ---- standing on the basketball field outside a window, while people worked on one of the CIM boys who had jumped up and grabbed a hanging wire. They tried for hours, but never brought him back. A sad day.
 *

I r e m e m b e r :
 sitting on the outside wall at the baseball field, the second time paratroopers dropped. We had put up parachutes as a backstop for the homeplate. All of a sudden, canisters started to drop where we were sitting, because they thought that was the place to aim the parachutes. Luckily, someone figured it out before anyone was hurt and rushed to tear the parachutes down.
 *

I remember playing in the dark and scary air raid shelter near the guard tower at the foot of the hospital.
 *

I r e m e m b e r :
 ---- the teachers wrote our textbooks with my sister and our on one side of our parents lived just next small notebooks, door.
 *

I remember that I wrote our homework. I watched Langdon Gilkey play tennis.
 *



I remember that a couple of times a nanny goat found its way into our Block 2 from the Japanese quarters. We attempted to milk it without success-someone else had beaten us to it!

*

I remember the 3 Grandon brothers-"Muscles"(Aubrey), "Suicide"(Joe) and "Oxford"(Bobby). "Muscles" I've heard used to pose on a beach in Florida and tell people he was a Native American.

*

I remember the little beggar boy in our first camp who was plucked from the street and brutally mistreated by the Jap soldiers as an example to us to behave.

*

I can also remember being in the Cubs, then graduating to the Scouts in the Eagle Patrol, of which I was the flag bearer, because my mother made the flag- a red eagles head on a white background!

*



I still remember the horror when our senior Chefoo classmate was accidentally electrocuted as we waited for roll call on the basketball court.

*

I remember that I enjoyed playing soccer, softball, tennis-quoits, running, and participating in Boy Scouts.

*

I remember that I was standing on Main Street on a warm summer afternoon when I heard Aliosha falling down from a big tree. He killed himself.

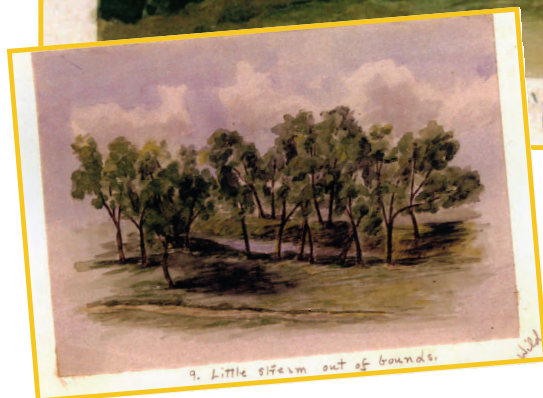
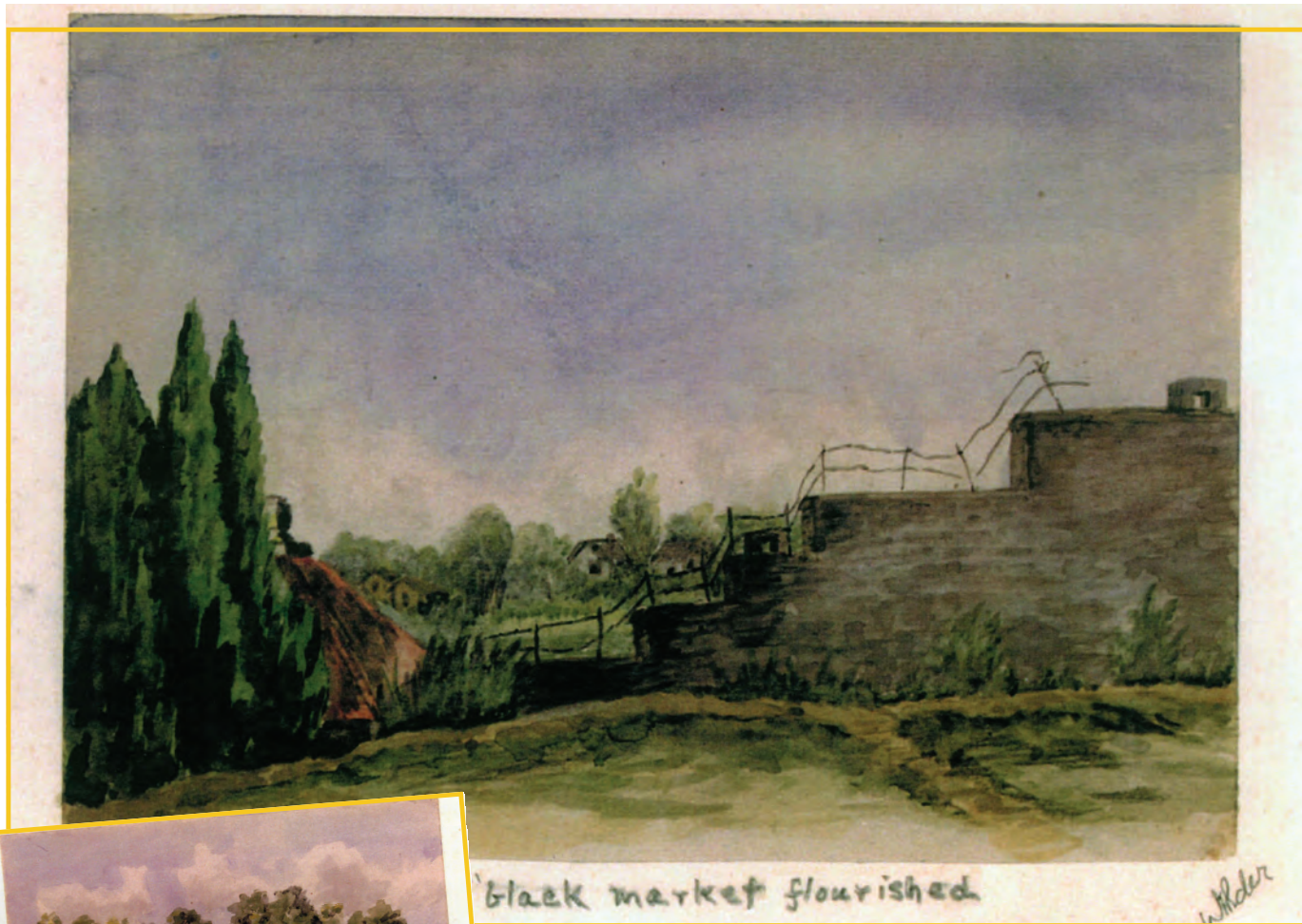
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I remember that I was on watch on Tin Pan Alley near Kitchen No 1. It was on a late evening in June 1944 when Hummel and Tipton escaped from the Weihsien Concentration Camp.

*

I remember, --- some of us Chefoo boys became "Camp Rangers" responsible for cleaning the grounds. That job gave us the added "privilege" each day of carrying our stretcher box loaded with leaves and trash out through The Gate to dump the refuse on the river bank beyond the barrier wall.

*



I remember that is was from the West part of the wall between blocks 1 & 2 that Tipton and Humel disapeard into the night ---

*

I remember When my grandpa, Herbert Taylor, nearly died of pneumonia, I moved to Block 60 (In de laminose) to care for him.

*

I remember the gaoliang as being full grown on August 17 and giving the parachutists trouble with knowing where the ground was. I carried a machine gun tripod back to camp.

*

I remember --- that is was here, behind the closed gate at a particular place behind the wall and relatively out-of-view from the Japanese guards that Father Scanlan made his blackmarket business with the local Chinese. Mostly eggs!

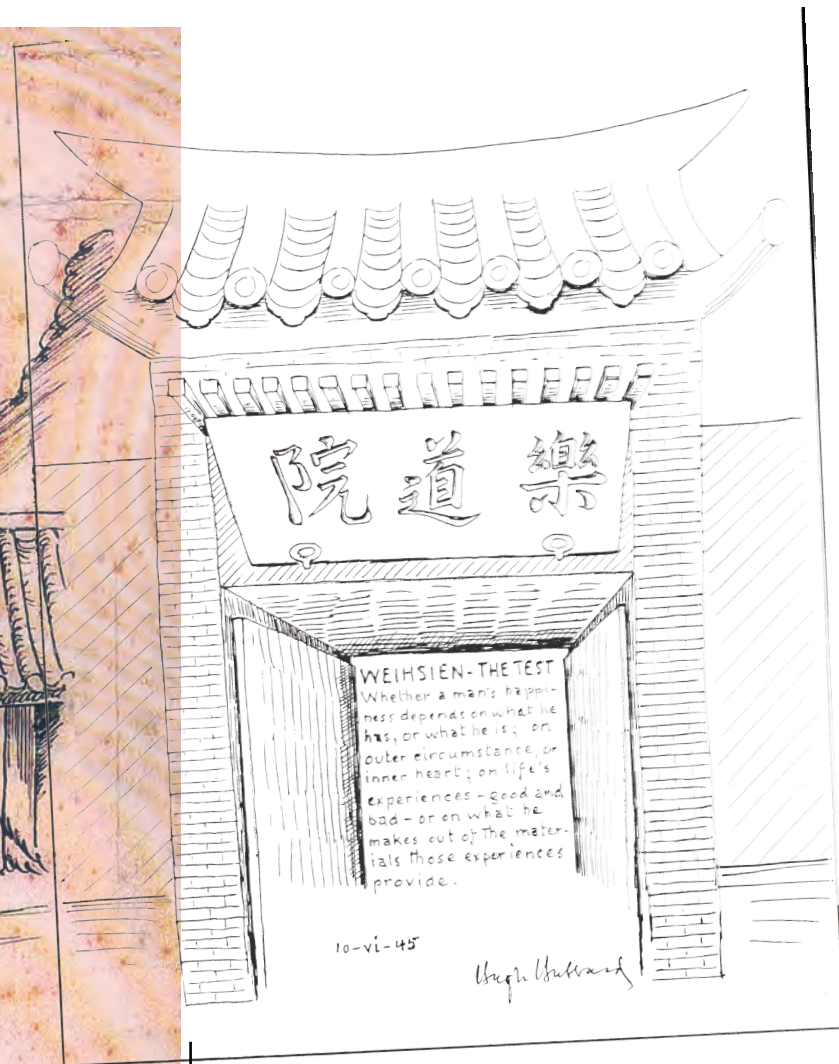
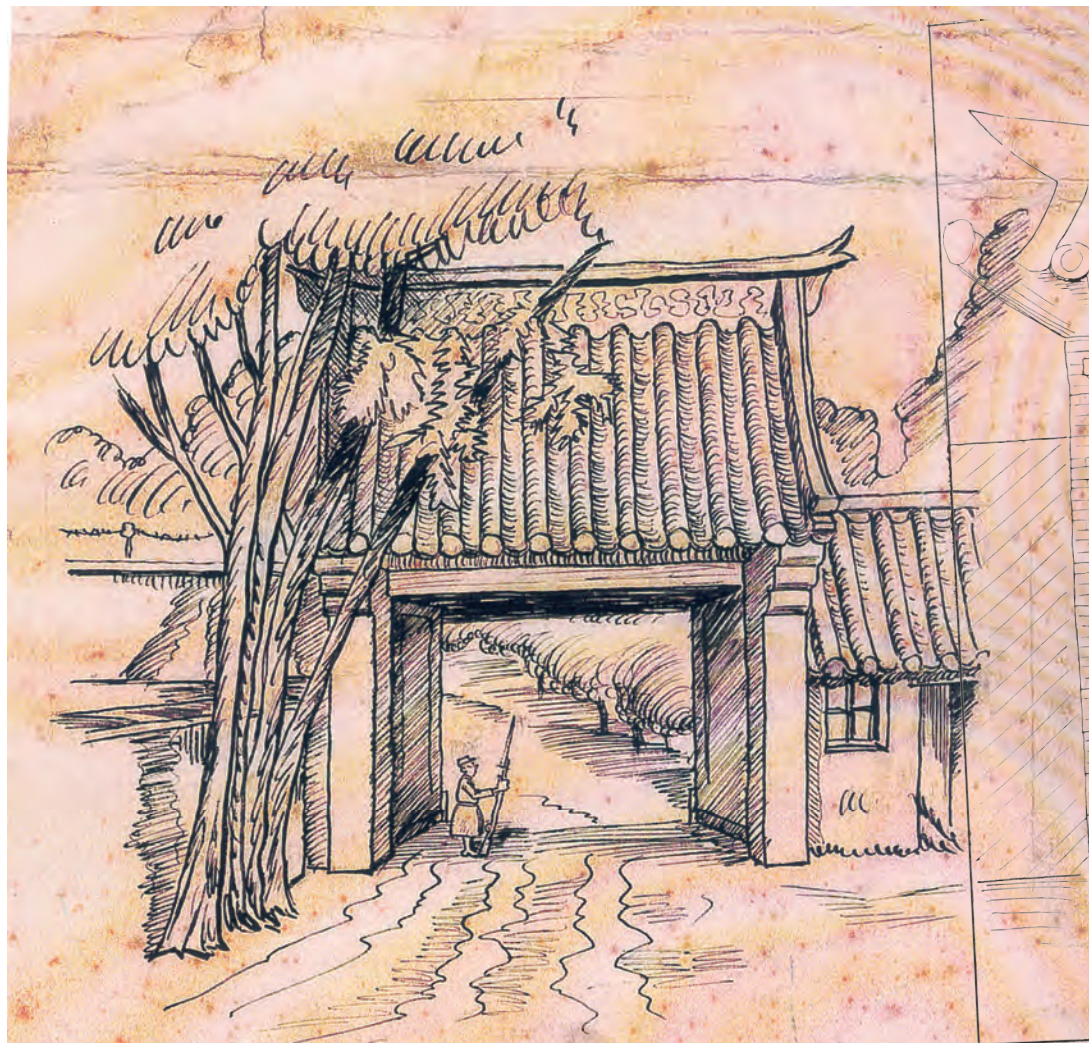
*

I remember that during our stay in the Weihsien compound, I had a close encounter with "Sgt. Bushindi," and if anyone should remember him wearing a villainous black outfit, it ought to be me.

*

I remember --- on August 17, 1945, internees poured through The Gate to welcome six American liberators and to carry them in triumph to accept the surrender of the Japanese commanding officer. Three or four of us Chefoo boys sneaked away from that triumphant procession and dashed into Weihsien (village), where we found the Catholic Mission. I'll never forget the welcome we were given. And I'll never forget that when we got back to The Gate, we found ourselves LOCKED OUT!

*



THE GATEWAY TO FREEDOM

(With acknowledgments to
Mr. Travers Smith for
the above title)

to Wehsien Camp

I remember the gate with its three large Chinese characters: Le Dao Yuan - "Campus of The Joyous Way." In September, 1943, our Chefoo contingent stepped off the lorries and poured through that gate to a rousing welcome and into an unknown future.

*



© Christine Sancton — The Children's playground

I remember that I camped in the children's playground under a tent (found in the attic) with more or less ten boy scouts. I remember that it was in September 1945.

*

I remember--- I lost my prisoner-number badge on that same basketball court. You could NEVER be caught without your prisoner-number badge. So my sister Kathleen helped me make a fake one. Roll call became a daily terror. Would the Japanese discover my fake badge? Many days later, I picked up a filthy piece of cloth and discovered it was my badge. Imagine my relief!

*

I remember I was standing with Major Staiger when he saw the misdirected chutes going down. He pulled his pistol and went off toward the village. Later a couple of wagons came back with all the stuff loaded on them. Those chutes were red as I remember.

*

I remember having my first communion and getting a little lacy paper card and an armlet hand painted.

*

I remember bed bugs and pouring boiling water on the beds, and getting scalded and being painted blue. Oh the embarrassment in the showers.

*

I also remember raising a dove in our room. I kept it on a shelf in the corner and it would eat from my mouth. Ended up eating it.

*

I remember Mrs De Jong, mother of the lovely Henrietta, lol., who also fried cheese sandwiches when the Red Cross parcels came in.

*



I remember Mrs Howard as being always dressed in black but who made donuts outside her room which was next to ours.

*

I remember when I was batting that day and the bases were full. I hit one that scored two players.

*

I remember one of the Japanese used to give me Judo lessons in the guard house near the church. One of the Japanese high ups put a stop to that.

*

I remember that I watched Langdon Gilkey play tennis.

*



I remember that Block 23 had been a classroom building with a bell tower. I remember in the beginning of our Weih sien days that some of us Chefoo boys were assigned dormitory space on the second floor. Our steamer trunks became our beds and our seats, because that dormitory was also our classroom.

*



I remember when the Japanese discovered that the men housed in the third floor of the hospital were signalling messages to Chinese beyond the wall. They moved the men out and moved us Chefoo boys in. I perched a hollow tree trunk behind a rain gutter on the hospital roof and watched a family of sparrows nesting and raising their young. If I did it right, I could chew up bread from Kitchen Number One and get the fledgling sparrows to eat the mush right out the side of my mouth.

*



I remember September 10, the day six of us Chefoo children were flown out of the camp from the air strip beyond the walls -- Raymond Moore, David Allen, and four Taylors -- Kathleen, Jamie, John, and me. We were only the second planeload out. For how many weeks the B-24s and the B-29s had been dropping food and clothing into the camp. It seemed so easy. So onto the plane I carried my own tiny relief and memory package to drop to the girls who for almost three years had been my dorm mates in the Lower School Dormitory. Sorrow of sorrows! When the plane got into the air,

Weih sien shrank to a tiny, unreachable target beneath us and I don't think the airplane windows opened. I curled up and went to sleep on a heap of used parachutes piled on the floor of the plane. When the plane touched down in Sian, the men at the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) base served us ice cream and cake and showed us a Humphrey Bogart movie I think it was "Casablanca." Kathleen and I slept that night in an officer's tent -- unaccompanied by bedbugs. The next night -- 9/11 -- we were home. We hadn't seen our parents for 5 1/2 years.

*



I remember a few days after liberation in 1945, Ronnie Masters and I made our way to a secret airfield -- a small landing strip -- a few miles south of the camp. We'd heard of the strip, and find it we did. On the strip, we saw two or three small Japanese fighter planes with their pilots nearby. I don't know how we had the nerve to climb up

and look in the cockpit, but we did. Ronnie could speak Japanese because he was 1/2 Japanese. He said to me, "Peter, they're talking about shooting us. So move away from the plane. Don't rush, but move on into the woods." The pilots looked pretty tough and hard-faced. It was a relief to get out of their sight and range.

*



各戶掛日本國旗

日僑回到就市面興旺的了

良民務須安居樂業

官員必要維持公安

日本軍是軍規嚴正保護良民

日軍快護回日本領事和僑民來

傳單

The Japanese Army is coming soon to protect Japanese civilians living in China. The Japanese Army is an army of strict discipline, protecting good citizens. Civil servants must seek to maintain peace and order. Members of the community must live together peacefully and happily. With the return of Japanese businessmen to China, the businesses will prosper once more. Every house must fly a Japanese flag to welcome the Japanese.

JAPANESE ARMY HEADQUARTERS



I remember I was the first to reach (American rescuer) Peter Orlich . He had a brush cut (flat top!) when I first saw him. He did not have his cap and he had his glasses taped with pink 'medical' as opposed to Scotch tape around his temples. I remember this very clearly. He was standing (as I remember) in a field of stubble, (Kaoliang?) I remember him assuming I was a Chinese, maybe I looked like one? when he saw me, barefoot and only wearing shorts. Who knows, but he pointed to some printing in Chinese on his shirt or jacket or vest. There was printing all over in different languages. There was also the stars and stripes. I said to him in my impeccable English "Excuse me, sir, but I don't read Chinese." He then asked me if I was from the camp, and how did I get out, so I told him the gates were opened. Then he wanted to know where his fellow jumpers were. I walked him back to the camp, and as we got closer I got pre-empted by some adults.

*



I remember --- on August 17, 1945, internees poured through The Gate to welcome six American liberators and to carry them in triumph to accept the surrender of the Japanese commanding officer.

I remember that upon our return from the field where we cheered the arrival of Major Staiger and his group on August 17, 1945 around 12 a.m., we approached the wall of the ball field, he came down on our shoulders and said:

"You stop here. Now, it is our turn to act."

I remember that August 17 was a windy day.

I remember hearing that one of the guys had his 45 out as he listened to the noises converging on him and only put it away when a crowd of jubilant kids burst through the kao liang.

I Remember the dizzy euphoria you felt on August 17, 1945, when these angels dropped out of the sky into the fields beyond those barrier walls?

I remember --- on August 17, 1945, internees poured through The Gate to welcome six American liberators and to carry them in triumph to accept the surrender of the Japanese commanding officer.





I remember climbing into the attic of Block 23 to see the pigeon nests or to catch a baby pigeon to make it our pet. One of the prisoners, Hugh Hubbard, nurtured a whole generation of budding ornithologists in Weih sien. Hugh Hubbard was one of my heroes in the camp. I still have my bird watching diary from Weih sien.

*

I remember Sometimes I was assigned to scrub sheets in the laundry located in the basement of the hospital.

*

I remember that Main Road was lined by acacia trees. Main Road took us past the church, past rows of tiny internee dorms, past Kitchen Number One to Block 23. High in the trees along Main Road, we scrounged dead branches for firewood. I remember too well the death of Aliosha Marinellis. I was in the branches on one side of Main Road, and Marinellis was in the branches on the other. He was high in a tree, holding on to a branch above him and jumping to break off the dead branch under his feet. I saw the dead branch snap under his feet. I saw the branch he was holding snap. And I saw him crash to the ground. He never regained consciousness. Dr. Howie told us later that a few days before this accident, he had talked to Marinellis about how uncertain life is and how important faith in Christ is.

*

I remember my parents referring to the camp at Weih sien as being about the size of two football fields.

*

I remember having trouble walking later on when we were out there under the welded-together barrels parachuting down from the B29s when we were being supplied from Saipan. In that case it was the puncture vine seeds that inflicted terrible pain on our bare feet as we ran to get away from what we supposed was the trajectory of the barrels. Looking up in the air and not at the ground, we would run right into a patch of puncture vine. The pain was awful and we would have to pick the spiky seeds out of our feet and then try to find a way out of the patch without picking up more.

*

The only color I remember of the chutes was dark green. But that was a long time ago and details like that may be wrong. I remember the B29 chutes being made into landing markers for future runs and that an adjacent village made some of their own and confused the pilots enough that they dumped their loads there, instead of on our markers.

*

WEIHSIEN GLEE SINGERS
1ST CONCERT
 ASSEMBLY HALL
 FRIDAY/SATURDAY 29/30 OCTOBER 8PM.



PROGRAMME

1 TWO 16TH CENTURY MADRIGALS
 (1) "COME AGAIN, SWEET LOVE"
 (2) "DOWN IN A FLOW'RY VALE"
 JOHN DOWLAND
 CONSTANTIUS VESTA

2 TWO PART SONGS FOR MALE VOICES
 (1) "MASSA DEAR"
 (2) "THE GOSLINGS"
 ANTONIN DVORAK
 FREDERICK BRIDGE

3 PIANOFORTE SOLOS BY **MISS RUTH GREENING**
 (1) VARIATIONS IN E FLAT
 (2) NOCTURNE IN G
 MENDELSSOHN
 CHOPIN

4 TWO MODERN MADRIGALS FOR FEMALE VOICES
 (1) "SNOW"
 (2) "FLY, SINGING BIRD"
 } EDWARD ELGAR

5 TWO GLEES
 (1) "MORNING"
 (2) SONG OF AUTOLYCUS FROM SHAKESPEARE'S "WINTER'S TALE"
 "SONG OF THE PEDLAR"
 QLEY SPEAKS
 LEE WILLIAMS

VIOLIN OBLIGATO IN NO 4 M^{RS} EILEEN AVERY AND DR J.B. ROBINSON
ACCOMPANIST MISS NELMA STRANKS

CONDUCTOR **PERCY S. GLEED**

WEEKLY LECTURE
 ARRANGED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
DUTCH PAINTING



ILLUSTRATED ON THE SCREEN

ONE SHOWN OCTOBER 27 - 2.45 PM AT THE ASSEMBLY HALL LECTURER - J. H. PRINCE

I remember flying from the camp back to Tientsin in C46 or C45. It had steel seats along the fuselage with dimpled seats in it. I think the windows were oval with a little hole cut out in the centre.

All the luggage was strapped down along the centre of the plane so that we could not see the people on the other side. I remember watching the wall of luggage looming overhead when the plane banked. What a thrill for a 10 year old.

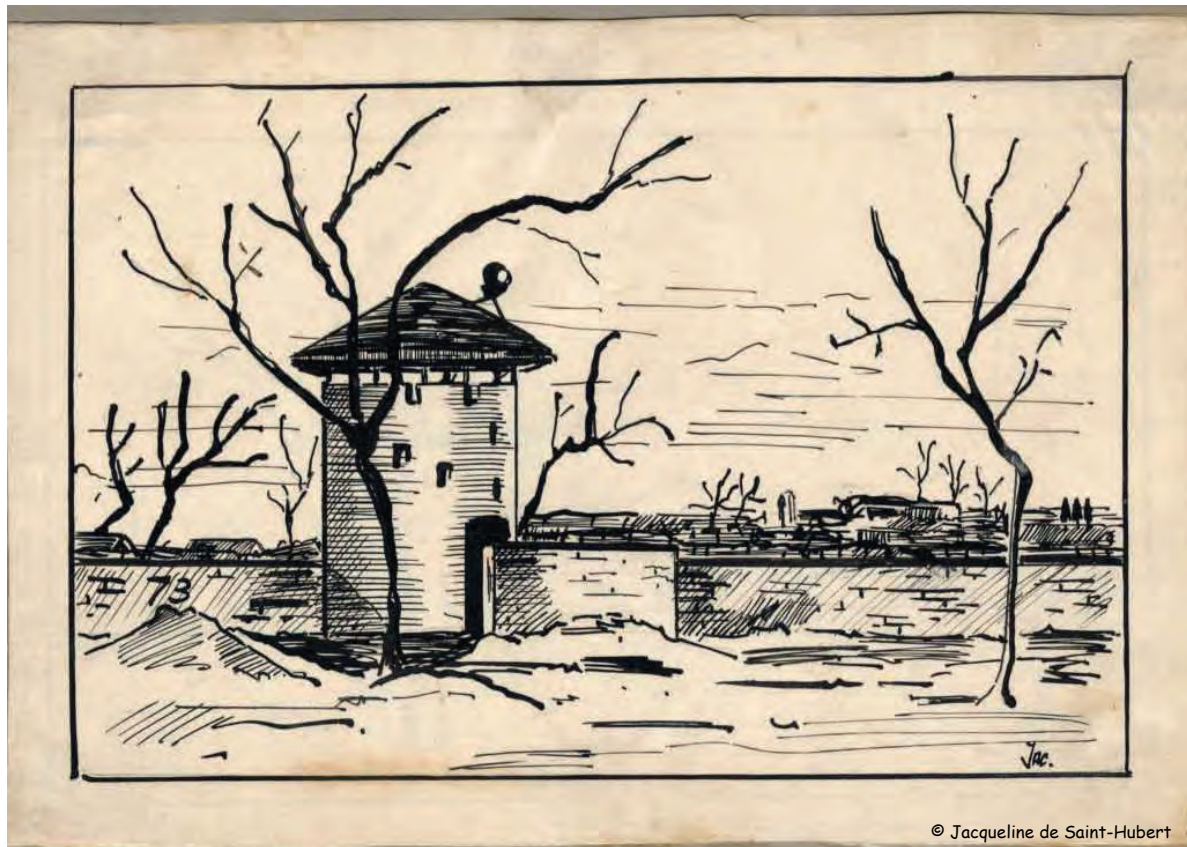


I Remember Armic Balianz who was brutally beaten several times in Tsingtao camp and WeiHsien camp to the extent that he was brain damaged for the rest of his life. Simply because as a Japanese speaker he would not spy for the Japanese.

I remember the cricket fights. We'd catch male crickets (3 tails- the females had 2) put two of them in a tin or jar and anger them by tickling their tails with a "tickler" made from a paspalum like weed. There were never any casualties, just a lot of aggressive posturing.

Compared to Dachau, Buchenwald, Auschwitz, and so on, Weihsien was a delightful place. When I have shown people pictures of the Weihsien inmates welcoming our liberators on August 17, 1945, my friends have remarked that it really does not appear as if we were starving.

Yes, I remember Androcles and the Lion. Yes, o, yes! I remember eating powdered egg shells! And, yes, O horrors! I remember the bed bugs. In our dorm, we didn't douse them with boiling water. We attacked them with knives and thumb nails every summer Saturday in what we called the "Battle of the Bedbugs."



© Jacqueline de Saint-Hubert

Gosh the bed bugs. I can remember being sent to get the boiling water, carrying it and spilling it all over...yes! Then getting myself painted blue with Gentian Violet.

*

I Remember how the Chinese were treated around the camp!

*

I can't remember the year (was it 1945?), but I do remember that on the 4th of July American Independence Day, part of the right field wall of the ball park collapsed following some heavy rain, then on the 14th, Bastille Day, a further section fell!

*

I definitely remember the wall crumbling on the fourth of July and, like you, I don't know whether it was 1944 or 1945. I remember we were wading in water half-way up to our knees, and sailing little wooden boats we had carved out of little blocks of wood.

*

I remember about the time the sentry outside the Main Gate was the victim of a home made tin can grenade thrown by a villager? I believe the perpetrator escaped and the sentry recovered.

*

I remember lunch - we were allowed whatever we wanted on our bread and you could only have peanut butter, jam or butter only two at a time????

*

I do remember the trees. I have very happy memories of hearing "Oh what a beautiful morning." Because I remember feeling how beautiful mornings were in our new found freedom.

*

I remember the guards wearing faded khaki uniforms and wearing caps. Those on guard duty did, indeed, carry the regulation Japanese bolt-action rifle.

*

I remember the camp guards had side arms only which were German Mauser pistols whose wood holsters could double as rifle butts.

*

I remember that Sergeant Bushindi was so called because it means "no can do" which was his constant answer to every request.

*

I remember about the guards in Weihsien is that they wore hats, not like baseball hats, but rather a short brim in the front -- sort of like a Greek hat. I remember it because my cousin and I would sneak up behind them when they were sitting down and we would knock off their hats and then run as fast as we could. They were good natured about it and would run after us, making a game of it.

*

I remember feeling secluded with the view from that area limited by a 'L' shaped wall to one side and a raised trench mound beyond.

Mean while the ball after all was only about 10 paces beyond the wall and I soon had it in my hands, but to my horror, and no figment of my imagination, so was a Jap guard rounding the corner tower and coming at me.

*

I do remember the flies. We had a campaign on killing flies as I recall.

*



© Jacqueline de Saint-Hubert

I remember going "scrounging" for stuff around the camp. We even went into the Japanese quarters because we didn't know we shouldn't.

*

Yes, I remember where I was. With my best friend, it was her birthday and we were grinding peanuts, making peanut butter! And yes, we ran out to the ball field and then on. Still the most exciting day in my life!!!!

*

I also remember that we had to wait until the Chefoo School students moved to the upper floors of the hospital to get to know them better. We used to have a little chat with the elder students when they passed by our block on their way to the hospital dormitories. We were in block number 56, the house with two floors and an exterior staircase in the middle.

*

I remember Father Palmer and the older Harle sister from the Chefoo group taking walks around the basketball (ROLL CALL) court near the hospital -- while she practiced French conversation.

*

I can remember some friendly gestures by occupying Japanese troops in Tsingtao before the attack on Pearl Harbor, but I also vividly remember four laughing Japanese soldiers in a car trying to run me down as I was crossing an intersection in Tsingtao walking home from school. Also, their treatment of the Chinese was generally atrocious.

*

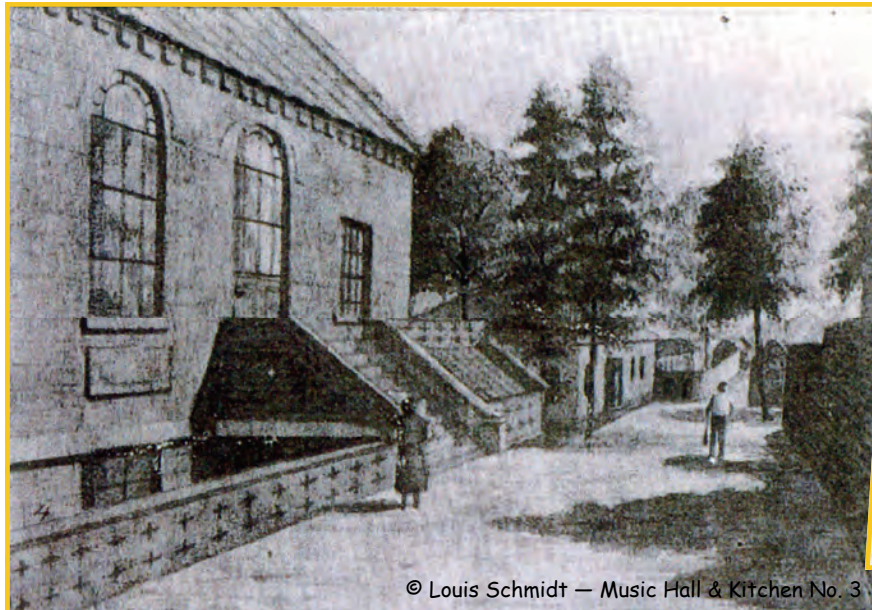
I for one have never described the guards either at Tsingtao or WeiHsien as "Nice and helpful guys" They were our captors from start to finish and acted accordingly. I acknowledge they may not have been as bad as other camps, particularly military prisoners of war camps. However at Tsingtao civilian assembly centre I saw them force a hotel servant to hold a container of very hot water hot water balanced on a chair over his head for an extended period and also saw them torture a Chinese boy, not a prisoner, aged about 8 years by chaining him to a tree and then assailing him with bamboo rods, aiming for the target of orange peel forced into his mouth. His copious tears were a sight I will always remember and ample evidence of his suffering.

At Tsingtao and WeiHsien assembly centre the Japs badly beat up one internee, an Armenian who spoke fluent Japanese. At Tsingtao the Japanese guards demanded to know the whereabouts of his money but despite the beating he refused to tell them. He was returned to his wife 'beaten so badly that he bled from neck to legs'.

At WeiHsien whilst his wife was actually giving birth to their child ".....the Japanese guards barged right into delivery room and demanded the name of the child to transmit to Tokyo. (He) replied that until the child was actually born he couldn't tell whether it was a boy or a girl.....(he) told them that if it was a boy, he would name him Arthur in honor of General McArthur. This enraged the guards and they beat him in front of my eyes...."

They beat him up three times.

*



© Louis Schmidt — Music Hall & Kitchen No. 3



© Louis Schmidt — Main Gate



© Louis Schmidt — Fathers' Quarters

I don't remember any other animals in the compound, except on one occasion when a rabid dog came in the gate and ran wildly around the place. There was a fair bit of open space inside the walls, and so it was hard to capture the animal. The Japanese guards threw missiles such as half bricks at it, and at least one of them found its target, making the dog even more demented. I think it eventually found the gate and ran outside into the town. Goodness knows with what awful results.

*

Guards with unfettered power over 1,500 prisoners. Yesterday, I remembered my 5 1/2 years separated from my missionary parents, with warring armies keeping us apart.

*

I do remember that they had a gun over their shoulder and a pistol in a leather case on their belt. A long sword attached to their belt and a strap across their shoulder that contained the bullets for their guns. They had tall black boots and wore a cap the same color as their uniform. They seemed to patrol the camp all day and night.

*

Once, a guard pointed his gun at us (I cannot remember the reason) and my brother firmly believed that if we both ran fast enough we could out run the bullets if he decided to shot!

*

I remember Sisters Donnatella and Blanda well. Sister Donnatella was very pretty.

*



Jim Moore in Dallas, we will remember you, honor you, thank you again today, and Jim Hannon in Yucca Valley, Calif., and Tad Nagaki in Alliance, Neb. Just like today, our heroes came from all across America.

*

I can remember the Chinese coming in with the wooden tank cart to clean out the cesspools, but for the life of me I cannot remember anything about the toilets/latrines.

*

I vaguely remember sheets of rough paper. How it was issued, or how much of it there was, escapes me. I am sure we weren't pulling up our pants over soggy bottoms, so there must have been something. I admit, I have never thought about that question before this.

*

I remembered the gut-wrenching hunger, guard dogs, bayonet drills, prisoner numbers and badges, daily roll calls, bedbugs, flies, and unspeakable sanitation. Yesterday, I remembered the Japanese soldiers commandeering our school, marching us, shipping us, trucking us to internment camp.

*

I remember you as the one with the falcon chicks.

*

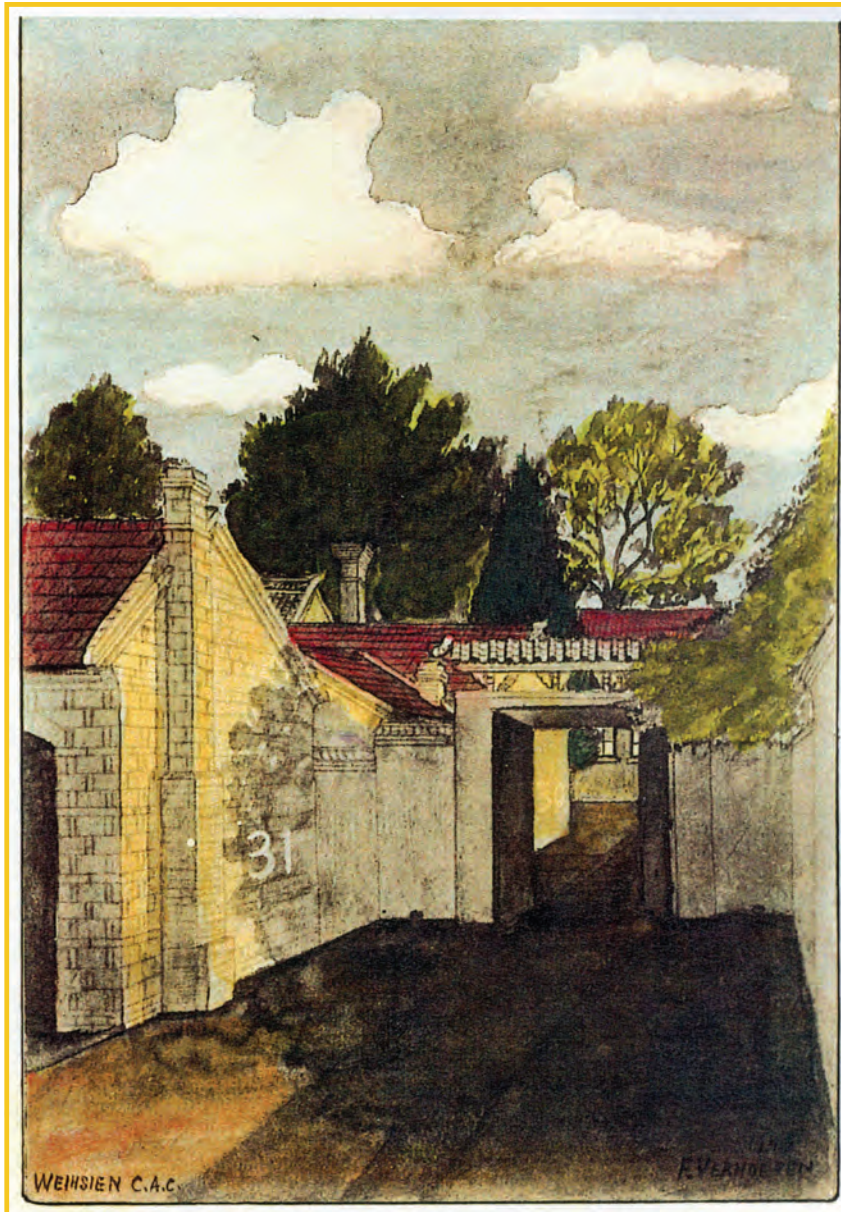
I remember the snow on the trees as icicles which tingled in the breeze. I also remember it was very cold despite the coal balls. I had no blankets because they were left at home and slept under overcoats and anything else we could find.

*

I remember the play with Professor Thomas and I too have all the signatures in my autograph book. In fact I sang a duet sitting at a piano with Tisha Metcalf (Gerry Thomas' step-daughter) singing "September In The Rain" and also managed a solo "Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me A Bow Wow" (Maybe it is a good thing recorders weren't available in those days).

*





I remember that my most vivid memory was of being constantly hungry-- not a nice feeling!!

*

I remember we were grinding peanuts into peanut butter when the plane came over on the 17th of Aug, 45!!!

*

Someone will remember the ragamuffin crowd of scrawny prisoners stampeding through the gates -- stumbling past Japanese guards -- into the open fields.

*

Does anyone remember snow at Wehsien? I remember the bitter cold.

*

I remember that I played a Roman soldier in "Androcles and the Lion" with Father Palmers.

*

I remember that flight back to Tientsin. I was sick and felt awfully miserable. The

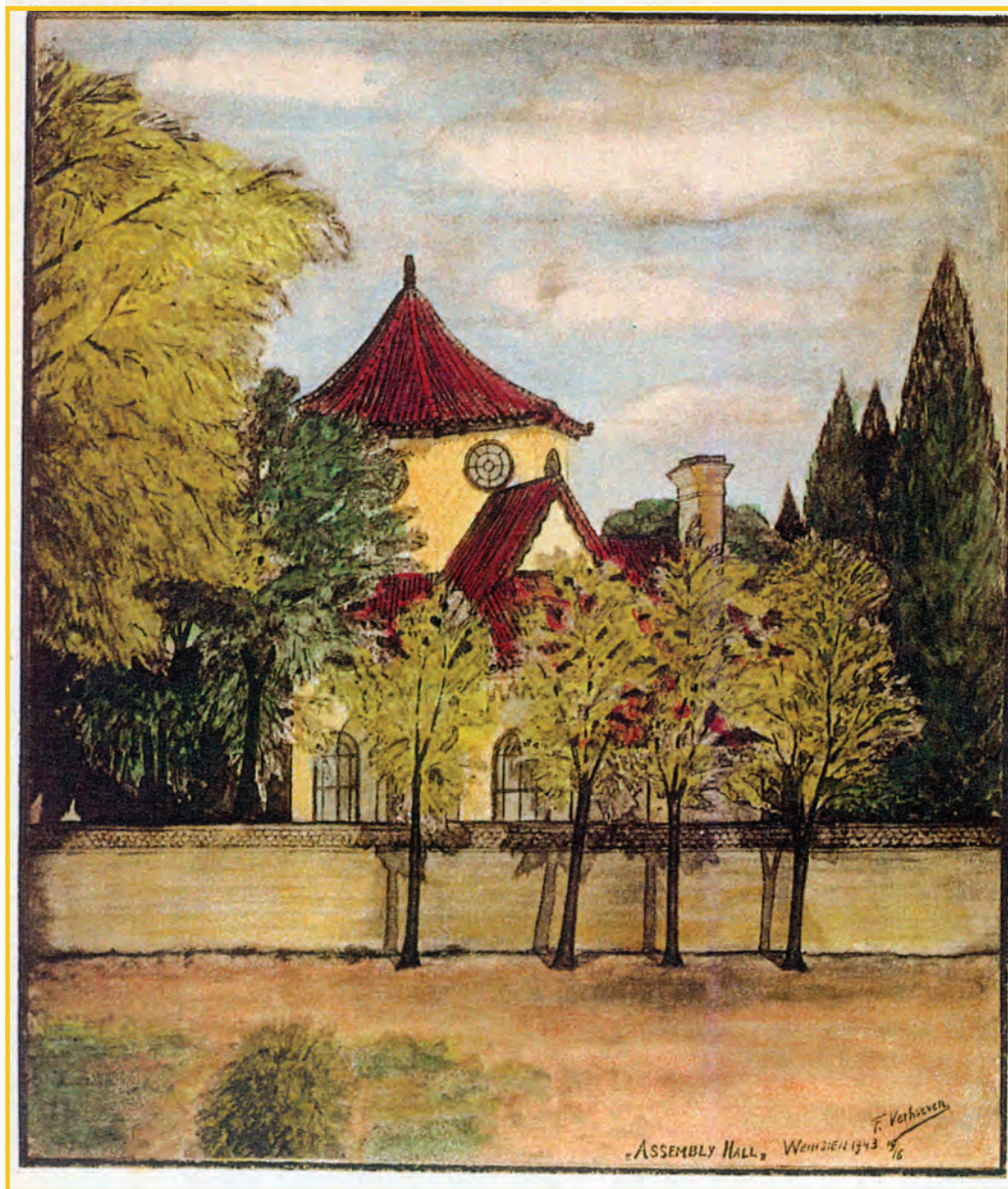


American soldiers tried to cheer me up.

*

The children if I remember correctly were qualified to be issued with an egg a day each.

*



I still remembered the event quite well, right down to the little girl cutting off some of my hair for a souvenir.”

*

I remember we were all 'dying' for that extra little bit of 'grub' that our comfort money just couldn't cover.

*

..... why do we remember certain things?

*

I remember, but not sure, maybe one of your relatives have helped supplying foods and drugs to the camp.

*

I clearly remember, after nearly 62 years, Mr Watanabi waving goodbye to us from a flat car on a railway siding as our train, loaded with just-released internees, pulled out of the railway station at Weih sien in September 1945 bound for Qingdao.

*

I do remember that I was always happy when he was on duty. That must mean that he was more imaginative than some of our other more 'prosaic' cooks. In their defense I'll say that none of the cooks had a great deal to work with. But there was some real slop produced in that kitchen, more fit for swine than human beings.

*

I remember that at aged twelve, I was honoured to be able to play the piano at a concert. It was a thrill; however, I do not know how great the performance was, since I was only able to practice on it twice beforehand.

*

Do you remember Mr Percy Gleed? He was an outstanding pianist and often accompanied Sunday services. Miss Talati spent countless hours making the piano speak eloquently and sing impressively!

*

I also remember Mr Elden Whipple Sr, Dwight's father playing that piano just before so many of the Americans were repatriated!

*

I remember it well as a seven year old.

*

On the Teia Maru I remember the Japanese broke out a case or two of the English-language propaganda books they had aboard for the returning Japanese from America. One called "Singapore Assignment" was among them. I'm afraid the guards were not too happy when we kids tore out pages to make paper airplanes and sail them off the aft of the ship.

*



I well remember the cold winters, and how we cornet/trumpet players could not wear gloves as the valves were too close together. Our hands and lips were chapped but it did not occur to us to stop playing.

*

I remember the Salvation Army band playing God bless America and the British singing God save the King.

*

I remember the American Salvation Army band playing God Bless America while they brought the 1st paratroopers into camp on the men's shoulders.

The British thought they were playing God Save the King. What excitement!

*

I remember I pitched for the Chefoo School boy team against the Weihsien boys. Once a week, we played. But the BIG contests were the regular games between the men of Kitchen #1 and Kitchen #2.

One day when our Chefoo boys were playing Weihsien, I heard one of the Kitchen # 2 players say, "This guy Peter Bazire should pitch for us.

My modesty has held me back from mentioning this for 60 years.

*

I remember the 300 priests we had there for the first six months or so did so much for the overall spirit and morale in the camp, and while Father Hanquet was no comedian, he made a substantial contribution to our welfare with his activism, his optimism and positive, can-do attitude.

*

I clearly remember being in the hospital, which is still standing, having my lower lip dressed after I had split it a week earlier playing, looking out the window and seeing the B24 "Armoured Angel" with a pin up girl in a bathing suit painted on the side. The nurse dropped everything and ran out followed by me. I high-tailed it back to my Block 2 and of course the rest is history.

*

I also remember we explored down into the bowels of the Teia Maru and found the darkened, spooky (and empty) swimming pool -- once an elegant place for a dip, I understand.

*

I remember the colorful parachutes red, yellow and blue, coming down and everybody screaming once again when they started realizing that they were people.

*

I remember precisely the same scene. Being with Wies and looking at her birthday presents, when the planes flew low that day.

*

I remember Sunlight soap (one cake per month, correct me if I am wrong about the quantity issued) for everything but I used Lysol to clean the lavatories which was my first job when I turned 14.

*

I remembered a verse of "Tout Va Tres Bien, Madame La Marquise." That song was performed as a comedy skit in the concentration camp by two Belgian priests. Father "Gus," short and plump (this was early in the game, before malnutrition had taken its toll), played the Marquise calling home, singing in a falsetto voice, and a great big bearded priest played the butler whose role was to tell the Marquise that everything was fine ... except for a growing list of disasters revealed verse by verse. They had us in stitches. I know it must have made a big impression on me as an 11-year-old because although the whole thing was in French, I understood the gist of it and remembered the chorus.

*



I remember walking to Kitchen One in the rain, and squelching through the mud, and there were tiny frogs in it. Do you remember 'the plague of frogs'?

*

I remember going barefoot in the summer and almost burning our feet on the ground that was baking hot in the summer sun.

*

I don't remember clearly where in the camp the sports equipment was stored. It may have been outside the lower side of the hospital.

*

I remember learning "La haut sur la montagne il est un vieux chalet." A round which was not particularly appropriate in the circumstances. Still, we sang it with gusto.

*

Yes I vaguely remember it. I remember thinking afterwards that I didn't grow out of my shoes, or wear them out. Of course we kept them for the bitter winters. I have been hearing recently from other internees how their feet were deformed because they had no other shoes, and had to force them on.

*

I remember seeing the B-24 fly over and the crates and drums falling from the bomb bays and the 'chutes never opening. Then I remember the 7 jumped from the B-24. The parachutes came down so evenly spaced. They were like steps in a staircase. Somehow everyone ran out of the gates.

*

I remember that for every Canadian released to Canada a Japanese resident in Canada was exchanged and the same thing happened with the US. In the first exchange in August 1942 which was largely diplomatic and quasi diplomatic staff through Lourenco Marques the numbers were not so precise as it was a diplomatic "thing".

*

I remember your saying how often you were clean up to your wrists because you did dishes after meals.

*



I remember Chefoo classrooms, would grieve to see forty boys, and a few girls seated on lockers in a two chien room in the servants' quarters without blackboard, desk, or convenience for writing,--but the room has been whitewashed. A stove and the south aspect keep it warm, and teaching goes ahead. At present the teaching is admittedly a makeshift affair, at least for the senior school; we hope we shall do better after Christmas.

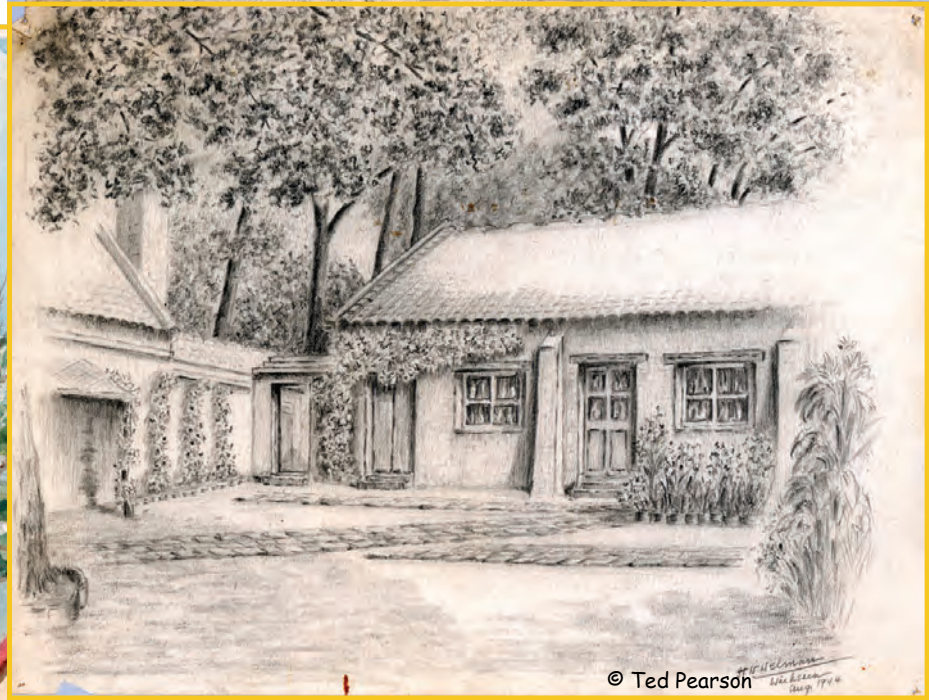
*

I remember reading a lot!!!! Most of Charles Dickens and Sir Walter Scott. And the books smelled very British. I am a Librarian and have always smelled books - You can tell where they were published by the smell!!!! Where was the library?

*

Remember, most of us Chefoo School children were separated from our parents for 5 or 6 years -- some even more. So our teachers were our protectors. Miss Carr, the principal of our elementary school told me, "I would pray to God at night that when the Japanese lined us up along the death trenches and started shooting us that God would let me be one of the first to be shot."

*



I remember, Laughing at ourselves, our guards and our circumstances was a key survival technique in the camp. There was a song about the monotony of bean sprouts on our menu day after day for a time; there was a song about Father Scanlan getting caught dealing for eggs with the Chinese farmers through a hole in the wall ("Oh they trapped me a Trappist last Wednesday, Now few are the eggs to be fried..." I wish I could remember more of it).

*

Many of you will remember that after the rest of the American liberation team left Weihsien to establish an Office of Strategic Services (OSS) base in Tsingtao in 1945, Jim Hannon stayed in Weihsien to coordinate the evacuation of prisoners. That evacuation was complicated by warring Chinese factions blowing up the railroad between Weihsien and Tsingtao.

*

I remember practicing our semaphore and Morse Code while waiting for roll call on the quad outside the hospital in Weihsien. I can still sing Stephen Foster's "Way Down Upon the Swanee River" (OLD FOLKS AT HOME) which I learned for my Girl Guide folk music badge in Weihsien.

*

I remembered that September was the first movement of Beethoven's 1st piano concerto. That music lived with me during camp and afterwards. To this day if I occasionally hear the concerto on the radio, memories of 1943 come flooding back.

*

If I remember right, the room was bigger than the regular living quarters. It had a smallish table and a chair, the rest was books on shelves. If you can recall where the Japs erected long tables to go through any packages that arrived from outside for an internee, they were in front of the library, the tables were removed after the guards had taken everything out of the packages they wanted and kept for themselves. Pushed the remainder over to the recipients. Usually not much left. After my father's Masonic funeral our boxes were often just pushed over to me and I took them to mother.

*

I remember that Pete -- at age 21 and the youngest member of the team -- was the darling of many Weihhsien ladies.

*



© William A. Smith

I remember "Androcles and the Lion"? To costume 10 Roman guards with armor and helmets, stage hands soldered together tin cans from the Red Cross food parcels.

*

Funny the things you remember and awful how much we forget.

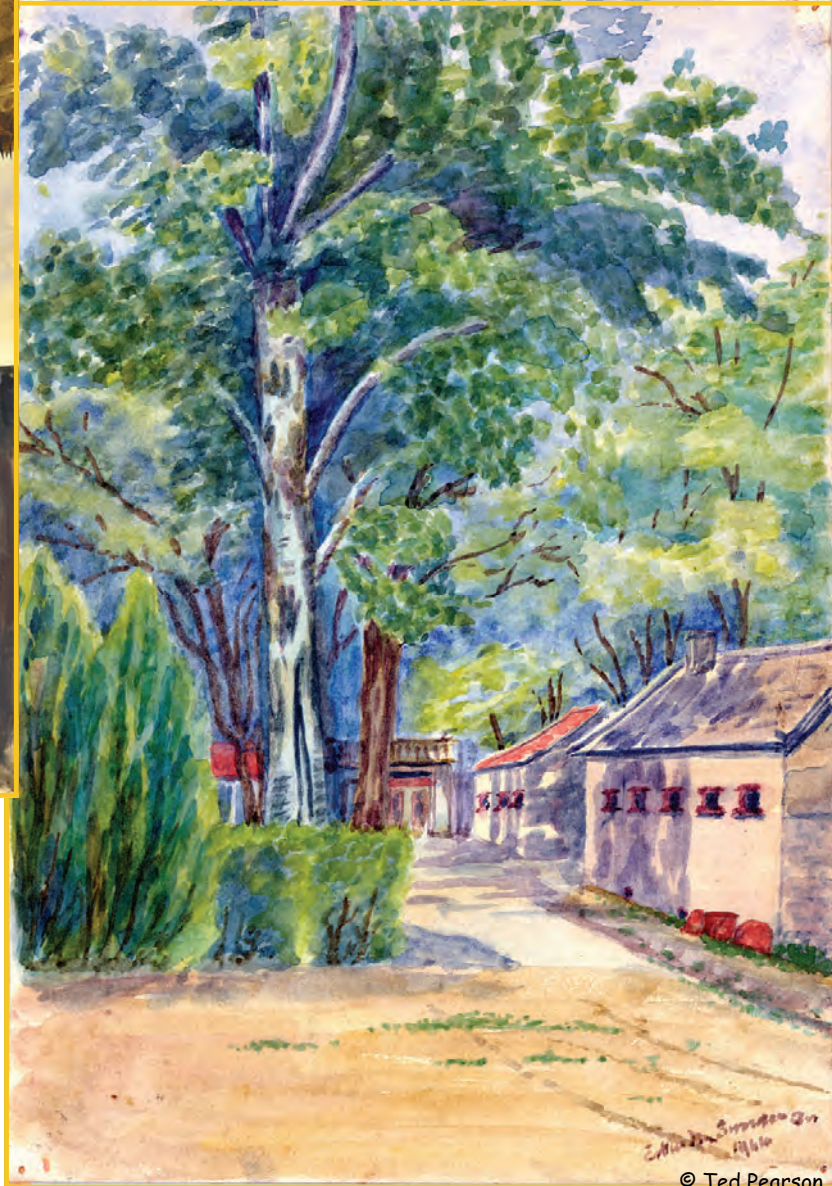
*

I remember a Nazarene missionary, Mary Scott, who had been a tomboy growing up in a family of boys in the state of Indiana.

*

I remember that we had the good fortune to arrive in Weihhsien in September 1943 after earlier groups had cleaned the place up.

*



© Ted Pearson



1. The front gate

Weih sien



Catalpa Gunders
Weih sien
1945

I remember the beggar boy being beaten - poured hot water in him. Were we the first people in Weih sien - those of us from Tsing-tao.

*

I remember learning the proper way to bandage a sprained ankle or injured knee. And, bless my soul -- yes, doing a good deed every day! Can you believe it?

*

I remember one of the Catholic priests -- I think it was Father Palmer -- walking around the camp day after day teaching French to Elizabeth Harle.

*

I remember, some of the rescuers carried .45 caliber submachine guns, and I wonder if that's what you are referring to when you say "a .45 made into a machine gun?"

*

I seem to remember that Didi Sayles (sp?) had a radio or had access to one. I remember his name because I am called Didi (little brother in Chinese) by my family.

*

I do not remember who rang the bell late at night but it signalled us to go quickly to the ballfield to be counted. Winter and summer in sometimes atrocious weather.

*

I particularly remember Mr Koyanagi, Commandant. I remember he inspected the inmates during a roll call very early in our incarceration. He was wearing full dark coloured Japanese Officer's uniform.

*

"I don't remember a lot of what happened; I've talked to my older sister about much of it. It was a horrible experience. I never talked to my father about it, which I regret. Years later, my father suffered a nervous breakdown that I believe was caused by being in the camp for so long."

*

I remember that wartime news filtered down to us Chefoo School students in the form of infrequent briefings that provided information that must have come first either from a radio or from news smuggled in by escapees, Hummel and Tipton, via the Chinese "honey pot" men.

*

I distinctly remember sub-machine guns in the hands of at least two of the rescuers. It was a daunting sight, as these guns were in the ready firing position. I was 13 years old at the time, and already knew about "Tommy guns" from ganster movies before the war.

*

I remember spending time with you all in the Scott House in Iltus Huk.

*



© Brian Butcher

I remember a story that my aunt, Marjory Broomhall, headmistress of CIMGS, told me years later. She said the Japanese (a Jap officer?) came to an internee who was known to be good radio technician, and asked him to repair his radio. The man found the fault easily and fixed it. But he said to the owner that he needed a certain part, with a long name, and drew the supposed part on a piece of paper. The Jap spent the rest of the war hunting for the spare part, while the internee enjoyed the use of the radio. I know no names.

*

I well remember often hearing a distinctive bird sound in Chefoo (Yantai) but never seeing the birds. It was not until we moved to Weihsien in Sept '43 that I saw them: golden orioles! Here they would fly from branch to branch or tree. A beautiful sight. I mentioned them in my "Scout 1st Class Journey"

*

All I remember is wanting to sit on the laps of these heroes, to be near them, to touch them. They were my favorite version of "You are my Sunshine."

*

I remember being fascinated by his description of helicopters (which he pronounced: HEE-licopters). Then there was the big tall, handsome blond paratrooper whom I and Raymond Trickey met at the edge of a gaoliang field striding toward the camp and who accepted a drink of water from us and made us feel really SPECIAL!

*

I remember a very hot summer day, people at their various tasks, listless yet hopeful, waiting, we knew the war was over, then suddenly a plane, yes American, then the parachutes! Grown-ups were yelling, cheering, crying we're free, we're free! We weren't forgotten after all! And everyone rushed through the gates to welcome our American Angels! After more than two years behind walls my world wet topsy-turvy. I had to dare to go 'out of bounds,' discover the feel of the wind on my face, make my legs run on unknown ground, learn to eat again. No more roll-call rituals. I had yet to come to terms with the word Freedom,"

*

I remember the importance of having feet: they grew!

When I looked down I could finally wiggle my toes, the top of my shoes were cut away. Two months later heels became a problem.

Mama found a pair of shoes from another family, they didn't fit. No more shoes.

Lucky it was summer 1943, I ran around bare feet as did all the kids, but I don't remember what happened in winter.

*

I remember when I wasn't hungry anymore. I wasn't eating anymore, just couldn't.

I was sent to the diet kitchen (at the hospital?) I sat at a long table with other people, Mrs. Dyer helped me.

I had a real plate heaped with vegetables, light green and watery. I couldn't keep anything down. Everyone was very kind, but I could see it on their faces: what a waste!

Soon after the war ended.

*



I remember the nuns; they made great donuts or at least donut holes.

*

I remember the funeral of the lad who jumped to touch the electric wire? I was not meant to go, but crept in behind others, climbing a tree to see what was going on.

*

I remember that there was an underground tunnel on the east side of the camp...there are pictures in my mind but no clear context.

*

I remember the wonderful taste of corn after liberation.

*

Dying is easy. When desires are thwarted, life becomes meaningless. It's easy to reject life and the pain it brings than to live. One has to overcome the philosophy of "I mean nothing, ... there is nothing, ... nothing matters, I live only to die" Hope is the strongest character trait for survival.

*

I remember when I was 5 and a half, I had this obsession for birds. It didn't have anything to do with that nice man who knew everything about birds (as I found out later), I was too little.

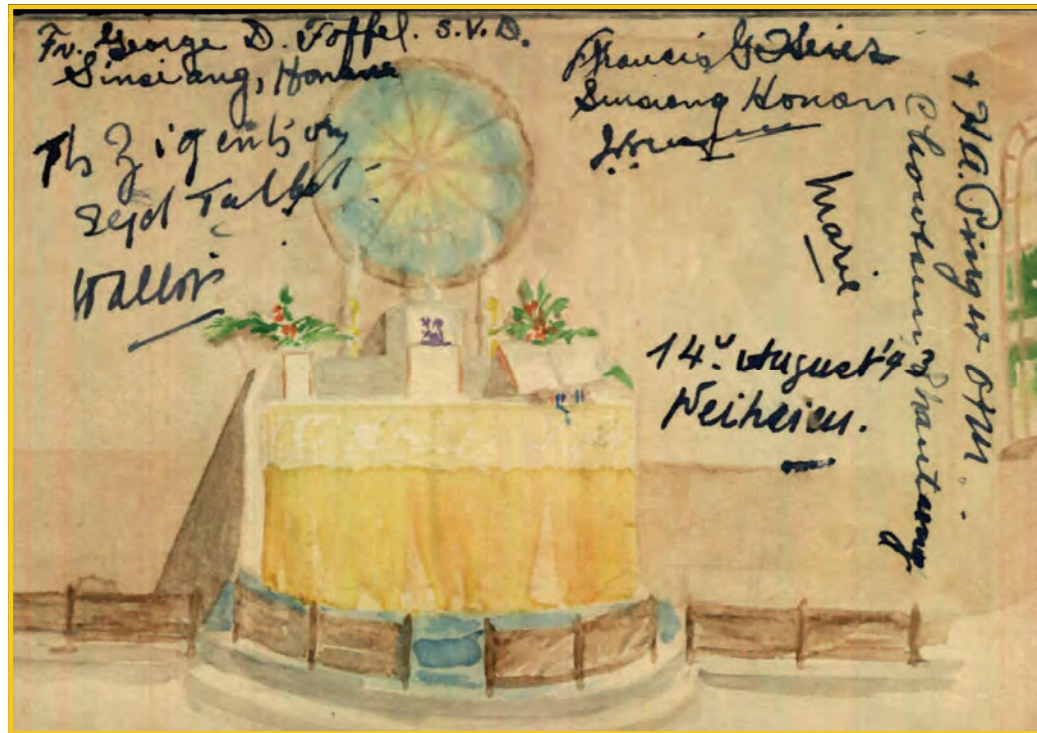
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I remember Mr. Turner saying that the camp experience included 'slow starvation. Within a very few years, I realized that he had been correct in his remark. In 1948 I began receiving hospital care that a remarkable medical doctor, Leslie Arthur Patterson, MD, attributed to what he termed ADRENAL CORTICAL STARVATION resulting from prolonged malnutrition in a Japanese camp during World War Two. Dr. Patterson was, I believe, a remarkably knowledgeable medical practitioner. He was a 'disciple' of a Dr. John Gregory who practiced medicine in California, USA. He even took my file with him down to California to confer with Dr. Gregory. Dr. Patterson had a very large part in enabling me to have sufficient self confidence to walk out of a Provincial mental hospital with my sanity intact.

*

I remember one hot summer day Daddy rushed into our room saying: Quick where can I hide this? Mama calmly took the piece of paper, folded it and hid it behind the icon high up in a corner. The Japanese never came; anyway they would never have dared to look up there.

*



I remember the recipe for barbed wire mentality:

2 cups of forgiveness	Make it in prayer to God
2 spoons of hope	Need daily dose to survive
2 cups of loyalty	Hope dies without loyalty
4 cups of love	"We're all in this together"
1 barrel of laughter	Removes the sting of hatred
1 spoon of friendship	Support system for the weak
4 quarts of faith	Looks at possibilities not problems.

Take love and loyalty, mix thoroughly with faith.
 Blend with tenderness, kindness and understanding.
 Add friendship and hope.
 Sprinkle abundantly with laughter.
 Bake it with sunshine (gratefulness).
 Serve daily in generous helpings.

*

I remember that first summer; I was almost 5 years old. Everyone was settling down, I explored the camp and found the nuns in Block 23, they were fun, and they giggled a lot. Sister Eustella was very bossy; she wanted me to become a nun, so she dressed me up and marched me to my parents' room. I had those white wings on my head and couldn't look left or right, and felt horribly stiff. Sister Eustella said: "Look how sweet, she wants to become a nun!" My parents were FURIOUS, I was never, ever, to go to visit the nuns again!

*

I remember 1,700 men, women & children from Peiping, Tientsin CIC39 (Tsingtao), and CIC40 (Chefoo), and 400 Catholic Fathers and Sisters in American mission Hospital. Rows of student rooms were used by the Married couples and children. Classrooms were used for single men. Food was prepared in large cauldrons in a central kitchen; the food rations were adequate. The internees ran a children's school, dramatic society. In Sept 1943: 300 Americans were exchanged.

*

I remember that Goopy Martin used to read to a considerable group of us at bed time. I remember him reading Charles Reade's The Cloister and the Hearth. It was a ripping yarn, and I was transfixed! (I didn't realize until later that it was all about Gerard agonizing about taking up the religious life). While Gerard and Denys were waiting for the horrifying "Abbott" to come up the stairs, I'm quite sure that I was slack-jawed and wide-eyed ! (seeing us all in this state was no doubt part of Goopy's reward !) I know that those evenings contributed to our lifelong love of books; and it put the phrase "Courage, mon ami ! - le diable est mort !" into my head where it seems to be firmly stuck !

*

Remember: There is no training for being a prisoner of war.

*

I remember that I was stirring our daily stew ration with a long wooden ladle in an enormous cauldron on top of a vigorously burning fire in Kitchen # 1. I didn't notice that I was too close to the hot flames and, inadvertently, my pants were on fire. It took ages to extinguish my flaming trousers. Badly burnt between my legs, I was immediately admitted at the hospital and stayed there quite a while. After that, the chores in Kitchen # 1 were over for me. Another prisoner had replaced me there and I was chosen for another "job". I chopped wood for the Hospital's furnaces. It was hard work because the "wood" was mostly of roots from big dead trees.

*

I remember that we, as kids, adapted to the situation, but the teachers were doing the real work of human beings, they were evolving their consciousness (not just adapting it) in response to the situation, acting as mediators to shape the context for us all.

*

I remember :

IT WAS A HOT August day.. From our second-story room we could look over the 10-foot brick wall topped by electrified wire into the field of grain outside the compound. That day Aug. 17, 1945 there were no peasants in coolie hats tending their crops.

We heard the drone of an airplane engine. The Japanese had a two-seater bi-plane that they flew in the area occasionally, so the sound of the engine aroused no immediate interest.

But the sound persisted, and, as we listened more carefully, we realized it was different more powerful than the putt-putt of the single-engine bi-plane.

I remember standing at the top of the outside staircase leading up to the room where our family of four had spent the last 2-1/2 years in that Japanese prison camp in China, and seeing the sun sparkle off the aluminum body of this unknown airplane as it turned in the distance and started back toward us, dropping altitude. It grew larger and larger and the roar of its engines grew stronger and stronger, until finally it was almost directly overhead and we saw the insignia on its wings.

"IT'S AMERICAN! It's American!" we shouted to one another, needing one another's assurance after all that time of uncertainty about our fate and the progress of the war.

Every one of the 1,500 civilian prisoners who could walk must have come out to see this airplane, this symbol of hope and a power that perhaps could match or surpass the power of the Japanese Imperial Army of Occupation that had ruled in China for the last eight years of our lives.

Having made a low flight over the center of the walled compound, the silver bird which, we were told later, was a B-24 circled back and gained altitude. As I stood at the top of the outside staircase, shirtless, barefooted, my spindly legs brown from the sun sticking out from my khaki shorts, I saw the silver bird out over the field again, this time going from right to left. I was afraid it was leaving.

Then objects began dropping out of the plane and parachutes began to open, and I could see arms and legs moving!

Without further thought, I and hundreds of other prisoners rushed toward the main gate of the concentration camp and hurtled past the startled Japanese guards standing there with bayonets on rifles. We turned left on the dirt road and then pounded into the fields, heedless of the brambles and stones and thorns under bare feet.

The seven Americans were crouched down, .45-caliber Tommy-guns held ready when we reached them. It must have been a strange experience for them and perhaps a great relief to be rushed by a ragamuffin crowd of under-

nourished men, women and children instead of an armed enemy.

Those six army officers and men and one naval officer were carried triumphantly on the shoulders of the men of the camp back through the main gate. The American contingent was led by a major, to match the Japanese major who was in command of the prison camp at Weihsien. American intelligence about the camp was supplied by two young men in their 20s who had escaped and joined Chinese Nationalist forces close by. One of those men Arthur Hummel later became the American ambassador to Beijing, appointed to that post by President Ronald Reagan.

In the commandant's office just inside the camp gate there was a short, tense confrontation between the two majors. Following the American major's demand that the Japanese major surrender, they eyed one another for a few seconds before the Japanese commandant unbuckled his sword and laid it on the desk. The American major then requested that the Japanese forces (which numbered about 70) function as a security guard against the Communist forces, which they did until a company of American Rangers was flown in several days later. THE DAY OF OUR LIBERATION was August 17. We found out that Japan had surrendered on August 14. The Allied Command had been worried that with the end of the war, the Chinese communists might want to make hostages of the Americans, British, Belgians, Canadians, Australians and Dutch inmates of the

camp, and so had wanted to take over the camp as quickly as possible. The navy officer was a young man who had been born in China of American parents and had studied at the Chefoo school. Boarders and teachers at the school had been brought to the camp as a group.

We found out, also, that America had dropped two bombs on two Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki and that those bombs had destroyed those cities. We hadn't even known about the so-called "block-busters," much less about bombs that could annihilate an entire city and its people.

The atomic attacks brought an abrupt halt to World War II in the Pacific. How many lives were spared by averting the need to invade Japan will continue to be a matter of speculation. I choose to think that from their point of view President Harry S. Truman and his advisors did what they thought best under the circumstances, and that it took time for the world to come to an acute realization of the horrendous potential of nuclear warfare.

Unfortunately, during the last 50 years, the world has amassed tens of thousands of nuclear warheads, multiplying the potential for disaster and the need for responsible action to abate the threat.

Meanwhile, we have perhaps come closer to a realization of the unacceptability of all war as a means of settling

disputes. We are reminded once again in the situation in Bosnia that there can be no war without atrocities, and that serial injustices accumulate into horrors of massive proportions just as surely as nuclear attack.

In retrospect, the experiences of a boy in a Japanese internment camp during World War II pale by comparison to the harsh injustices that rob life and hope from children in so many poor countries today. That fact makes all the more urgent the pleas of our popes and our bishops that we urgently apply ourselves to the task of building peace through systems of economic and political justice.

It was a commitment to fairness and justice that helped sustain life in the prison camp despite worsening scarcity of food, fuel and clothing through two bitterly cold winters. That commitment and a spirit of community which taught us to laugh and sing about camp conditions and to help one another was largely attributable to the 300 Catholic missionary priests who shared our fate for the first six months. Most of them were then repatriated in a prisoner exchange, but some 15 volunteered to stay with us for the duration.

There were impressive Protestant missionaries too. Among them was Eric Liddell (pronounced LID-ul), the Olympic champion portrayed in the movie, "Chariots of Fire," who died of a brain tumor in the camp. He coached us kids and refereed our games and repaired field hockey sticks, among other things. I thank



God for the priceless gift the example of those missionaries gave me. For a boy in his 11th, 12th and 13th years it was a practical lesson in the life-giving power of Christianity. Nevertheless, the reality is that another winter of even more severe scarcity would have spelled the end

for many. The war ended none too soon for us.

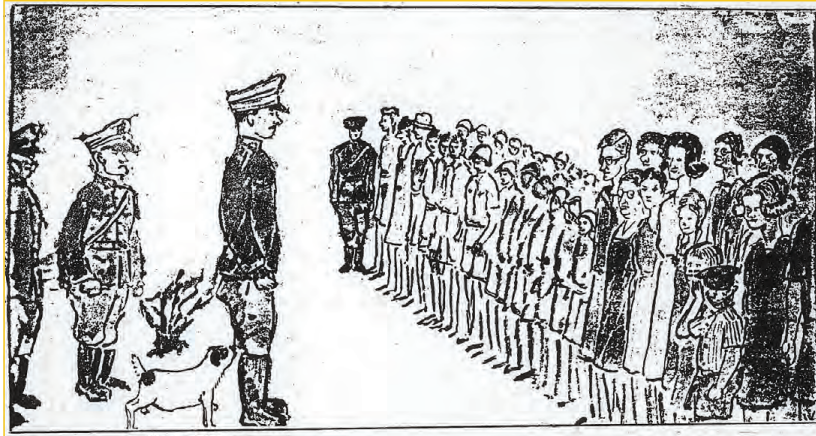
I have considered myself free and blessed ever since that liberation day of Aug. 17, 1945. But my own freedom is not enough. I thank God for America and for the spirit of freedom and equality which

continue to flow through it like a strong undercurrent to the distortions of greed and self-indulgence that often beset us. I believe we can and must take responsibility for one another both within our borders and on a world-wide scale.

*

I remember :

Early the next morning we were called out to the front of the building where we had to learn to count in Japanese, so that we could respond clearly as we numbered off for Roll Call. "Ichi, nee, san, she, gwo, rocku,



shichi, hachi, ku, ju." For the next three or four years we were called out for roll call at eight o'clock every morning. The residents of each building gathered in a suitable spot outside in two rows and numbered off. The two Jap guards then consulted their list to check that we were all present and accounted for. They then had to compile an aggregate figure after all the guards had reported their results. Only when this final figure satisfied the camp commandant were we able to go on with our day's activities.

I don't remember any other animals

in the compound, except on one occasion when a rabid dog came in the gate and ran wildly around the place. There was a fair bit of open space inside the walls, and so it was hard to capture the animal. The Japanese guards threw missiles such as half bricks at it, and at least one of them



The Chinese style of gateway had three Chinese characters written across the top of it and later I learned that

they said, "Courtyard of the Happy Way", for this had been another Presbyterian Mission Centre. It was about 200 metres by 150 metres in size and included a church, hospital, rows of



small rooms to house the Bible School students, larger buildings for classrooms and staff houses for the American missionaries, teachers and doctors.

We drove through the gate and up the incline with what seemed like hundreds of internees standing on either side of the road to witness our arrival. We stopped, with the church



and a playing field on our right. We were unloaded and gathered on the playing field while a camp leader read out the instructions about the camp

to us and then we were assigned sleeping quarters. We were now a small part of the 2,000 or so people who had been interned in this Concentration Camp called Weihhsien.

That room was our home for the first couple of weeks, and in that time two or three of us got "jaundice" as it was then called. There is something appealing about being sick in a boarding school. We were away from our parents and the teachers were mostly



spinster missionaries who, having been called by God to work amongst the heathen in China, were then allocated, because of their training, to teach and live with a challenging bunch of missionaries' children. In all the time that I was in the Chefoo School I do not remember any teacher putting their arm around me or showing any kind of physical affection to me. Except once. That was while we were still in Chefoo and I woke up about 10 or 11 o'clock one night from a nightmare. I must have called out and was obviously upset when a teacher came in to the darkened dormitory and sat on the

side of my bed, put her arm around me and hugged me better. That hug stands out in my memory.

So being sick was another way of getting some kind of personal attention. I was taken out of my fold up camp stretcher and placed in a large double bed that stood at one end of the room. My skin had gone yellow. I was quickly nauseated by anything that was or looked like it was greasy. I had no energy. I was quarantined from the other children – as far as that was possible in the confined quarters of a prison camp. But I had, from time to time, the undivided attention and care of some of the teachers.

Soon after this our small Prep School was allocated more permanent quarters where we stayed for the rest of the War. It was in Block 23 and was on the ground floor. I imagine that it was a teacher's flat in a former life. Block 23 was a large building with a bell tower in the centre. The front of



the building had a long stone flagged verandah along its full length, and one end of this verandah led to a

door which gave access to our quarters.

When you walked in the door you found yourself in a tiny hallway with a door straight ahead. This led into the teachers bedroom. By that stage in the school's evolution we were down to three female teachers, Miss Carr,



Miss Stark, and Miss Woodward. If you turned left in the small hallway, there were two more doors. The door on the left was the girls' room. There were five girls left in the Prep School, and in the last room there were nine boys.

The boys' room was a much larger room than the other two. We did not have beds but slept on mattresses on the floor. My bed was just inside the door. Every morning we had to make our beds and roll up the mattresses against the wall because this was the class room and living room during the day. Our trunks were placed in the centre of the room and we sat on these for classes. In that sense life went on as normal, but there were

few supplies and we had to use the books which we had been able to bring in with us. Apart from that the teachers were probably most creative in trying to give us as normal an education as possible during those years.

I remember using slates and chalk for some subjects and activities such as maths, but we also had a few notebooks which we used until we got to the end of the book, then we turned the book upside down and wrote between the lines. There was a pot belly stove in the middle of the room, but fuel was difficult to get. We were able to scrounge coal dust and, learning from others in the camp, we mixed the dust with dirt and water, then formed them into briquettes. They didn't burn very well, but had to do.

One of the activities I will always remember was the endless pursuit of bed bugs. These were pandemic and their total destruction was a constant



fantasy. They seemed to hide in the cracks in the wall plaster during the day, and then when these warm bodies were comfortably settled in their beds on the floor, over would trot this army of bed bugs and proceed to graze all night on the ready supply of blood that was available. If you squashed them in the night, they left streaks of blood on

your sheets and a strong and distinctive smell behind them. During the day we would use boiling water and pour it into any available crack, and use other means to block up cracks, but if we were at all successful it was hard to see the results of our efforts.

Along one wall of our room was a long bench which held basins and other items for our ablutions. We were able to buy soap from the Japanese, but no toothpaste, so for years I got used to cleaning my teeth with soap. I can still hear the teachers asking us if we had washed our ankles, behind our ears and between our legs. One teacher seemed to find a need to inspect the appendages between these latter items to see that they were clean.

We did not have access to much in the way of medical supplies or vitamin supplements. When the medical powers that be figured that we were all deficient in calcium, we collected egg shells, which were dried and powdered. A teaspoonful of this dry, choking powder was swallowed each day for a period. At another stage I was deemed to be anemic and in need of iron. This was supplied by the simple means of collecting rust from old metal and grinding it into a powder and administering it to me in the same way.

Day to day life inside a prison compound became normal after a while. We played marbles – "alleys" – in the

dust outside, and also hopscotch. I collected labels off food cans that had been thrown away in people's rubbish



bins. It was amazing how many people must have brought in canned food with them. We used some of the larger cans to make small ovens by lining them with mud and cooking minute scones, although I think 'scones' is a rather grand name for what actually resulted from this effort. But like a lot of things that children do, the fun experienced during the effort made it well worthwhile, regardless of the result.

There were four kitchen/dining room complexes scattered around the camp. One was in the basement of the hospital and was a diet kitchen. The other three were numbered one to three and internees were allocated to one of these for their meals. We went to Kitchen One. I don't remember the meals much, probably because they were not very memorable.

What was memorable was the Menu Board on which the cooks used their creative writing skills to describe the coming meal in the most exotic terms. You would think that you were in the grandest hotel in the land. What was actually served was bread porridge for breakfast, watery stew in the middle of the day, and whatever was left over for the evening meal.



I remember mainly the things that broke the monotony. A couple of times we got Red Cross parcels and the main item of interest to me was the powdered milk that we could have. It was only a tablespoonful, but I still remember the beautiful taste of that powder mixed with a little water and eaten a lick at a time from the spoon. I also remember when we actually got pieces of meat you could recognize as meat. It was – I was told later – horse or donkey or some such animal. My fellow Prepites were not very impressed and so I was able to enjoy some extra pieces on that occasion. I think we may have had peanut butter sometime in those three years, because I remember walking around

to the little yard behind Kitchen One and finding a man with a meat grinder, carefully grinding peanuts into peanut butter. I talked to him for a while, hoping that I might be lucky enough to get a lick, but it wasn't to be my lucky day.

After breakfast, our teachers felt that we needed to be taught how to be regular, so we were sent off to the communal toilets to empty our bowels. This we did faithfully, and when we returned to our rooms, we would be asked by the teacher on duty, "Did you go?" and if we replied that we had not been able to "go", then we were told to "Go and try again",



which we did, usually with positive results. These toilets were emptied

into a cesspool which was accessed each day by some Chinese farmers who took the contents in wooden buckets carried on a pole across their shoulders – "honey buckets" we called them - to their fields to fertilize the vegetable crops. It always seemed to me to be an excellent and natural recycling process. One of the children in the camp fell in to one of these cesspools due to some tragic mischance. He survived, and the worst long term result of his accident was that he was from then on known as "Cesspool Kelly".

Talk about tragic mischance's reminds me of some deaths we had in the camp. I remember walking up one of the main streets of the camp and seeing the very spot where a young man had fallen from a tree and been killed just the day before. Bringing death closer to home, was the accident that



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.

killed one of the boys in our Chefoo Boys' School. He had been with the others for the morning roll call near

the hospital where they lived, and had jumped up to touch a low electric wire that had been loosened in the wind – possibly as a dare. Unfortunately it was very much alive and he was electrocuted.

To an eight or nine year old death was fascinating, repelling and scary all at the same time. When one of the nuns



died, she was laid out in the small building that served as a morgue not far from the hospital. I found my way there one day, and as no one was around, I climbed in the broken window and stood and looked at her for quite a while. Later they had an official viewing of the body, and I queued up with the rest and had another look.

Eric Liddell the Olympic runner of “Chariots of Fire” fame was in our camp. He spoke at one of our Chefoo church services and told us about the famous episode when he would not run in an Olympic race because it was to be held on a Sunday. He was a truly great man and in my young mind was

a true hero. Unfortunately he also died in the camp of a brain tumour, just months before the end of the War. In 2002, my brother Frank and I went to Weifang, as the town is now called. It is a city of some millions of people and is internationally famous as the world kite centre. We found the old camp site which is now the No. 2 Middle School and the only buildings still standing were a couple of the houses where the Japanese had been quartered and the hospital. But in a position just behind where the church used to be and next to the former front gate was an “Eric Liddell Memorial Garden”, which was locked up behind a wall and we were able to



get access to it and take some pictures.

One night during our internment we were woken up and called out to a roll call as someone had rung the bell which graced the top of our building. We were kept outside until the Japanese were satisfied that no one had escaped. But on another occasion a couple of men did escape over the

wall and joined with Government forces outside the camp until the end of the war. They were able to keep the Chinese Government in Chongqing up to date with information about the camp. At the end of the War they came back in with the American liberators and told us some of their adventures.

Inevitably the end of the War came. There had been gossip about the War being over, but no one knew for sure



what was happening. At times we had seen planes flying very high overhead, and people wondered in the last few days whether they might be American planes. Then on 17 August 1945, about 9:30 am, a plane was heard to circle the camp. I rushed out to see what was happening and could see this front silhouette of a B24 bomber coming towards us at a low altitude. It was coming straight at us with its round body and two engines either side joined by the slim shape of the wings. and then we saw parachutes falling from it. It flew so low that we could see that it was aptly named

“The Flying Angel”. We knew this was it.



This was the most exciting day of my life. I was 10½ years old and for the first time since December 1941, a month before my 7th birthday, I was going to be free. Seven parachutes floated to the ground outside the camp. There was no doubt about what we had to do. We had to be there to welcome them. It seemed like the whole camp, all 1500 of us, rushed down the incline to the entrance and through the gate, past the Japanese guards who were still standing there with their rifles and bayonets, but obviously unsure how to react. What did it matter. Out in the fields we found the 7 Americans who became instant heroes. They were carried in on the shoulders of some of the men and soon had things sorted out peacefully with the Japanese. From now on they were in charge, and we were free.

By the end of the War, our caloric intake was very low, and so it was with

great excitement that over the next few days tonnes of supplies were dropped by parachute just outside



the camp. Because the loads were too heavy for the parachutes, many of the drums broke open and the canned peaches and chewing gum were scattered over the ground. At least those were the two items that I noticed and gorged myself on with some dire results. There must have been other items such as army field rations, because, later we were issued with packets of field rations and, on opening mine up I found not only chocolate and biscuits, but also cigarettes. I had only seen these in the mouths of

strangers as none of the missionaries smoked. So I couldn't resist this forbidden fruit and escaped to one of the guard towers, now unmanned, and climbed up the stairs and sat in a corner and tried my first cigarette. I don't think I suffered very much because I did not know anything about drawback at that time.

We followed the Americans around wherever they went, and on one of these "hero sessions", I was jumping over a bench and my arm got caught between the back rails. "Ouch!" However, such was my excitement and awe at being in the orbit of this newly discovered star, that I ignored it for the rest of the day. In bed that night I began to feel the pain, and late that evening I was taken to the hospital, where they were able to ascertain that I had a greenstick fracture of the Radius and my arm was placed in a plaster cast.

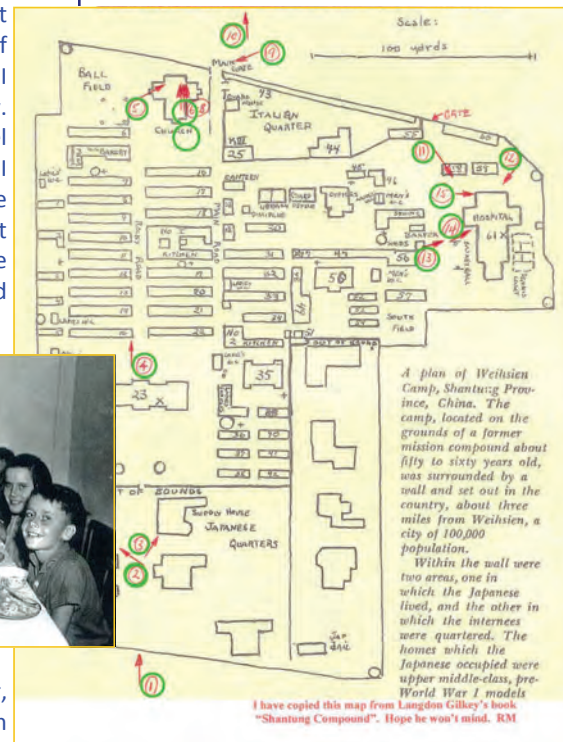


So it was that a few days later, six of us whose parents lived in

the west of China, were flown out in a bomber which was stacked full of parachutes which had been used in the supply drop. As there were no seats of any kind on board, we spent the trip lolling about on parachutes in comfort, but me with my arm in plaster – a wounded warrior.

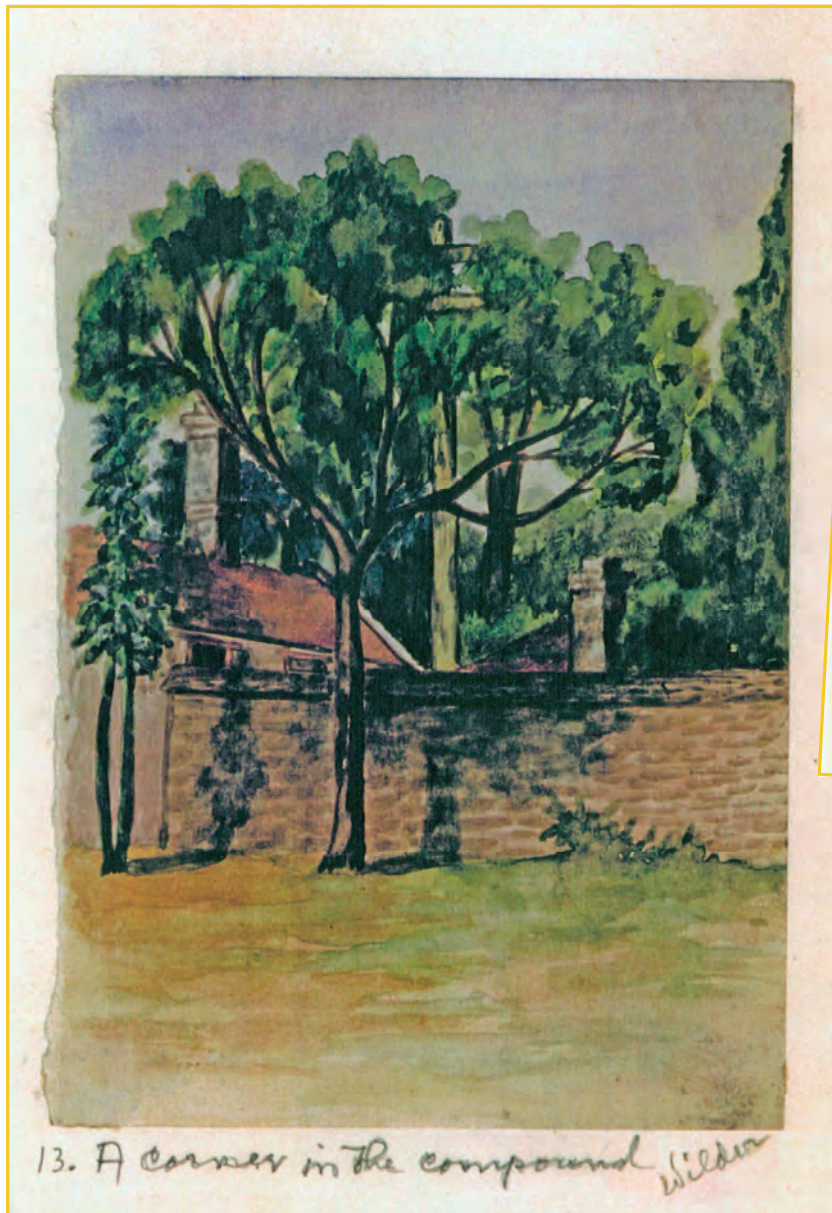
We were free at last.

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A plan of Weishien Camp, Shantung Province, China. The camp, located on the grounds of a former mission compound about fifty to sixty years old, was surrounded by a wall and set out in the country, about three miles from Weishien, a city of 100,000 population. Within the wall were two areas, one in which the Japanese lived, and the other in which the internees were quartered. The homes which the Japanese occupied were upper middle-class, pre-World War I, models.





I remember Father Hanquet telling me that when the Italians were herded into Weih sien after Italy's surrender the Japs isolated them from the rest of the camp. On the first night he jumped over the separation wall with Father Palmers to meet the Italians – prisoners just as we were. Whilst chatting friendly with the Tallati's they received a cup of excellent hot coffee. Due to their strict Weih sien diet, it was ages since they hadn't drank coffee, neither of them slept that night!

*

I remember that Torje used to get me away from books — I did a lot of reading — and got me really enthused playing what might be called "sand-lot basketball." That is, we'd chase around bouncing the basketball and trying to get it away from each other and into the basket on that clay court outside Block 61. That of course was by the hospital. And those of us who lived latterly in the hospital building had our roll call twice a day in that location.

*



I remember pig weed.

I was weeding my garden today, pulling up pig weed. Pig weed always makes me think of Weihsien. Late in the war, our Chefoo Schools teachers taught us to identify and pick pigweed and burdock. We ate it boiled -- sort of like spinach. It has a very iron-y taste. We were weed eaters!

*

I remember that no matter what, our Chefoo Schools teachers insisted on good manners. There is no such thing, they said, as one set of manners for people in the outside world and another set for the concentration camp. You could be eating the most awful-looking glop out of a tin can or a soap dish, but you were to be as refined as the two princesses in Buckingham Palace. Sit up straight. Don't stuff food in your mouth. Don't talk with your mouth full. Keep your voice down. And don't complain.

*

I remember the bell.

It appears that the bell up on Block 23 bell tower would have been used by the Japanese guards as a call for assistance in an emergency - hence their palpable anger when the bell was rung by pranksters on VJ Day.

*

I remember that when eggs were available, they were cooked as scrambled eggs on makeshift stoves in our rooms. I suppose the fuel was coal or coal dust or coal balls.

*

I remember the egg shells crushed into powder for "calcium". We used to cough out and wheeze out as much of the powdered eggshell as we could. I was fascinated to see Weihsien reports in the National Archives verifying our eating egg shells - "very poor quality." When our family took a memory trip to Weihsien, I made my daughter take a memory picture of me with my tongue out on that very spot by the door of the dormitory.

*



I remember that my dad lost his spoon. He was very, very upset about it. It was the only spoon we had and it was used to make coal balls out of coal dust.

*

I remember the hospital and the nearby water tower, where I had pumped zillions of gallons of water. It still stood, as did the former Japanese guard quarters which in 1986 was Weifang No 2 Middle School building.

*

I remember Douglas Finlay, 6' 6 1/2". He was one of Weihsien's superstar athletes. He and Eric Liddell used to compete. When I tracked Douglas down in Canada a year or two ago, Douglas told me that he had been racing on the ball field when this young gazelle of a girl came running after him. It was my sister Kathleen. To the horror of our Chefoo teachers, they fell in love. Chefoo School students were not supposed to fall in love with non-Chefoo School people. Come to think of it, Chefoo School students probably weren't supposed to fall in love.

*

I remember that we heard that one of the parachutists had been slightly injured, and wondered if he had known that the kao liang was 12 feet tall when he made a landing.

*



I remember that rescuer Jim Hannon told me that Eddie Wang, the Chinese interpreter, froze when his turn came to jump from the B-24 bomber that morning. Jim says he had to push Eddie Wang out of the plane. As a result, Jim says, he himself got a bad start on his own jump and injured his shoulder in the drop. Jim was an experienced parachuter. Indeed, he had trained troops in parachuting. Jim knew all about prison camps. He, himself, had been captured by the Germans and held in German POW camps in Europe in 1944 and had escaped.

Before they set out from Sian that morning, Jim Hannon, who was in a group called the Air-Ground Assistance Service, advised the team that seven men would be no match for whatever Japanese forces would meet them on the ground. He says the team had at first planned to come heavily armed. He says he felt that would invite disaster. As a result, each

man parachuted, carrying only one side weapon apiece.

Major Staiger says they used faster-opening British parachutes. He ordered the drop at about 400 feet -- astonishingly low -- to leave less space and time for the Japanese to shoot at them as the team drifted to the ground.

Jim Moore, who was the son of Southern Baptist missionaries to China, had attended and graduated the Chefoo School in the 1930s. He told me that the first person he asked to see when he got inside the walls of the camp was "Pa" Bruce, the headmaster of the Chefoo Schools.

*

I remember that Douglas had lived in the Hospital until the escape of Hummel and Tipton. After the escape, the Japanese moved all those young adult men -- and Douglas -- from the Hospital where they could see too easily over the camp wall and transplanted them to Block 23.

*



© William A. Smith

I Remember August 15, the day the Emperor surrendered. For all of us it's good to remember that there is a flip side to our happy celebration. Japan honors this date in quite a different way...

*

I remember that we all had to wear armbands in those early days of the war: "A" for American, "B" for British. When our teachers and the Japanese weren't looking, the American children turned the "A" upside down, chalked out the crossbar and proudly wore a "V."

*

I remember the ringing of the assembly bell would summon us to our assigned roll-call "district". Then would come the strict lineups, with our prisoner numbers pinned to our chests, and the numbering off when the uniformed guards counted us, and then the delays while the guards tallied the totals from all six roll-call districts. And finally, the all-clear bell.

*



I remember how I found the six Americans that liberated us:
It happened in 1997 ---

This Friday, August 25, I'll be speaking in Houston, Texas, to the evening banquet of the China-Burma-India Veterans Association National Convention. It was this veterans' group that got me started on my successful search for our six Americans that liberated us.

Our liberator, Jim Moore, and his wife will also be there at the banquet. So I shall publicly honor Jim again. I'll tell them this miracle story of our rescue and of my tracking down these heroes.

In May 1997, when I was running for election to the New Jersey state legislature, my two running mates asked me to substitute for them at a banquet of an All-East Coast of the USA reunion of a group called the China-Burma-India Veterans Association. They wanted me to present a proclamation from the New Jersey Senate and General Assembly to honor these veterans for their World War II service to America. This banquet was to be held in a hotel ten minutes from my home. Imagine it! As soon as I heard the name of the group, a lightbulb went on in my head. China-Burma-India -- our rescuers might be at that reunion! From my treasures, I dug out their

names and carried the list to the banquet that Saturday night.

When my turn came on the program, I read the proclamation from the Legislature. And then I told them, "I know it was not an accident that I was invited to substitute tonight for Senator Adler and Assemblyman Greenwald."

I briefly told the story from the eyes of a twelve-year-old -- of Americans parachuting from the sky to liberate the camp. "I've brought their names," I said. And I read the names to a very hushed room.

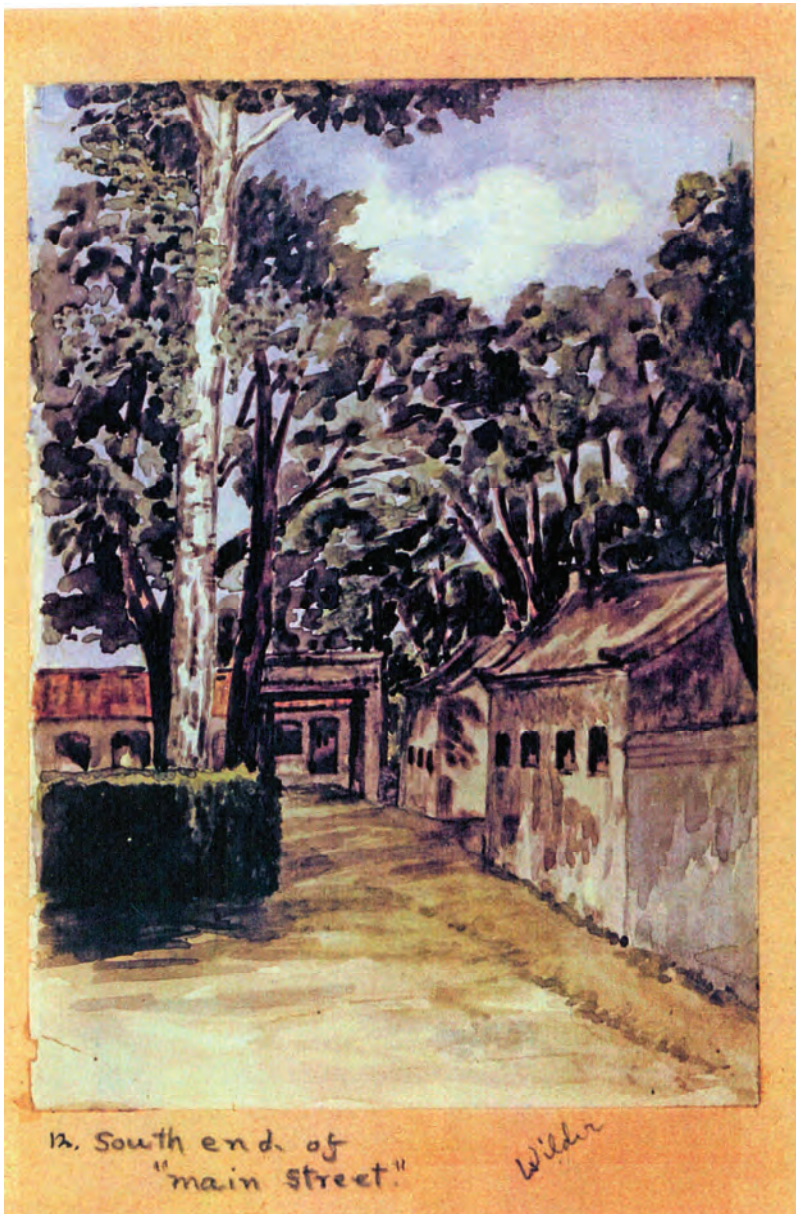
"Is any one of my heroes here tonight?"

I was greeted with silence and with old-timers weeping.

But after the banquet they embraced me. They told me I must write an article in the CBIVA "Sound-Off" Magazine to say that I was searching for these heroes -- to list their names, to list my own name, address, and phone number.

May 1997: That was the start. The first break came in September. By December I had found them all. Saying thank you by telephone and letter didn't feel quite enough, so I criss-crossed America to visit each one. I visited the last one this February in California. Believe me, it's been as much a gift to me as a gift to them.

*



I remember that the photo was definitely the drop of a number of two 55gall drums welded together containing peaches, Navy pea soup or whatever. They are being dropped from a B29 Super fortress.

The film was probably obtained from the photographers or film that was left by them as major re-supply did not start until 27th August although there were isolated drops before that date. The photographers were part of Col Bird's group that diverted into Weihsien on 20th August three days after the Staiger drop. They had been on a mission to Korea but failed and ran short of fuel and diverted to the airfield near Weihsien. The party contained both a press representative and a photographer. It is known that he took photos in the camp. They also took out their aircraft the following day for a low fly past on the Tuesday 21st August.

The Col Bird group left on Wed 22nd August 1945, on departure they did a low pass over the Camp. The same day that Lt Hannon gave a talk on prison camps of Italy and Germany.



I remember the morning of December. 8, 1941. We awoke to find Japanese soldiers stationed at every gate of our school. They had posted notices on the entrances: Under the control of the Naval Forces of Great Japan. Their Shinto priests took over our ball field and performed some kind of rite and - just like that! - the whole school belonged to the Emperor. Then they posted pieces of paper with Japanese writing on our desks and chairs and pianos and beds saying this all belonged to the Great Emperor of Japan.

There was reason enough for panic. When we opened the school doors, Japanese soldiers with fixed bayonets blocked the entrance. Our headmaster was locked in solitary confinement. Beyond our gates, the Chinese were starving. Thieves often invaded the school compound at night, and, to our teachers' horror, one morning we came downstairs to find that all the girls' best overcoats had been stolen. After that, the schoolmasters took turns patrolling the grounds after dark, and our prep school principal, Miss Ailsa Carr, and another teacher, Miss Beatrice Stark, started sleeping with hockey sticks next to their beds.





I Remember August 15, the day the Emperor surrendered. For all of us it's good to remember that there is a flip side to our happy celebration. Japan honors this date in quite a different way...



I received this message from Gil Hair, executive director of The Center for Internee Rights, and it shows there is still a pot simmering on the back burner, and that we'd better take the time to see if we can't turn down the heat under it. Gill wrote --

"It is that time of the year when Japanese officials make their annual pilgrimage to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo. This event always raises the level of indignation on the part of Japan's WWII victims and survivors, for it exemplifies once more the dual standard that exists between what the world tolerates on the Part of the WWII Axis nations -- Germany and Japan.

"The Yasukuni Shrine is where the Japanese WWII war criminals are interred and revered. Do you think the world would tolerate a cathedral in Germany dedicated to the Nazis and the Nazi

WWII war criminals? I don't think so, and rightfully so.

"Having visited the Yasukuni Shrine three time, I'm always amazed at the special building at the shrine containing the artefacts and history of the war criminals and the glowing commentary of the Shinto priests on how the Japanese war criminals killed and butchered their enemies. It reflects again the attitude of the Japanese that there is pride, not shame, in what was done. It further reflects the growing element of the ultra-nationalists in Japan and its support by many members of the Japanese government. This is the opposite in Germany, where the Neo-Nazi movement is strongly opposed by the German government. Isn't it time to end this dual standard of morality and to hold Japan and Germany to the same standards?"

An article in The Japan Times, dated August 9, entitled "Eight Ministers Plan to Visit Yasukuni Shrine," listed the eight members of Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's cabinet who were going to make the pilgrimage. Mori, at that time, had not made up his mind to go with the group, or go separately...

I am amazed at the complete dedication of Gil Hair -- who spent his war years in SantoTomas in the Philippines -- for his unending battle to see we receive an apology and reparations from Japan. Possibly, that is the only way we'll be able to cool the pot that is still slowly simmering on the back of the range...

*



I remember so well when the Japanese came and marched us away from our school. It was November 1942. Wearing military uniforms, the Japanese soldiers led us off to our first concentration camp, three miles across town. A straggling line of perhaps 200 children, proper Victorian teachers and God-fearing missionaries, we went marching into the unknown, singing from the Psalms. "God is our refuge and strength Therefore will we not fear... Along the street, our Chinese friends stood weeping.

*

I remember that we always sang to keep our spirits up. We made up songs for everything. :

*We might have been shipped to Timbuktu.
We might have been shipped to Kalamazoo.
It's not repatriation,
Nor is it yet stagnation
It's only con-cen-tration in Chefoo.*

We'd hit the high note at the end and then giggle. I can sing it still.

*

I remember that first Easter in camp, when Easter Mass was celebrated in the assembly centre. These five bishops stood in a line facing hundreds of priests, nuns and lay people. The ancient hymns soared, Gregorian chant resounded and echoed from wall to wall expressing the faith and hope even in this place. It was unforgettable.

We lived in block 6, right next to the hall, and during the numerous services, I heard and came to love all manner of hymns. Sunday evening ended with the Salvation Army's rousing sing song at 10pm.

*

I remember that I was on the top floor of the camp hospital along with fellow students, when one of us heard a faint burred humming sound. As this grew louder, our first thought was that it was just another Japanese plane. We crowded to the window and realized that the drone of the plane was unfamiliar to us, and hoped against hope that it was an American plane.

As the plane circled over the camp, we were thrilled to see the American markings and then witness the heart stopping descent of the parachutes.

One analyst concluded that the parachutes were actually deployed with attached dummies in order to draw enemy fire. Should this have occurred, then the plane would have returned to its base without completing the mission. Fortunately for all of us, the 7 heroes risking their very lives on our behalf gloriously fulfilled their mission. We joined in the stampede to and through the gate, to welcome our liberators. As I recall there were no casualties. The leaders in our camp had prepared for the possibility of such a wild chaotic exuberant exodus from the compound on the day of actual liberation by creating their own police unit with the members sporting a red armband. Their immediate task was to get the women and children back into the camp and allow only the able bodied men to recover the support supplies that had been air dropped by the rescue plane. Without their efforts, we might still be roaming the countryside.

*



I remember coal dust. The Japanese issued only coal dust. Like every other Weih sien problem, coal dust had its dark side and its bright side. You could take your pick. You could grump yourself miserable about having only coal dust to burn; or, when you were breaking the ice in the water bucket in the morning to wash your face, you could count your blessings that you had anything at all to fuel the stove.

We younger girls made a game of carrying the coal buckets. In a long human chain -- girl, bucket, girl, bucket, girl, bucket, girl -- we hauled the coal dust from the Japanese quarters of the camp back to our dormitory, chanting all the way, "Many hands make light work." Then, in the biting cold, with frost-cracked fingers, we shaped coal balls out of coal dust and clay - two shovels of coal dust, one shovel of clay and a few splashes of water.

Grown-ups swapped coal ball recipes. Winter sunshine made the coal balls dry enough for burning.

*

I remember the ball games that took place right under our window. For the evening games of baseball, I used to stand tiptoe on a bed to watch these exciting games. The priests were enthusiastic players. The Dutch priests were new to the game but en-

tered into the spirit calling 'lope lope' (run run) to encourage the black robed men as they ran with full beards flying ...

*

I remember the whisper that passed from mouth to mouth one day at roll call: "Hummel and Tipton have escaped!" My heart pounded against my ribs. I grabbed Podgey Edwards and started jumping up and down. I tried to recall what Hummel and Tipton looked like. Shaved bald and tanned brown like Chinese, someone said: Chinese clothes. But how in the world, I wondered, did they get over the electrified wire atop the camp wall without getting killed? Our teachers and the older boys were more subdued. Escape would mean instant reprisals.

Roll call that day dragged on and on. With Hummel and Tipton missing, the guards' count failed to tally, and when the Japanese realized what was wrong the commandant unleashed the police dogs. And Japanese soldiers promptly arrested the nine remaining roommates from the bachelor dormitory and locked them up in the church for days of ugly interrogation. But nothing worked. Hummel and Tipton were gone. Roll call was never the same after that. Instead of one, we now had two roll calls a day. Japanese guards cursed and shouted. They counted and recounted us each time. They also dug a monstrous trench beyond the wall, 10 feet deep and five feet wide, and beyond that they strung a tangle of electrified wire. No one would ever escape again.

*



© Father Louis Schmidt



I remember the ringing of the assembly bell would summon us to our assigned roll-call "district. Then would come the strict line-ups, with our prisoner numbers pinned to our chests, and the numbering off when the uniformed guards counted us, and then the delays while the guards tallied the totals from all six roll-call districts. And finally, the all-clear bell.

To the Japanese soldiers who missed their own families, our district, with more than 100 children, was their pride and joy. And when visiting Japanese officials monitored the camp, our roll call was the highlight of the show -

little foreign devils with prep school manners, standing with eyes front, spines stiff at attention, numbering off in Japanese: Ichi ... nee .. san...she...go....

Delays to the all-clear bell often dragged on and on. In summer we wilted in the insufferable heat; in winter we froze in the snow. We turned these ugly routines of war into games. While the Japanese tallied the prisoner count, we played marbles, or leapfrog, or practiced semaphore and Morse Code for our Brownie, Girl Guide and Boy Scout badges.

*

I still remember how our teachers taught us exactly what to expect.

Structure. Structure. Structure. It was like a little voice inside saying, "Oh, I know what's going to happen next." They marched us off to breakfast for a splash of steaming gao liang gruel (animal feed, even by Chinese standards). They trooped us back to our dormitory, mug and spoon in hand, to scrub the floor. We grouped for morning prayers, and sang:

*God is still on the throne;
And He will remember His own ...
His promise is true;
He will not forget you.
God is still on the throne.*

We lined up for inspection. Were we clean? Were we neat? Did we have our mending done? We settled down on our steamer-trunk beds for school: English, Latin, French, history, Bible. School must go on.

Structure. It was our security blanket.

*

...I remember that the boy who spread the word made it clear as he ran through the kitchen yard screaming in an almost insane excitement, 'An American plane, and headed straight for us.' We all flung our stirring paddles down beside the cauldrons in the kitchen; left the carrots unchopped on the tables, and tore after the boys to the ball field. At this point the excitement was too great for any of us to contain. Suddenly I realized that for some seconds I had been running around in circles, waving my hands in the air and shouting at the top of my lungs. This plane was OUR plane. It was sent here to tell US.

To tell us the war was over. The plane's underside suddenly opened. Out of it floated seven men in parachutes. The height of the incredible!

Without pausing even a second to consider the danger, we poured like some gushing human torrent down the short road. The avalanche hit the front gate, burst it open and streamed past the guards. Some of the more rational internees were trying to fold the parachutes. Most of us, however, were far too 'high' for the task. We just stood there adoring, or ran about shouting and dancing..."

*

I remember that we were crammed into the camp like sardines. There were four family-size houses, each one bulging with 60 to 70 people.

*



I remember Jim Moore's story, one that not even a skilled novelist could match. Jim is the son of Southern Baptist missionaries to China who attended and graduated from our very own Chefoo School. He returned to America in 1937, graduated from Hardin-Simmons University and joined the FBI. Jim read about the capture of his/our school in the Chefoo School's alumni magazine -- that his teachers and little brothers and sisters of his classmates had been marched into concentration camp. He read of classmates dying in the war. FBI members were deferred from military service. But Jim resigned from the FBI, joined the Navy and the Office of Strategic Services -- which was looking for people who could speak Chinese -- and was in Kunming, training 15- and 16-year-old Chinese paratroopers-in-training when the OSS started pulling together these hastily-constituted teams to liberate the civilian internment camps. Jim volunteered to join the team that liberated Weihsien.

*

I remember the private reunions I had with our liberators. They said: "Real heroes don't think of themselves as heroes." Our rescuers didn't. In fact, they get down right embarrassed when I call them heroes. They usually say something like, "I only did what any other American would have done."

*

I remember our evacuation from Weihsien. Now listen to this. At this very minute I have a picture on my refrigerator! Imagine it. Douglas Finlay sent it to me last year -- a snapshot of David Allen, Raymond Moore, and four Taylor children -- Kathleen, Jamie, John, and me (Mary) -- at Sian the night we flew out of Weihsien in early September 1945. We six Chefoo children were the second planeload flown out of Weihsien. Yes, yes, yes, remember our sitting on heaps of used parachutes all the way from Weihsien to Sian? I had carried on board with me that day a small bundle of treasures which I intended to drop out of the airplane window to my Chefoo dorm mates below. Wrong!

In the picture on my refrigerator,



we six children are feasting on a cake with

an O.S.S. officer in Sian.

*

I remember that our own rescue team had a few tense moments when they got inside the camp. One of our liberators, Jim Moore, says the Japanese at Weihsien said that the Americans should have brought official papers notifying the Japanese of their assignment.

*



I remember that although I was as thrilled as anyone else when these guys dropped from the sky, I never connected with any of them personally. I was a shy 13 year old. My friend and classmate David Birch tells me that he and I were playing ping pong in Kitchen #1 when the sound of an airplane drew us outside. When we

got to the front gates they were open and we went out. I followed the kids ahead of us at a run. That's when I was stopped by a weed patch. I don't know what they are called but they grow prostrate along the ground and produce lots of tiny little thorny tetrahedral stars that always have one thorn facing the sky. I was of course bare-

foot! I lifted one foot and saw perhaps 20 thorns up to the hilt in my calluses. I knew there must be a similar number in the other foot. I wanted very much to sit down and pull them out, but that would only have put another 50 of them in my bum. I walked on the thorns for 15 or 20 steps till I got out of the patch, sat down, pulled all the

blankety-blank things out of my feet and took myself home to treat my bleeding soles. As you can see, this little experience has completely colored my memory of Liberation Day !

*

I remember that all you Chefoo students stayed mostly between yourselves. I never experienced religious prejudice until our family was interned, first in Tsingtao in October 1942, and then in Weih sien in March 1943. My Tsingtao camp experience was that a 10-year-old girl who was the daughter of American missionaries was forbidden to play with me because I was a Catholic boy (also 10). And, of course, in Weih sien, there were many Evangelical missionaries who looked down on Catholics or considered them outright evil. However, there were many positive spiritual experiences at Weih sien, and those outweighed the negative ones.

*

I remember August 17, 1945. There is not a single August 17th that comes without my rejoicing at the memory of being in the church having a singing lesson and hearing someone say It's not a Jap plane and then all of us taking off out of the church past a weakly protesting teacher, dashing on to the field, picking up those pamphlets and then seeing the seven men and the rainbow of parachutes, running out, bare feet ignoring mighty prickles and running, running to greet those heroes.

*



I remember the LIVING ARRANGEMENTS:

There were 10 of us boys crammed in a classroom 12 ft long x 10 ft wide. All the mattresses had been rolled up against the wall where the bedbugs lived. This gave up 2 to 3 ft of walking space because in the middle of the room were steamer trunks (our seats). In the opposite corner from the door to our room were Red Cross boxes stacked over by John Taylor's side.

Starting from the door and going around the room were: Raymond Moore, David Allen, Robert Clow, John Birch, (?), on the other side, Philip Paulson, Paul Grant, (?), John Taylor, Val Nichols. I will have to confer with John Taylor, and Paul Grant, and maybe we can figure it out together. We were all about 10 - 11 years of age.

In the room next to us were the girls of approximately the same age. I couldn't remember one of their names, but I think there were 8 of them. I wasn't interested at that time. We were housed in Building 23 which had the bell tower.

There are other memories of roll call ... learning to number off in Japanese ... learning the caws of rooks in the trees and what they meant ... making snowballs and snowballing the guards ... (this was a kids game, no adults allowed)... making coal balls for our little KLIM (Milk spelled backwards) cans, which we mudded and made into stoves ... walking through the tunnel underground by the hospital, ... running long distance

races through the camp ... reddened buttocks from mouthing off to teachers, generously applied by Mr Martin with hand, shoe, ... yellow jaundice and the utter distaste for the smell or taste of food, that was when we were in Building 23 before getting moved into Building 24, ... roll call late in the evening after 2 men escaped from the camp and the bell was rung. We were outside a long time for that one.... Sneaking out the window of our classroom, and getting caught by Miss Priestman on her prayer rounds.

*

I remember that I told them everything I could about Eddie "Cheng-Han" Wang, who was the Chinese interpreter on the mission to liberate Weihhsien. He's the only one of the rescue team whom I have not tracked down. I'm still looking. They guessed that if Mr. Wang was fluent in English, he would most likely be in the USA now.

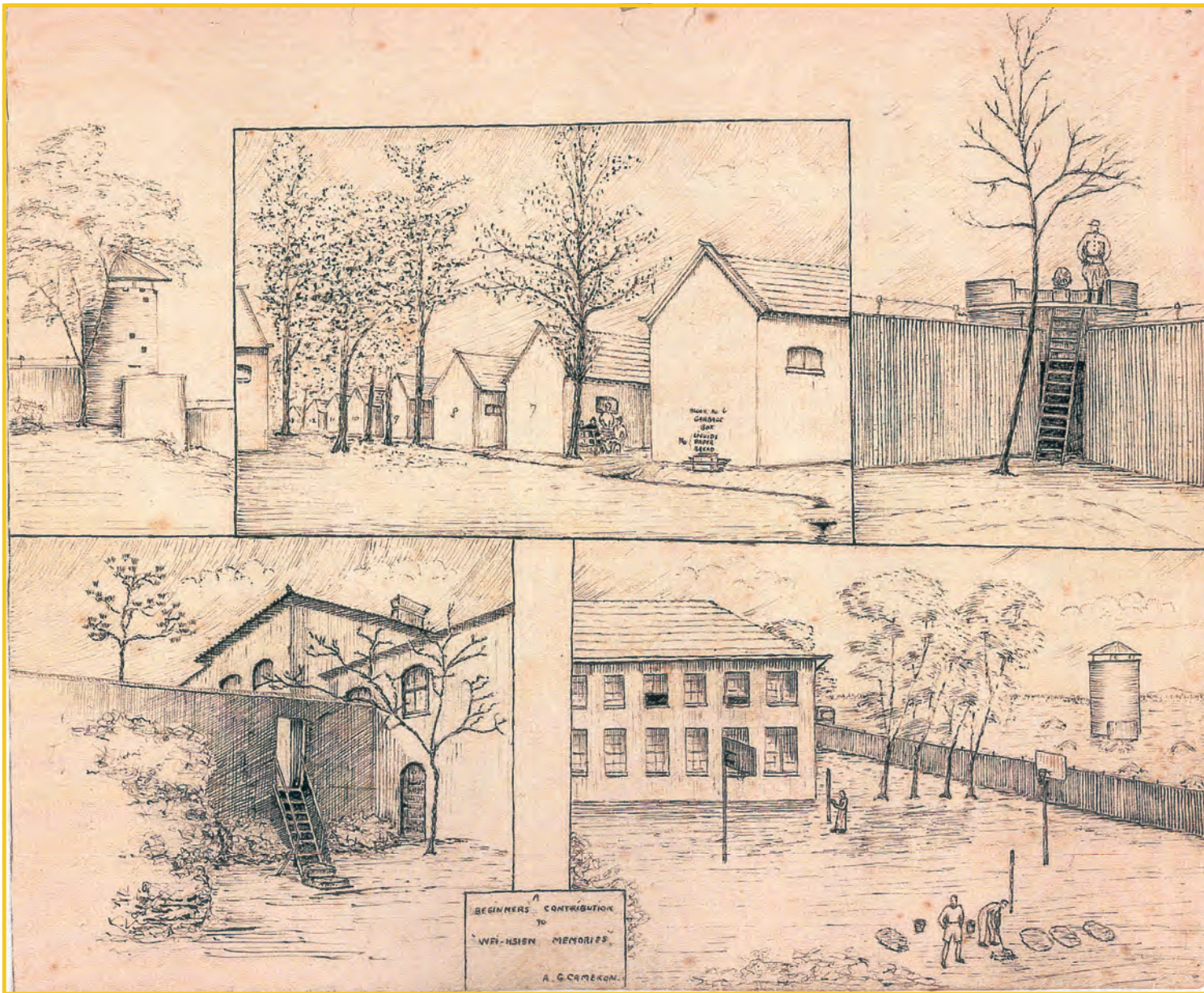
*

I remember that one of my shoes dropped off, good leather shoes, imagine!, and mum had to make me a cloth shoe in blue and white cloth for me to limp into Weihhsien where we went through a moongate and had a welcoming tea.

*

I remember that I had to return the rosary and was kept away from the nuns though some bad boy and I stood under their window and sang rude songs just to show that we weren't going to get caught by their wicked religion...

*



I remember the night of the escape which stands clear in mind with the midnight roll call, and those horrid great Alsatians with their permanganate streaks on them prowling around us. How did ma do it? She managed to give us all a square of chocolate to eat as we waited on the field under search lights with trucks bustling in with guards bristling with guns.

*

I remember that the highlight of the culinary year was Christmas Dinner when the menu skipped such staples as beet and turnip tops and eggplant in exchange for pork, peas and other vegetables, finishing with Christmas pudding and Christmas cake or stolen incorporating walnuts, Chinese dates and grated orange peel.

*



I remember of one inmate who was always having his apple stolen by guards decided to fix them. He took the urine from a sick patient and injected it in near the stem of the apple and placed it under his pillow as usual. When the guard ate the apple he became very sick and was taken off that watch. That solved that problem.

*

I remember the year our Chefoo teachers presented us with small lap slates and chalk for Christmas? I have no idea where they got the money or the slates. But that gift of lap slates rescued us from having to use and erase and re-use and erase and re-use the cheap notebooks we used to write all of our lessons. As I recall, we each got only one notebook a month and used and re-used until we erased holes in the pages.

*

I remember of this occupation therapy from a doctor: Capture bugs and lice, and slip them into Japanese soldier's huts in vast quantities. In camp there was always an abundance of ants, fleas, lice and bedbugs. No insect was loathed more than the bedbug.

*

I remember that toys were made from stones, sticks, string bottles, empty tin cans, pieces of glass, acorns, grass.

*

I remember celebrating Christmas in Weih sien, buying small presents at the White Elephant, besides creating gifts out of wood, cloth and paper. I remember the games and parties as well as joint Christmas services in the camp church.

Norman was part of a group which went from block to block on Christmas Eve singing carols. They would conclude with :

*"We wish you a merry Christmas,
We wish you a merry Christmas ;
We wish you a merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year,
And hope it won't be here!"*

*

I remember that Pa made our tiny room habitable for us by giving each of us a painting on the wall above our bunk beds that just belonged to us. Richard had a tiger and I had a copy of a picture by Ma Yuan of some venerable sage rocking quietly in his boat, paddle just touching the water, surrounded by bamboos. I have a copy of it in my bedroom now and it has always felt like an icon of place.

*

I remember so many pictures, the Japanese dentist, that gritty eggshell on a spoon, making coal balls, planting our castor oil beans and morning glory seeds, listening to the nuns singing downstairs in Block 23 and having my parents horrified to find me lying in bed playing with a 'necklace' the nuns had given me and crooning songs to the Virgin Mary...oh rags of Popery!

*



I remember that Lt. Jim Hannon had lectured in Weih sien on POW camps in Italy and Germany. Lt. Hannon had been captured in Italy in 1944 and was held in several POW camps. He has described to me how he escaped and walked across Europe until he bumped into US troops. After a de-briefing in Washington, he was sent to China in a group called the Air Ground Aid Service (AGAS) -- a group that specialized in rescuing downed pilots. The other members of our team were all in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) - - which was affectionately called Oh, So Secret or Oh, So Social -- because some of the OSS were from Ivy League schools. On our rescue team, Jim Moore was the only college graduate (Harden Simmons University in Texas). Major Staiger was snatched out of University of Oregon after his third year. He never finished college.

*

I remember, when a cluster of us boys in the attic, where we lived, gathered around another wonderful man who had a lasting impact for good, we asked this much-respected schoolmaster of ours, "What would happen if the Japanese won the war?"

I clearly recall today Mr. Houghton's confident reply, "The Japanese won't win the war." "But what would happen IF they won the war?" we persisted. "The Japanese WONT win the war," repeated Mr. Houghton. "But JUST SUPPOSE they DID win the war!" (We weren't ready to give up.) "Mr. Houghton's quiet reply to this third query was a simple repeat of his first two replies:

Quietly but firmly, **THE JAPANESE WILL NOT WIN THE WAR!**

I believe that all of us went to bed that night in that two-large-room attic apartment in the comfy old house on the hill comfortably convinced that the Allies were going to win the war!

*





I remember that our liberators told a strange story about Colonel Byrd. The Byrd team had been assigned to liberate another civilian camp, but failed in its mission. Our liberators told me that Colonel Byrd then came into Weihsien and wanted to take over the camp from Major Staiger. Sort of a save-face move. Major Staiger would have none of it. Weihsien was his.

*

I remember Miss B. M. Stark whose birthday did indeed coincide with mine. She exhibited infinite patience while tutoring me so I could catch up to the rest of my class in the Prep. School.

*

I remember that some of my happiest boyhood memories are of those days in internment.

*

I Remember Sgt Bu Shing! Remember King Kong? Not complimentary nicknames - but certainly nicknames that helped us to see our imprisonment with some humour.

*

I remember that Winston Churchill is supposed to have said, "*The difficult can be done at once. The impossible will take a little longer.*"

*

I remember that very first Hershey bar. Pa always used to say; "*Et haec olim meminisse iuvabit*" (Some day we shall be glad to remember even this). How true!

*



I remember that they were fascinated at my piece of parachute silk, embroidered with the rescue scene -- the B-24 bomber, the seven parachutes dropping from the plane, and the camp's church steeple below. Each member of the rescue team autographed the silk next to his parachute embroidered on the scene.

Members, of the audience passed the embroidered silk from hand to hand. I had brought the embroidery along as my "show-and-tell." The widow of Peter Orlich, the youngest of the rescue team, gave me this treasure after I tracked her down in 1997. She and I are still trying to find out who embroidered this amazing memento. A woman in the camp gave it to Peter Orlich as a goodbye gift when Peter left for Qingdao in late August 1945. Pete Orlich's widow says she thinks Peter said a White Russian woman gave it to him. Does anyone know anything about this embroidery? In addition to the embroidery, I have a pattern of the picture on the embroidery. That makes me think that other women may have embroidered this scene, using this same pattern.

*



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



I remember there was a kind of a feud between the adults. The Japanese were not involved. Protestants vs. Catholics. Such a pity for the children.

*

I remember the walls and the barbed wires. The birds flew over and away. Where?.....

*

I remember my Mother once said lucky she had her diamond ring to trade for fruit at the Black Market.

*

I remember Gordon Martin. He was an outstanding teacher, through use of object lessons, in the morning church services; through his paper, ink, and pen drawings; through his graphical portrayals of European History;

through his use of the hairbrush or hand on the bottom of a bare seat in Weihsien (for lipping off to the teachers).

I remember him challenging us to read through the chapter on the Prussian wars in Europe and graphically portraying the leading characters, places, events, dates and if possible the reasons. I chose the use of waterfalls to show the turbulent times, main characters and split in alliances at that time. That must have been back in about 1949 - 1950.

I remember him using the easel, plus the Chinese ink pen, draw, and paste technique. He illustrated the spiritual armor in Eph. 6 worn by a Christian. He would paint magically on paper the different pieces of armor, cut them out, and then paste them on the soldier. Our attention was glued to his great artistry and lesson. We were too busy watching him create this fighting soldier, than to make rabbits out our handkerchiefs or to catch flies with a little spit in the palm of our hands.

His teaching was like a graphical flowchart of today. He was years ahead of his time, tying in truth to a simple flowchart.

Mr Martin, taught like the apostle Paul, and Mr Stanley Houghton taught like the apostle John. Stanley Houghton, understood the separation and loneliness caused by separation from parents, and responded with understanding and compassion.

*



I remember I was ill in bed with a high fever, still in my little cot. Winter. Mama said: No roll-call, she's not to go out in this freezing weather. So they waited outside, and I waited inside. All of a sudden King Kong was towering over my cot, grunting, spitting and rather mad, demanding explanations. Well, I don't know what happened, but next morning I was outside for roll-call.

*

I remember that Mrs. Bazire told me that at first she was permitted to post her paintings at will around the camp. Later, the Japanese made a rule that no posters were to be posted until they had first been reviewed and approved by them. Those which had been approved were marked with a small Japanese "chop" or seal.

*

I remember that for a brilliant run in cricket, we would clap politely or call demurely across the lawn, 'Well played, Sir!' But in Weihsien, when the Tientsin Tigers were whopping the Peking Panthers or the Priests' Padres in the softball games on summer evenings, we whooped, we hollered, we flipped hand springs, and slapped each other on the back. Our teachers shuddered. Alas! Exposed to the troubling new world in this prison camp melting pot, we might escape the war without falling prey to the triple threat of sin, sex, and sophistication, but from our first taste of softball it was clear that we would never escape the taint of American enthusiasm.

*

I remember that in Chefoo we had played all the proper -- very proper -- British games: tenni quoit, cricket, tennis, hockey, prisoners' base. In Weihsien, with its postage stamp field too small for baseball, Mary Scott introduced us to the joys of softball. A Nazarene missionary from America's heartlands, a lively English teacher from Hammond High, Mary Scott grew up the only girl in a family of seven brothers. They blistered her hands with hardball in the back yards and sandlots of Hammond, Indiana. This 5'2" dynamo could play like a pro. But the starvation diet was taking its toll. In the summer league games, when the Peking Panthers or the Tientsin Tigers ran out of men with enough stamina to finish a game, they called Mary Scott from the bench. It was unheard of in the 1940's -- a woman coming in to save the faltering male line up.

*

I have many memories - strangely most of them happy as our parents protected us from all that was not pleasant. I do remember vividly the pantomimes that were put on and I remember the electrician's daughter was the fairy and she was all lit up with lights. I also remember when the American planes flew over to liberate us. I was very scared as they seem to touch the roofs of our little huts -- and there was so much confusion (at least in my eyes) as everyone was running around. I remember running out of the camp -- the guards just standing there as everyone ran out of the compound.

*



I remember beautiful summer evenings when Zandy played the accordion on his doorstep.

*

I remember that one person wrote: 'Whatever subject Mr. Martin taught became interesting and memorable'.

*

I remember that the Chefoo group arrived in Weihsien less than two weeks before the US internees left for their trip back to the States on the M/S Gripsholm.

*

I remember the egg shell programme. One egg a week ration each had the shell crushed between two spoons and fed to children - I was one.

*

I remember Mrs. Wilder's paintings: These are just gems! I am surprised at how green it all looks, the cosiness of the views, the big trees by the church....my strongest memories are of the bare field outside the church, and of the alfalfa we picked on the rolling ground above the air raid shelter near the morgue. What a gift parcel it is, with the maps, diary excerpts and all. How different it looks with the student blocks having little gates into their courtyards. We were in block fifteen, looking straight out at block 23. That was where we made our coal balls, grew our castor oil plants, and the morning glories.

*

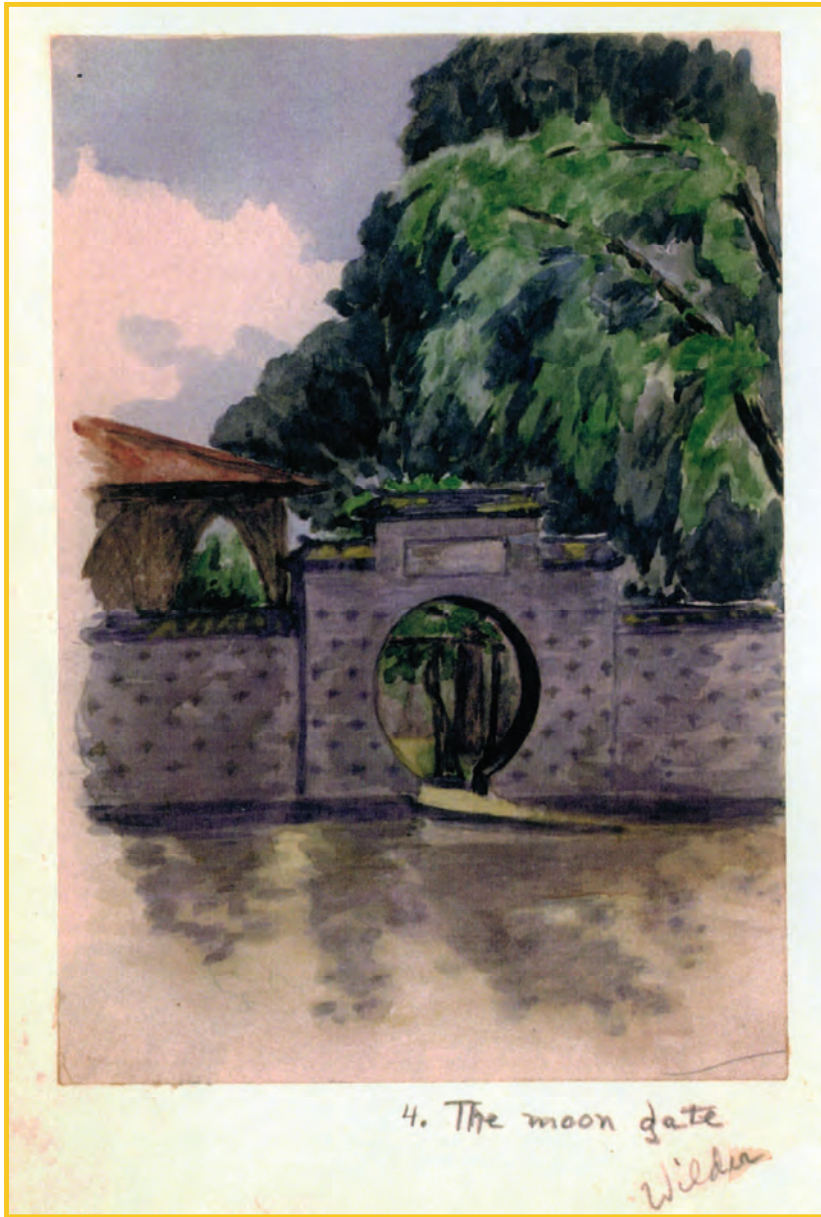
I still recall my first meal at Weihsien Camp. I remember joining a line-up outside Kitchen #1 (I think it was), and receiving an informal welcome to Weihsien from friendly camp 'veterans.'

Interestingly, nearly all my recollections of Weihsien are pleasant. These include school classes conducted in bedrooms; chores such as pumping water into a water tower by the Ladies' Showers; making coal balls and 'briquettes' with mixtures of slack coal and mud which we dried in the sun; queuing up in great long lines to fill our coal buckets with coal from a huge heap in the Japanese quarters; concerts in some of which I and my classmates took part in choral singing; baseball games, and so on and so on and a lot more. Of course, the rescue by the U. S. airmen is a particularly vivid and treasured memory.

*

I remember my GOING HOME FROM WEIHSIEN. It was an adventure. Six Chefoo children -- Kathleen, Jamie, Mary, and John Taylor, David Allen, and Raymond Moore-- were flown from Weihsien to an American Office of Strategic Services base in Sian, Shensi province, September 10, 1945, in the second plane load of prisoners repatriated from the camp.

*



I remember that some of us -- me included -- had contracted trachoma -- so we were banned from getting into the USA until we were treated and pronounced clear of this dreaded eye disease.

*

I remember that we were on a similar ship. I disremember its name, but it was not the ARAWAK. It had once been a frozen mutton transport ship from Australia to England. We also slept in hammocks and had a supply of ancient dusty chocolate bars. Out of Hong Kong the South China Sea was like a mirror. We stopped in Singapore and Colombo but were not allowed off the ship. We watched in fascination as we passed through the Suez Canal. Near Malta we had some high seas, but soon we were crossing the Bay of Biscay and docked in Liverpool in late December 1945. I would have guessed that we were 6 weeks out of Hong Kong.

*

Yes, I remember the SS Arawa, and the journey from Hong Kong to London. It took 4 or 5 weeks. I remember that we travelled via the Suez Canal. There was an awful storm in the Mediterranean, which probably slowed us down a bit, but we had good weather in the Bay of Biscay.

To keep us safe and occupied, the staff continued to teach us. We owe them a tremendous debt for all they did for us, both in camp and afterwards, as I hardly need tell you. On the ship, some of us shared cabins, but many slept in hammocks.

*

I remember a very personal story. I met America's heroes a long, long time ago. I fell in love with America 56 years ago. August 17, 1945. I will never forget that day. They were spilling from the belly of a B-24 bomber. Six American heroes risking their lives for people they didn't even know. For three years I had been a child prisoner in a Japanese concentration camp in China. For 5 1/2 years I had not seen my missionary parents. And now American heroes were dropping from the skies. We turned these liberators into gods. We wanted their buttons. We wanted their insignia. We cut off souvenir pieces of their hair. Oh, yes, yes, yes! We sang, too. God bless America.

*

I remember this Dutch woman who hoarded loads of goodies in her room? At the end of it all other prisoners found loads of stuff stored - stuff which could perhaps be of help to those families with starving kids. Mum used to tell the story of the time when she saw three potatoes lying in the gutter. Carefully checking that no Jap was watching she sat beside them and surreptitiously sneaked them into her pocket. Can you believe it — but this Dutch woman (who was by herself and had no kids to feed) saw what was happening and told my mother that unless she gave her two of them she would report it to the Japs. Oh well, I suppose it takes all sorts to make a world. I doubt that she is still alive — but if she is I hope that she gets to read this, and feels suitably ashamed of herself!

*



A Japanese-American sergeant watches a backyard cook

I remember that Granny only spoke of the camp during her final year, 1989, when a brain tumor seemed to lift the censor that had kept her memories silent. Up to that point, whenever I asked her questions she replied that I should focus on being happy and clean (she was a consummate hand washer. . .)

*

I remember:

It is incredible to think that we, in a prisoner of war camp in China under the control of the Japanese, could have letters from the outside world. Especially surprising were those from my uncle Arthur Jones in Stalag VIII B, a German prisoner of War Camp through the good auspices of the Red Cross.

*

I remember that our first home was in Block 6 and had two rooms as we were a family of five. This was near the ball field. My father was a baker in the No. 3 kitchen where my mother peeled vegetables. Our neighbours were: Wallises, Dreggs, Joneses, Carters, Barnes, Marshes and the Simmies. For 15 months we shared accommodation with Marie and (Dr) Robbie Robinson and their two children.

*

I remember that I was 9 months old when we went into the camp. Mr father and mother, May and Fred and the whole family - mum, dad my sisters Kath (6yrs old), my sister Beryl (3 yrs old, and little me - were all together for the duration. I have only vague memories of life in Weihsien although a few years ago I went to a reunion in England and saw several photos of the camp, and I was so pleased to see that my memories were actually true and not just imagined. I can remember the wall and the ditch outside. I also remember the tower that the Japs lived in and their dogs, which I imagine to be Alsations (can anybody confirm that?). I still have a scar on my chin which I managed to get when we kids were out collecting frogs. I was holding a tin can to put them in when my sister Kath slipped and fell onto me. I managed to stick my chin into the jagged edge of the tin can. My war wound!!!!

*

I remember that my father was in kitchen No 1 as a cook. He was also a blackmarketeer. My job when I turned 14 was cleaning out toilets in the camp near the showers.

*



A former "taipan" named Blackadder

I remember Aug 17th 1945: V I Day (Victory over Internment.)

On Wednesday we heard that the war was over by our underground canary.

News was also passed by coolies trading cigarettes with internees.

On Thursday we were showered with pamphlets telling us what to expect.

On Friday the Jr. Boys were down on the playfield not far from the main gate. We were either playing soccer or watching a game, when we heard the sound of an airplane. Looking over the barbed-wire fence which carried high voltage electricity we expected to see a single engine Japanese plane. Instead, to our surprise we saw a four engine B-24 circle once, determine the wind direction and then make an Immelman manoeuvre and come back over the fields outside the camp. Slowly 7 men parachuted out of the plane. Before any had touched the ground we were running full tilt for the front gate. They were opening as we arrived and we headed out in mass. There were about 1700 people in that camp.

Our feet were hardened to the ground but not the puncture weeds and their barbs. As soon as we left the motor road we found them. Some of the Chinese field workers, seeing us take the stickers out of our feet, volunteered to take us piggy back to the motor road. They were so glad to be free of Japanese oppression. We walked so proudly beside the American GI's, so glad to be free at last.

Within 2 days we had B-29 bombers flying outside the camp and dropping food and clothing supplies. The sky was filled with parachutes, plane after plane coming and dumping food, clothing and pamphlets. It was an exciting time.

On Monday the American GI's handed out sweets and chocolates. The first meal of split pea soup tasted awful good, but made an abrupt return. I could not retain rich food for up to 3 weeks after that. They started giving us vitamins etc from packages dropped from the B-29's. That evening the Jr. boys and Senior Boys and Girls gave a gymnastic display. The GI's gave some of the kids penknives as gifts, or pieces of ripped parachutes.

We salvaged the tin cans from the food drops and traded them for tomatoes, corn, apples, pears and crab-apples. Only the adult men and women were allowed to go outside the camp to make trades, but the kids would trade over the wall.

The electric barbed-wire fence turned off. The apples we got in trade we made into stewed apples.

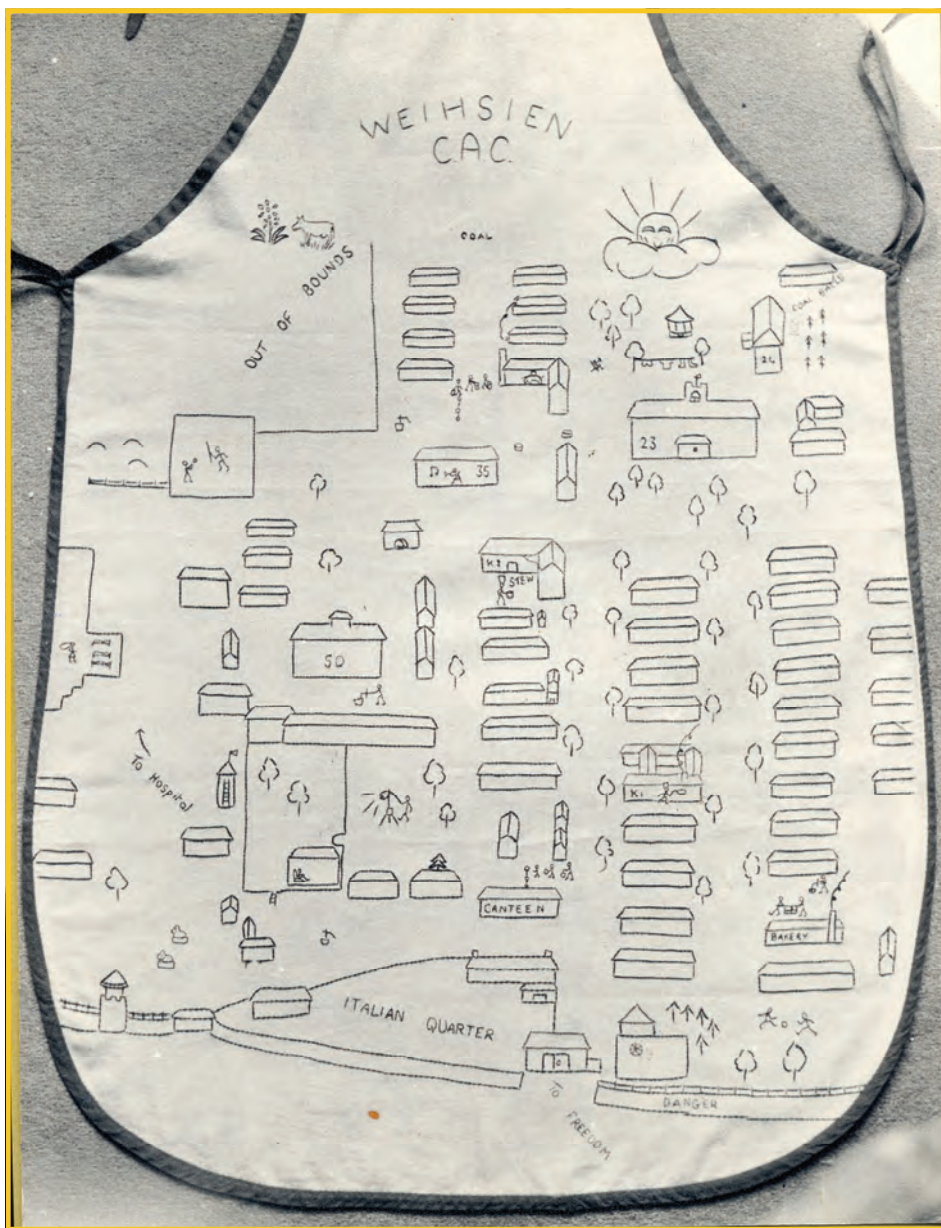
The stoves we cooked on were made from KLIM cans (milk spelled backwards. The cans were mudded inside and wires placed through them and a door for proper ventilation.

Adults were selling old clothes and anything that was sailable for fresh fruit. Everyone had a craving for fresh fruit.

Within 2 weeks John Taylor, Raymond Moore and I were taken by bus out to the Weihsien airport and climbed into a C-46 Cargo plane. We flew to Sian, and from there on I flew on to Kunming on a B-17 bomber called "The Home-sick Angel."

The last letter was written from Weihsien Aug 25, 1945 and received in Mitu, Yunnan on Oct 11, 1945. Now you know why missionary kids didn't go home to see their folks at Christmas time. Transportation was too slow and distances too far and a war was on. I didn't see my folks from Sept 1940 - Sept 1945.

*



I remember that getting to Weihsien was a great adventure for all of us. When I had finished with schooling at the camp one of my jobs was at the bakery. Your father was the leader of one of the bakery teams and I was in his team together with Ken Marshall, Tony Lambert and someone else whose name I have forgotten. We always maintained that "Sid Talbot's Team made the best bread in camp!!"

*

I remember that my mother always felt that the things she had learnt to do in Camp like cleaning, washing, baking, budgeting etc all helped her in her new life as a widow in post war England. She had been brought up in China, and always had had servants. Actually she turned out to be a great cook!

*

I remember that there was one Jap who took a liking to me. Apparently he was homesick and had a son back in Japan of my age. I can remember him taking me into the tower and showing me his sword and also letting me play with his dog. One day he gave me two eggs. Now I remember that I had never seen an egg before and I was probably not yet three years old. I took the eggs back to out room and when my mum saw me she was so excited that I threw them onto the floor and ran over for a cuddle. My mum told me that she scraped them off the ground, complete with the earth and dust and cooked them anyway.

*

I remember that my dad was into the black market as well whilst we were in the camp. If anybody wanted something special they would give him the money or a piece of jewellery, etc., and dad would push it up his nose with a written note saying what was to be delivered. When the Chinese rubbish collectors turned up at the Camp my dad would be there waiting for them - along with the Jap guards.

He would catch the eye of the bin man who was into the scheme and then, under the eye of the Jap guard, he would put one finger to his nostril and blow hard. Of course the money and note would spray out into the bin (along with other disgusting things!) and the guard would always look away - disgusted. The bin man then picked up the bin and left. The next time the trash men arrived the man would always put one bin in a particular place, and when it was safe dad would open the bin and inside, attached to the lid, would be the purchases. All this, of course, under the threat of terrible consequences if he was discovered.

*

Sometimes it felt as if we were such a closed little world...and that's one of the reasons Weihsien was so great...we started seeing what the 'real world' was like, warts and all.

*



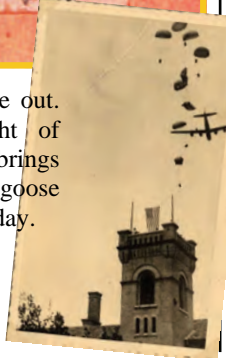
I remember Roy Tchoo: He was, after all, a most interesting and enterprising internee, full of ability, as reported by Des Power in the end chapters of his book, 'Little Foreign Devil'. Who else would have had a loaded

camera on hand, ready to capture for posterity, that moment the first plane, the big 'silvery' B24 Liberator came thundering out of the clear blue sky, that morning. Then swooping in low over the camp on it's second pass to unload it's welcome

cargo of 7 'gung-ho' paratroopers onto the 'gao-liang fields, outside the camp. Reliving the moment as I stood in a clearing in front of block 22, open mouthed then screaming with excitement as the ear-splitting din from those 4 big engines

drowned me out. The thought of which still brings on the goose pimples, today.

*



I remember this kind lady and me taking up a position facing the big block No. 23, with paper and board on our lap. I remember watching how she began her sketch. I'd like to think it was Gertrude Wilder. I can't imagine who else it could have been and don't remember her there in 44 or 45. There was a huge exodus from camp at the latter end of our first year. Besides the repatriation of half (?) of the Americans, 700 of the catholic nuns and priests left us as well. Taking with them our most entertaining and charismatic group: the flamboyant, softball playing padres. My sporting rolls models, which never lost a game and now THEY were gone. At the time this had a bad effect on my morale, at being left behind, if you know what I mean. At least, now there was more room in camp.

*

I remember the lad in grubby working overalls. He was my stoking shift partner, Nick. Due to our difficulty to light the hospital diet kitchen fires, we were required to make an early start, 3:30 am no less. As a 15 year old, it was both exciting and eerie making my way across a sleeping camp, from block 22, hoping I would not run into a Jap guard in the dark.

*



I remember the adventure of "the great escape". Where together with Fr. de Jaegher, the Belgium priest, and Roy's fluency in Chinese the key to the outside connection which ultimately enabled Arthur Hummel and Larry Tipton to "go over the wall" on that memorable night and to 'freedom'. In it's own way, it was a helluva risky affair that caused quite a stir and huge embarrassment for the Japanese authorities. It's a shame so little ever came to light on it. Finally as our time in camp drew to a close, Roy's skills were called upon again to negotiate our safe passage out by rail. But it is history now; most of us had to be flown out on US C47s.

*

I remember visiting James Hannon in January 2000. It was the end of a very personal pilgrimage for me. It's a goosebumps story, how I tracked down our heroes by telephone. Then I wanted to thank each one of them or their widows face to face. So I criss-crossed the continent to visit each one of them. My visit with Jim Hannon was the last of those reunions.

*



I remember that I raced for the entry gates and was swept off my feet by the pandemonium. Prisoners ran in circles and pounded the skies with their fists. They wept, cursed, hugged, and danced. They cheered themselves hoarse. Wave after wave of prisoners swept me past the guards and into the fields beyond the camp.

A mile away we found them — seven young Americans — standing with their weapons ready, surrounded by fields of ripening broom corn

Advancing toward them came a tidal wave of prisoners, intoxicated with joy.

Free in the open fields. Ragtag, barefoot, hollow with hunger. They hoisted the paratroopers' leader onto their shoulders and carried

him back toward the camp in triumph. In the distance, from a mound by the gate, the music of "Happy Days Are Here Again" drifted out into the fields. It was the Salvation Army band blasting its joyful Victory Medley. When they got to "The Star-Spangled Banner," the crowd hushed.

O, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave, o'er the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave.

From up on his throne of shoulders, the young, sun-bronzed American major struggled down to a standing salute. And up on the mound by the gate, one of the musicians in the band, a young American trombonist, crumpled to the ground and wept...#

*



I remember:

We would win the war, of course, and when we did, we would need a Victory March. So on Tuesday evenings — all so clandestinely, in a small room next to the shoe repair shop — the Salvation Army band practiced a newly-created Victory Medley. It was a joyful mix of all the Allied national anthems.

Because the Japanese were suspicious of this "army" with its officers, uniforms and military regalia, the Salvation Army in China had changed its Chinese name from "Save the World Army" to "Save the World Church." The Salvation Army had guts. Right under the nose of the Japanese — omitting the melodies so the authorities wouldn't recognize the tunes — Brig. Stranks and his 15 brass instruments practiced their parts of the victory medley each week, sandwiching it between triumphant hymns of the church — "Onward, Christian Soldiers," "Rise Up, O Men of God," and "Battle Hymn of the Republic." We would be ready for any victor — American, English, Chinese, Russian — or God. And victory would surely come.



I remember this incident that took place in August 1995 when a small group of weihsieners returned to Weih sien to celebrate 50 years since Liberation. Their picture was shown on the local TV, and their story told. A Chinese, whose home had been in Weih sien, saw the photo and listened to the narrative.

His attention was immediately arrested. In the group was "a lady with blue eyes and blond hair. Her gestures and facial expression seemed so familiar to me." Could she be Marina "the pale, thin and weak little girl of 50 years ago?"

In his article in the Chinese press he says, "That night I could not sleep. I recalled that all the foreigners in north China had been imprisoned here...To me it was a horrible and mysterious Hell?"

He remembered that after Liberation the electric wires had been removed, and how the prisoners were now free. They eagerly bartered their worn out clothes for vegetables and tomatoes.

With a package of 15 tomatoes Ju went to join in the bartering on a low wall on the east side of the camp. A young girl of his age "with blond hair and a pair of large blue eyes, and a pale thin face" put her "purple coat and a pair of yellow pointed leather shoes" into a bamboo basket which was pulled up the wall, and he on his part put his 15 tomatoes into the basket; and he added an egg which he had brought for his lunch.

Marina disappeared to her room. Meanwhile an elderly lady, who spoke Chinese and was also bartering, told the youth all about her. She was 14 years old and American. Her parents had been missionaries in Shijiazhuang, and prior to internment her father had been killed by the Japanese. Her mother was ill, and no doubt was being given the egg.

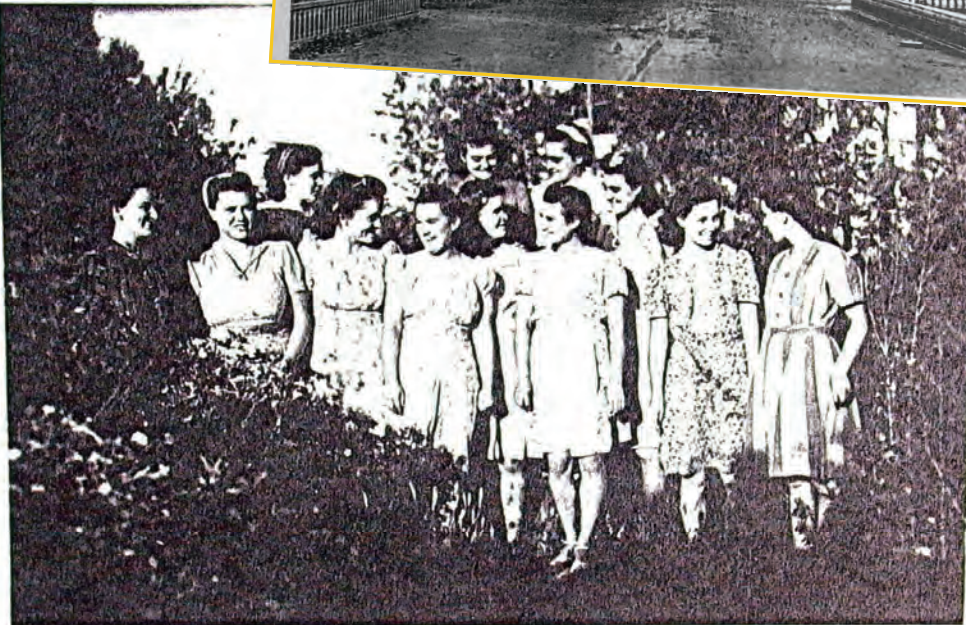
Marina returned to the wall with a xylophone which she herself had made, and passed it to the Chinese to

express her gratitude.

"This moved me deepy as I love music v e r y much".

Mr Ju was convinced that the lady on the TV was Marina of 1945. This was in fact my sister Estelle, who was not the Marina of earlier days.

*
The Chefoo Matric. girls in 1945. I am on the right, talking to SYLVIA (WELCH) LONG. The dress I am wearing was made out of the school curtains.





I remember:

Pa
 Stanman
 Chuckles
 Boomph
 Goopy
 Carr-Carr
 Willowbutt
 Woody
 Lassy
 Starky

These were all monikers given to staff members who were invariably people of sterling character and great dedication to their calling. They loved us. I believe they truly did, without exception.

*

I remember cesspool Kelly: ... I'm wondering if he was a son of Mr. and Mrs. Baltau(sp?) an American couple. Or was his surname Kelly?

Yes, I think it was. Wasn't he the youngster who before the war was over actually fell into one of those cesspools from which laborers from the nearby countryside used to cart the 'night soil' (human excrement out to the surrounding farmers' fields? Daniel was fortunately rescued from drowning in the cesspool. What dreams he may have had!

*

In the year 2002:

I remember that I lay the lilies on the edge of the football field. According to maps, my grandparents' quarters were closer to the near end of the field, but for some reason I felt drawn to the far edge, as though something of importance had happened there. Forgive my spookiness, but it was all rather spooky. Also, from that place, looking back over my shoulder, I could see the whole section and felt a sense of entirety, that the lilies were not just for my family, as I'd planned, but for everyone who had been there, who had helped and witnessed each other's survival. This is a story that belongs to all of us, and as I knelt at the lilies to say a prayer, I felt comforted by hope and time which moves us forward and through all terrible things.

While writing that I figured out I was on the West edge of the section. Perhaps I

was drawn to the West edge because our families were from the West and for innumerable reasons found themselves caught in the East, and suffered with the East, and later, for the most part, returned to the West. I'm not sure, but it's possible. All I know is that was



the space that spoke most deeply to me. I lay five golden lilies. Four for each member of my family that was there, and one for all of you and the peace I hope you have all found in your lives and memories.

*



15. Entrance to residence compound. Out of bounds. Wilber

I remember this one story Dad liked to tell:

In the early days of July 1944, when Mom was at the hospital, waiting for our little sister Marylou, Dad had to take care of the two other kids. I reckon, it wasn't easy for him, but he did it anyway and one evening, after having given us our bath (with all that precious water he had to pump out of the well), and clean us as never before, I went out to play with my friend Billy.

Where?

In the coal dump!!

We must have had a gorgeous time, because when I returned "home" for bedtime, Dad almost had an attack. I was so black and dirty that he had to give me a bath all over again. Furious, he was.

*

Isn't it great remembering? I remember having warts on my hands in our Weih sien days -- over a hundred warts in all on the backs (not palms) of both my hands. Some of them were quite large for a little boy of seven. At first, a doctor started burning them with some kind of acid. It was very painful and my parents made them stop. Then, some kind of natural doctor (homeopath?) gave my parents a small bottle of white pills and told them to give them to me each day -- for about a week or ten days, I think. In a month the warts were completely gone -- all of them. And they have never reappeared. Whether it was the white pills or the continuation of time, I will never know. But I would love to know what was in those pills!

*

I remember Roy and George used to make a potent brew from sweet potatoes and occasionally George would sip a little too much!!! They would get together in our little room and I used to sleep on a bunk at the top and they had this weird contraption which used to drip the alcohol out a drop at a time.

*

I remember that in many of the camps lice and bedbugs were a problem. An ex internee of Haiphong Road told me they used to go to sleep with the leaves of a certain plant stuffed under the covers. The leaves were reputedly effective in repelling bedbugs.

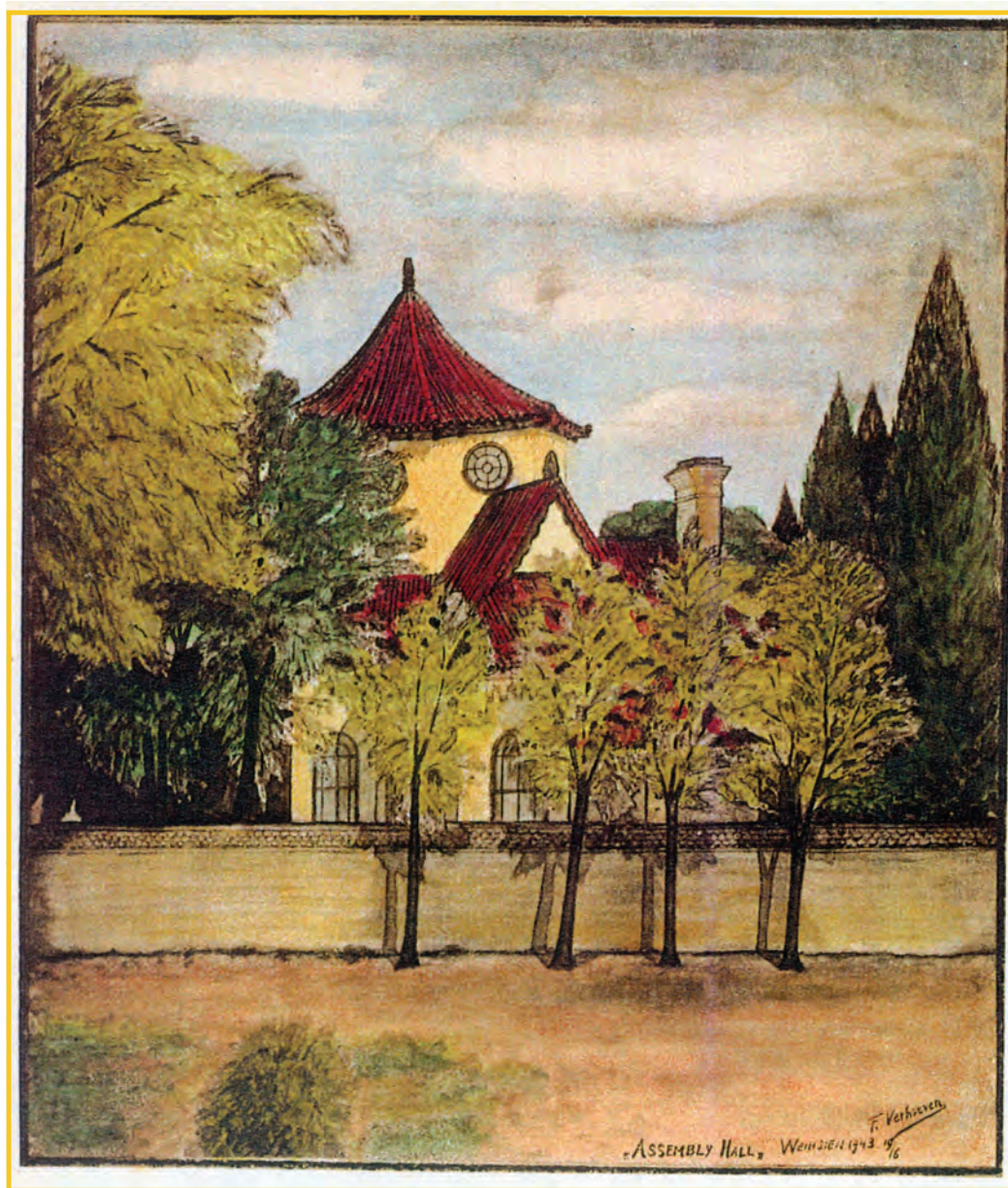
*

"Does anyone remember the rules for tip cat? I have such a vague picture in my head of this game...the cone shaped 'ball' and a flipping of it into the air...but I would love to hear from someone who either has an excellent memory of a game played sixty years ago...or someone who has been playing it ever since! Thanks "

*

I remember that my grandmother never fully recovered from her time at Weih sien, either spiritually or physically. And my father, who was 2 at the time of entry and 5 upon departure, bears the scars of the aftermath. I wanted to go there to lay the lilies to close the chapter at last. I found the experience healing, although in Qingdao a few days later found myself very sad. It is such a quiet part of history we all share ... and yet one so full of tales, dreams, stories, and effects.

*



I remember that one of the good things about Weihsien, for me, was that our school's leaders had an opportunity to mingle with other enlightened educators from the schools in Tientsin and Peking, for example. I think in retrospect that this must have been wonderfully refreshing to our masters. In the two years or so I was at Weihsien, I only recall receiving one caning, and it was administered quite lightly really... It was for sawing off the top of a great spruce tree on a bit of a sort of 'dare'. That was the year Kenneth Bell, Jim Young, Kenneth Patchett and I actually had a Christmas tree in our room for Christmas week.

*

I remember that after Weihsien we went back to the tiny world of Kuling....but my goodness it was beautiful. I am so glad for all the variations of experience we had.....and are still having. It was a glorious moment, that liberation, and I am sure that is one reason why I am here in the States....but my life and meaning are not dependent on that one day in August.

*

Remember?

"Ooooh! - What a beautiful morning,"

"Ooooh! - What a wonderful day..."

Father Hanquet (+90) explained how, after the 17th of August 1945, we slowly returned to civilization and how, every morning we all had to listen to this song bawling out of a network of loudspeakers hooked in every possible place in the entire camp perimeter. He (Father Hanquet) sang the whole song with a loud and perfect voice, twinkling eyes and a large smile on his face ...

*

I remember that one prominent Weihsien prisoner has told me how one of the Weihsien liberators — a married man — stole his sweetheart from him in those post liberation days.

*

Does anybody remember the tunnels at Weihsien? I remember playing in them. We lived in block one near the ball field and one tunnel started in the outfield and ended up by the hospital. We never knew what they were for -- maybe a hiding place in case of a raid? In any case, my memories are of a lot of fun down there, hiding and scaring whoever else would come along!

*



I remember pigweed:

Pigweed grows tall between my tomato and zucchini plants. Even my green beans can't choke it out. Each plant floods me with memories of World War II, so I pull the pigweeds out reluctantly.

Pigweed and dock helped save us in 1945.

Kathleen, Jamie, Johnny and I were children of Free Methodist missionaries. We and all our classmates and teachers had been taken prisoner in the early years of World War II when Japanese soldiers commandeered our boarding school on the east coast of China. For almost three years, we had been interned in the Weihsien Concentration Camp, separated from our missionary parents by warring armies. Food supply dwindled as the war dragged on. If you wanted to be optimistic, you could guess that the Allies were winning and that you were going hungry because the Japanese weren't about to share their army's dwindling food with Allied prisoners. Our missionary teachers shielded us from the debates among camp cynics over which would come first, starvation or liberation.

An average man needs about 4,800 calories a day to fuel heavy labor, about 3,600 for ordinary work. Concentration camp doctors guessed that the daily food ration was down to 1,200 calories. Although no one said so out loud, the prisoners were slowly starving. The signs were obvious - emaciation, exhaustion, apathy.

Adolescent girls were growing up with no menstrual cycle. That's when our teachers sent us foraging for pig weed and dock. They braised the weeds into food that tasted like spinach.

How did they know about eating weeds?

Was it wisdom passed down from grand mom to mom? Was it hunger on the prowl? Did they know that most of our common weeds carry more nutrients than our garden crops?

Today, from your computer, you can get recipes for pigweed as a side dish with butter, vinegar, or lemon juice. For sure, we didn't have butter, vinegar, or lemon juice in Weihsien.

These days, I usually throw away the pigweeds. They're bright green snapshots in my imaginary photo album of the war. They remind me too much of concentration camp. But I do allow my Crows Woods garden to grow a bumper crop of purslane weeds each year. I started letting them grow after I heard that trendy Philadelphia chefs serve purslane in salads in their chi-chi dining spots. So I snip the weeds into my salad bowl.

I learned to eat weeds a long, long time ago. #

*

I remember that Peter Orlich was the radio operator of the liberation team, only 21 years old the day he helped liberate the camp. Many girls in the camp were in love with him. He was young and unattached -- not that marital status mattered.

*

I remember that my grandmother told me of "handkerchief gardens" in which she tried to grow tomatoes from the seeds she pulled in the kitchen. At one point she was certain her boys would die without vitamin C and must have shared her concern as the next day three full ripe tomatoes appeared on her step with no note or name of their giver attached. Tomatoes, ever since I heard this story, are special to me.

*



3. Crepe myrtle tree

Wilder

I remember that some children in Weih sien had teeth growing in without enamel.

That's when our teachers discovered egg shell as a calcium supplement to our dwindling diet. On the advice of camp doctors, they washed and baked and ground the shells into a gritty powder and spooned it into our spluttering mouths each day in the dormitory. We gagged and choked and exhaled, hoping the grit would blow away before we had to swallow. But it never did. So we gnashed our teeth on the powdered shells — pure calcium.

*

I remember how most of the Chefoo School got switched from being housed in Block 23 to the hospital? Single, adult men had been housed in the hospital until the escape of Hummel and Tipton, June, 1944. Located near the camp wall, the hospital had a clear view of the fields beyond the camp, and the Japanese accused the adult men of signaling over the wall to Chinese guerrillas, perhaps to facilitate the escape. That's when the Japanese switched the single, adult men away from the hospital — too close to the outside wall — to Block 23 in the middle of the camp. They moved the Chefoo School children out of Block 23 to dormitories in the hospital. I guess they thought children and teenagers would be less likely to spy over the wall.

*

I remember this "coal hill" north west of the hospital where many boys of my age, me included, used to scratch around to find some useful lumps of semi-burnt coal to take home to our parents, as fuel was very scarce.

*

Remember:

I have a bit more on diet from my granny's notes, here reproduced:

"Gao-Liang flour was a hard grain used to make bread, filling but hard to digest". Millet.

"No cereal", only leftover bread soaked overnight and heated the following morning.

"No Experience" (she is referring to her own cooking skills) no hot plate.

Preparers were begged to cut down on water in the vegetables so people could use a fork."

Granny told me a story once about how she and some other cooks wrote up a menu card and posted it on the wall of the dining hall. On it were listed such delights as duck a l'orange, champagne, etc. They did this so everyone "could have a wish and a laugh". When the commandant saw it, he tore it down.

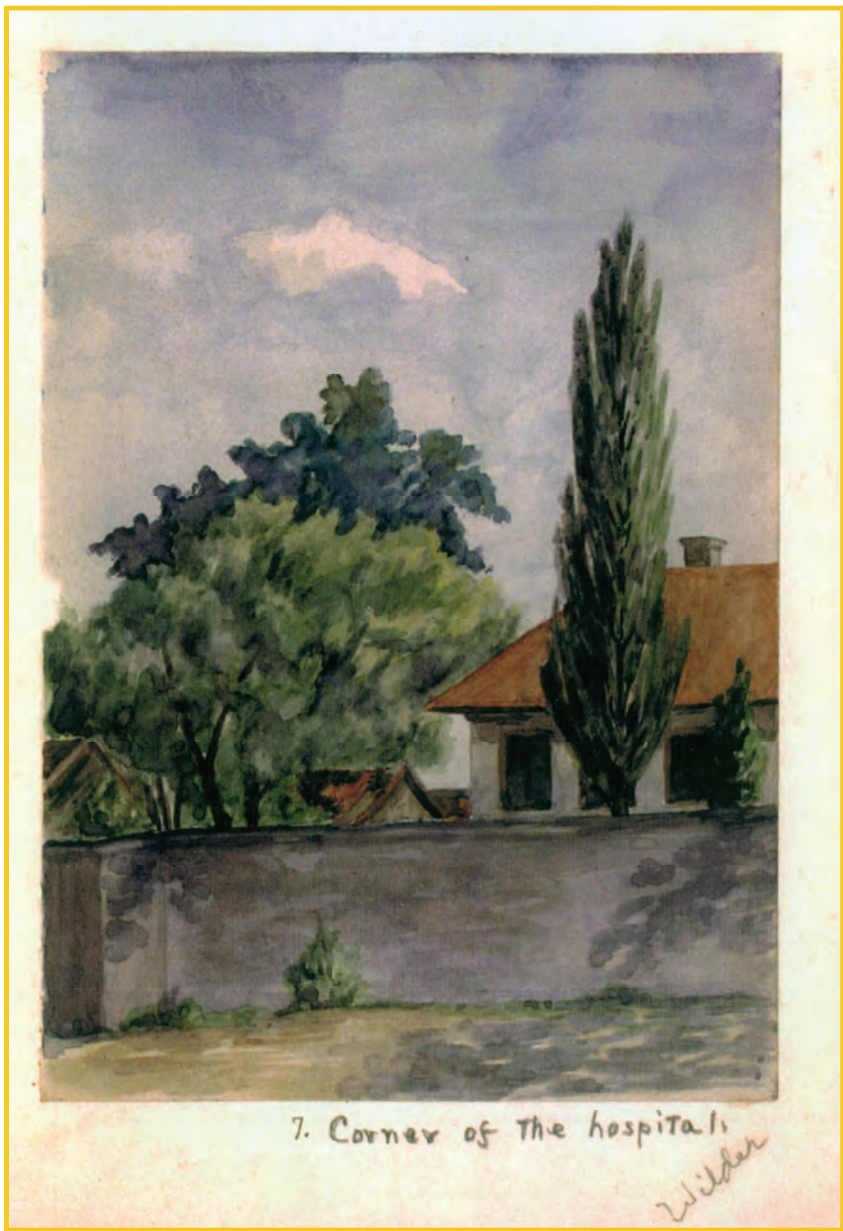
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I remember having to swallow (?) ground up egg shells. These were ground up to a fine powder and a table spoon full was given to the unhappy recipients with a smile of encouragement. I remember vividly walking around for hours with this horrible mass in my mouth which would not go down as egg shells are just soluble in water and just sit there waiting for little bite to go down slowly through their own initiative. It was truly terrible.

*

I remember, we also used to play in the hospital grounds, near the air raid shelters, and what went on in those dark scary tunnels was hard to believe.

*



I clearly remember taking the chalky, white powder, by teaspoon and washing it down with piping hot tea from my enamel mug. All the boys at my table, and adjoining ones (just a few feet from where my brother John sat at the prep school table with his classmates, boys and girls. The prepites as I recall ate certain greens, such as home-grown alfalfa, and so on, grown by Miss Pearl Young, et al).

Although it may sound a little like Dickens's Mrs. Squeers administering brimstone and treacle, it quite honestly wasn't that bad. Perhaps there was some of the powdered eggshell in our bread from time to time. I well remember enjoying dried-out bread (a bit like Melba toast or rusks) that Mr. Bruce kept in a bowl for us boys who lived in the attic of Block 61 (the fine old Presbyterian hospital overlooking the Wei River valley.

*

I remember that every Saturday in the summer was Battle of the Bedbugs time. It was a survival ritual. With knives or thumbnails we attacked every corner, every crack in those steamer trunks (it was them or us). We attacked every seam in sheets or pillows to crush hidden bugs or bedbug eggs. Some of us had mosquito nets that were streaked with blood where we had killed these blood-gorged bugs.

*

I remember that the Bedbugs and China of those years went together. In camp we placed the bed legs into tin cans filled with water. The bedbugs drowned.

*

I remember that I had just turned 19 in September of 1945. I fondly remember the outdoor dances. I remember going with George Wallis and Roy and Lily Tchoo. These dances were quite festive and quite a treat for us. I, too, do not remember about instruments being 'taken away' or members being punished. The Japs were quite lenient. We sang both American and British 'national & patriotic' songs and had many presentations of song and dance. Betty, Desmond's half sister with her Hula dancing was a great success.

*

I remember that we also used to know when a certain guard was on duty at that sentry tower at the south east corner of the hospital grounds. This guard was very kind to us children, and would let us play with his sword, and remember having a pretend sword fight with Alec Lane, one of us with the sword and the other with the scabbard! This guard also let one boy over the wall to retrieve any ball that would mysteriously land on the other side of the wall. I never did get over, but some of the bigger and more athletic boys did spend a few precious minutes on the other side.

*

I remember that we lived in block 53, which was the main way to the hospital area by those from the west of the camp and was right past our door. The Hospital was my home territory, as well as the South Field, where I ran around with Alec Lane (block 33) who always seemed to have got me into mischief.

*

It's so interesting to me to see all these grandchildren wanting to know about the lives of their grandparents. What a source of information Ron Bridge is....he will know exactly where every one lived and have precise details in a way that few others of us can furnish. The memories handed down or still held by some of us seem very similar...the food, the glory of release, playing in the air raid shelters or dancing... That's why I really appreciate Pam Masters book as it has love and despair and teenage hopes, showing a strong inner life amidst the monotony. Do you think people escaped into books? Did anyone discover a strong calling because of the circumstances? I just love the Wilder pictures, and this was obviously a talent she had developed before camp. Did any one find that they became an artist BECAUSE of the time on their hands? Were there whittlers? Were there play writes? Or did all the ingenuity go into day to day living? Who created beauty? I know my mother insisted on flowers as well as beans in the garden. My father painted pictures on the walls above our beds so that each of us had a spot we could call our own. And I still have in my bedroom the picture that Ma Yuan made (?) 800 years ago of an old fisherman asleep on his autumn river, the boat rocking gently and the paddle just touching the water. Chien Lung loved this picture 200 years ago and fifty years ago it brought sweet dreams to me. And on bedbugs I remember the acrid smell

and sizzle as they dropped into the flame of the match) I know that my father's story telling and ability to draw were heightened by camp. Did anyone become aflame with religion and find their lives changed? I guess what I am asking is for stories or evidence of this crucible bringing out refinement and change. We young were living life as though there was nothing else, and indeed there wasn't. But for teenagers and older, what did this experience do? Are the stories of quiet endurance and learned team work or are there others? I am thinking a lot about freedom these days and wanting to connect it to the core principles upon which it moves. Has freedom a definable character or is it a description of a state of being? And the same with confinement. What did confinement do to our sense of beauty, of purpose, relationship, intellect, idealism, structure? Did we find freedom in those areas? I would so enjoy hearing anyone musings on my ramblings! I like the idea of troops of people going back to Weifang....though it is so different from the days we were there. Each year we read of people going and yet another building being gone....and so they should be and the space utilized well.....but I will not forget the powerful experience of standing from the vantage point of Block 23 (then a middle school) to look out on to the scene of my childhood.

*





copyright 1945 William Arthur South

I remember that regarding to our peculiar diet in the camp, my father and uncle licked the walls to get calcium into their bodies.

*

I remember sleeping with China's millions — bed-bugs. We children in the Chefoo School slept on steamer trunks — three trunks, side by side, topped with a poo-gai -- because we had no beds. The bed-bugs infested every nook and cranny of those trunks, hiding out during daylight and marauding at night.

*

I remember that when the B-24 Liberator dropped those seven paratroopers down to us, Stanley Thompson and I were playing a game of table tennis in Kitchen One. I was thirteen going on fourteen at the time.

*

I remember the Jazz band.

Earl West (guitar) and Wayne Adams (Clarinet,) both African/Americans made up the group. We called 'it' the Hawaiian band. And I can still hear their popular rendition of "The Sheikh of Araby"!

No they were not on tour but just part of many foreign musicians working in China, as far as I know. I never heard about any instruments being 'taken away' or 'members being punished'. The Japs were pretty 'good' to us, really, in my opinion. The Salvation Army had their full quota of instruments of course. There were one or two piano accordions around as well. I had one loaned to me for a couple of weeks, as a trial. ---

*

I remember that Mom did a lot of washing in Weihsien.

She always did a lot of washing.

First; the steaming hot boiling water in an enormous kettle on the stove. She stirred everything with a broom-stick. Then the washing board - scrub, scrub, scrub - with lots of soap. Finally rinsing, with a great quantity of water - that came out of the tap.

---- In Weihsien, the water had to be pumped first .. by muscles !!!!

When she passed away, in 1992, besides the washing board, there was a stock of "Sunlight Soap" in the cellar of the apartment building, where we lived.

--- At least a hundred bricks! (Ready for the next war!!!)

*



I remember that little was wasted in that Shandong compound in those days. And, if we were about to waste anything . . . such as, for example, boiled turnips - the stringy, rather woody variety, sometimes served as a sort of gooey mash, the coolies who carried out the slops from the garbage pile out behind the kitchen, would salvage it - possibly for use by people even hungrier than we were. Their own people in a nearby village.

*

I remember that although I was only eleven, two things have stayed with me from that experience. One was the sense that I witnessed a whole community of unlikely mix rise above their circumstance. The greatness of the human spirit is amazing. The other was the Christian witness of the nuns and priests. Their joy in service; the way they took on any task willingly impressed me. It was a glimpse of how things should be- and can be.

*

I remember that Hugh Hubbard ranked near the top of Weihai's "spirit team" — right up there with Eric Liddell and Mary Scott. Through those Weihai years, he inspired countless children and teenagers by teaching them the lore of birds and in leading them on bird watching tours of the camp. I think my brother Jamie still has his Weihai bird watching diary.

*

I remember that another victim of the dreaded cesspool was father Keymolen, a catholic priest. He was a short, small man with an unfortunately misshapen back. Nature called during the night and he was on his way when he fell in. A Jap guard pulled him out when he heard him calling for help.

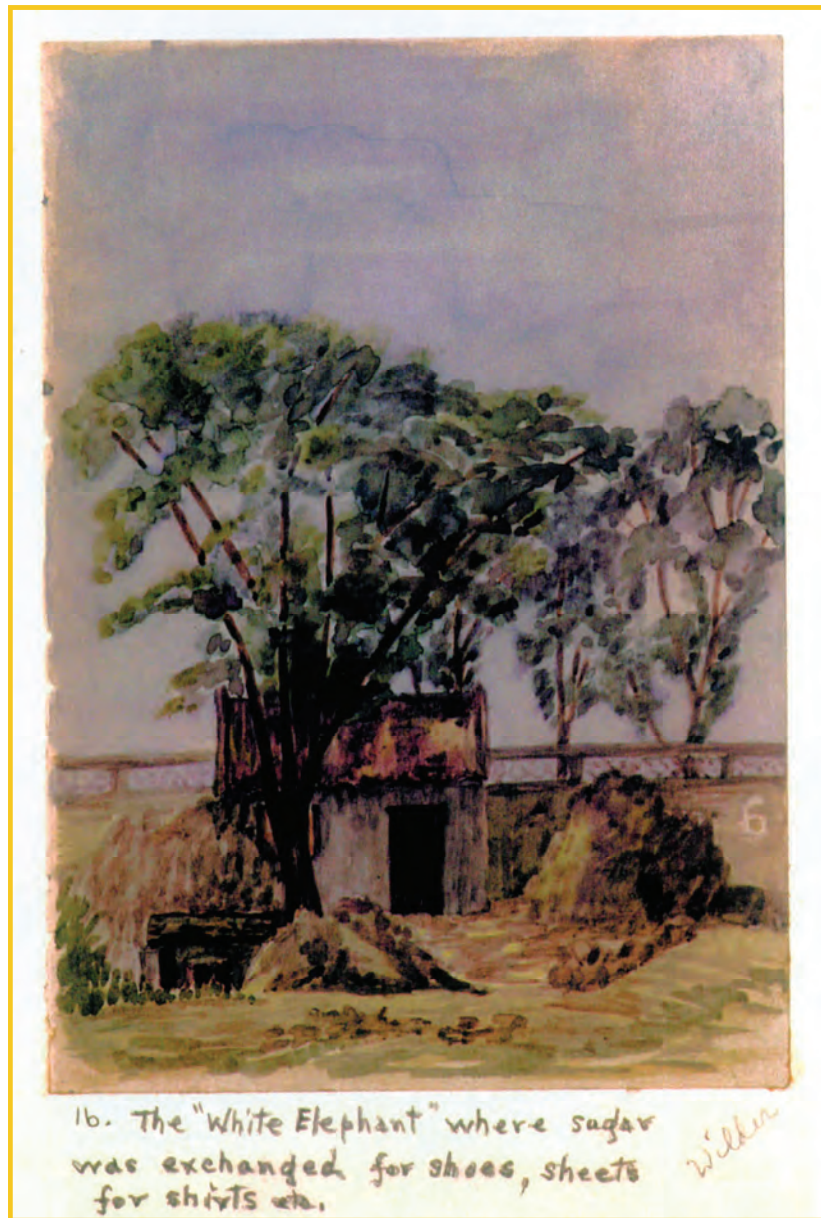
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I remember this one memory that came back to me just before we were sent to Weihai. The Japs (I make no apology) had closed down the Grammar School and had forbidden anyone studying in any other language but Japanese. Our house was confiscated as well as the car (this really hurt my father as it was a Lanchester) and we had to live in a garage on Tyne St. The pupils of the Grammar School were farmed out into various private houses and taught clandestinely. I have a birthday card given to me on my birthday 14th March. This was signed by all the class as well as the teacher in 1943, at 133 Singapore Rd. (just behind the Min Yuan field). The list, written by the children themselves is as follows.

Sylvia Churchill, Jimmy Quinn, Monica Morris, Lucy Oakes, Johnny Robinson, Daphnia Parking, Johnny Hoch, Jane Murray, Anthony Potter and our teacher FAH.Kelly

I have always wondered what became of all these children.

*



I remember the soap. I, too, never throw out the last slippery sliver of a bar of soap. I ALWAYS glue it to the new bar. Even when I stay in a hotel, I bring home the used hotel soap to use at home. My bathroom vanity cupboard boasts my never-ending supply of used hotel soap. When my sister-in-law told me about my brother John's soap-saving habits, I realized how Weihsien and wartime survival skills still shape us.

*

I am like you. I cannot waste food - even the crumbs go to the native birds of Australia which visit us every day. (White cockatoos, Lorekeets, Noisy miners, crested pigeons, Rosellas, Mountain lowrys and Galahs and Magpies and a few others. Aren't we lucky to have such beautiful birds visiting us of their own free will?

*

I remember our chief of police, any one recall his name — he was known a little disrespectfully as "King Kong" by some. Anyway, our chief of police who still had responsibility, delegated to him by the American administration officer, would understandably become quite frustrated. He'd try to stop this wretched over-the-wall bartering, running up and hollering at the offenders who rapidly dispersed, only to return when poor ole "King Kong" went off on his rounds.

*

I remember that after the paratroopers had come, along with tons and tons of American Red Cross food parcels, quite a bit of 'black marketing' took place over the wall of the camp.

*

I remember that empty "PREM" tins could be converted rapidly into shiny new tin lamps, and other useful objects. Meanwhile the supplier from our side of the wall would come away with a few hens' eggs. Some of the young people who lived in the camp were really pretty good bargainers, as of course the men and boys were who lived on the other side, the OUTside.

*

I remember that I first went to a Chinese language School held in block 51, right up against the Japanese compound wall, Almost facing block 50, and behind the two big mulberry trees. The building was small and contrary to the other blocks was built in a very Chinese manner. It was quite empty except for some desks and that is where we learned Chinese.

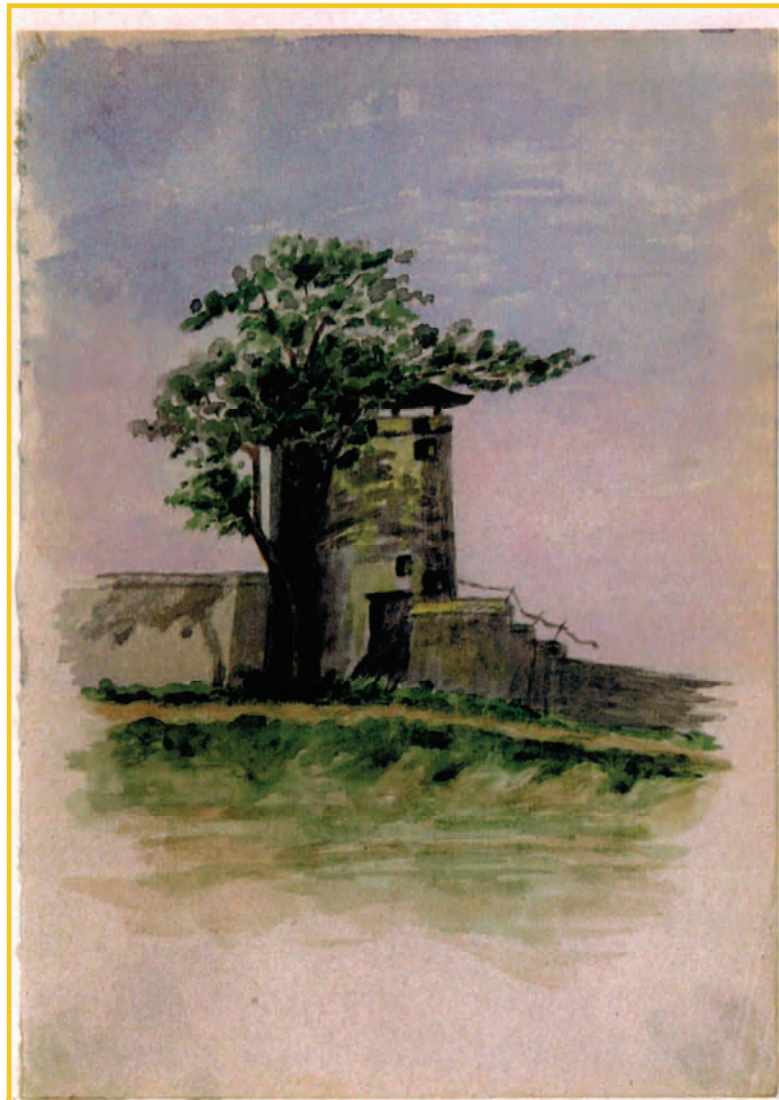
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I remember the first time I saw them - (the U.S. troop soldiers) - in the showers it was a great disappointment to me. They were so extremely white, (as compared to our weather beaten skins) they had no terrible wounds, scars or blood running down. What sort of soldiers could they be?

*

I remember the washboards. In fact, one time my mother was washing clothes in our block one area when a chicken was thrown over the wall from outside. She was so surprised that she pushed it into the washtub with the clothes in case guards were nearby. I think of Weihsien every time I open a new loaf of bread. Us kids used to fight over the crusts (heels, end pieces) because we thought they filled us up more. Our kids today throw away the crusts.

*



19. Watch tower built by Japanese
at corner of athletic field. *Wilder*

I remember that I went to school in the church, either I was promoted or kicked out of the previous one. In the Church for possibly some misdemeanour, I remember standing and facing the wall, when I heard the sound of the Aeroplanes that dropped our saviours. Being so close to the window to look out, I had this wonderful view of the parachutes coming down.

*

I remember soon after your group arrived, a few of you boys set up 2 sets of stumps either side of a make believe Wicket and proceeded to have a game of Cricket. We watched with amusement until challenged into 'having a go'! The bowling action beat us and it stopped us 'taking you on at your game'.

Well, to cut a long story short, you all started playing 'Softball' forming your own team. It wasn't long after, you fellas started challenging us at our game, taking-on the rest of the camp boys and much to our embarrassment — beat us.

As I remember it, the Chefoo boys, apart from the softball games, kept pretty much to themselves. Guess that's why we didn't get to know too many of you. There was one tall Chefoo boy who didn't mind openly fraternizing with 'one of ours'

*

I remember getting periodic news briefings in the camp? We children always thought this news came via the "bamboo radio," which was not a real radio at all, but only the messages sneaked into camp from escapees Hummel and Tipton via the "honey-pot men" to the camp's inner circle. (These "honey-pot men" who carried out the night soil from the cesspools were among the few Chinese ever allowed into the camp.) But according to Jack Graham, prisoners did have a real radio.

*

I remember Jack Graham, and this Weihsien adventure of smuggling himself into the Japanese quarters and successfully filching a good radio tube from a radio there in the Japanese quarters. Jack says he took out the good tube and replaced it with a burned out tube. This stolen tube successfully brought to life the prisoners' illicit radio. Jack says he was picked for the spy work by top level Weihsien insiders because he was a bit of a bad boy. Jack himself told me this spine tingling story. What a cloak and dagger yarn! Jack even described "covering his tracks" by putting dust on the tube he left in the Japanese radio.

*

You Weihsien softball buffs, do you remember Mary Scott? When men in the softball league fizzled, too weak to finish a game (the Priests Padres, Peking Panthers and the Tientsin Tigers), they would let Mary Scott come in to play — the only woman ever allowed as a softball substitute, as I recall. Mary Scott was a 5-foot ball of fire, a Church of the Nazarene missionary from around Chicago, I think. As the only girl in a large family of boys, she grew up a tomboy and played wonderful softball. It was Mary Scott who took it upon herself to teach us Chefoo School girls from the Lower School Dormitory (LSD) how to play softball. For hours in the south field bounded by Block 57 and the outside wall, she taught us how to throw a softball.

*



11. A watch tower

Wilder

I remember, for instance, throughout my childhood and adolescence, my father moved us from our homes approximately once every three years, the duration of his time in the camp. I have "inherited" the habit of leaving every three years, and this year will break it by remaining in a job for a fourth year. Also, the notion of "suffering" in my childhood was constantly compared to "real suffering," i.e. having to lick plaster from the walls to get calcium.

*

I remember that Blanche Kloosterboer and I stole bricks from the low internal walls. George Wallis and his room-mate built Russian peasant style brick stoves for us and themselves. These kept the heat in the room. Blanche and I decided that we needed roofing tiles for the top of the stove, and the only place we could get them was in the Japanese compound. This was out of bounds. I still remember being excited and very much afraid at the same time. We were in luck! We were not caught. Naturally neither her mother nor my father knew of our plans.

*

I remember that the amount of food was cut every time the Japs lost a battle or a battleship. By the end, the food left a lot to be desired, and the portions were small. But we all must remember that although we were hungry at times, we never starved as so many others did in Japanese and German camps. In the beginning many had tinned food to supplement the camp diet, but that did not last long. We later fondly remembered the food that we had been given before. The cooks have to be commended for what they were able to fix with the quality and quantity of food that each kitchen was given. In addition, we seldom were without fresh-baked bread.

*

I remember Mary Scott. She was one who CHOSE the chore of scrubbing those open-trough latrines.

*

What I find most striking is how the literature of the camp celebrates the community that evolves in adversity. It seems to me that the stories of Weihsien could shine a new and very important light on the nature of survival, one which could further develop the history of POW's. It was a concentration camp, but it was not a German Concentration Camp, of which there is much more documentation, more communal "memory" which has made it into consciousness, if not in some ways defined, modern/post-modern culture.

*

I remember that we didn't call it "stealing." We called it "scrounging." I remember, too, going into the out-of-bounds area and getting a screen door and a griddle. We took the griddle home and used it for years. I think we were the first, or one of the first groups, to be in the camp--arriving on March 20, 1943. It was our mother's birthday so the date is etched in our memory. Everything was up for grabs and we made do and shared with others. It was all so exciting and filled with adventure.

*

I remember the doctors and nurses who brought new life into the world, treated the sick with the few resources they had, and helped to prevent epidemics and disease.

*



I don't remember about the tunnel. I do not believe that I had ever gone through it.

*

I remember that we got so used to bedbugs crawling across our bodies that our minds often invented the feeling. In the morning the trail of bites would testify whether or not we were attacked by the real thing.

*

I remember my grandmother talking about grinding up eggshells for calcium, but I believe she said (or else I imagined) that they were mixed with food, or baked in bread. Did everyone have to take them straight?

*

I remember that I went on to a school in the hospital, first floor and to the right, with the classroom facing south. I sat next to Frennie Djunjishah. We wrote on slate.

*

I remember the soap. I must have inherited this tendency from my Weihsien Mother. I bought a "Soap Saver" from one of those catalogues, to put all the scraps and ends of soap in. Just add water and it comes out liquid soap. Wonderful!! No more guilt about wasting soap!!!

*

I remember that when I bought my father some oil paints and canvasses during what seemed a breakdown of sorts, we sat outside in his garden and he painted a small hut surrounded by snow. There was no door and the supply barrel was outside, under a boarded up window. At that moment, I began to consider the effects of the camp.

*

My sister and I are both poets and artists. Alice Miller, who has also written much on the topic of trauma, hypothesizes that it is the children and grandchildren who manifest the effects, either through subconscious behaviors or obsession, of their elders' experiences. There is also much written in transpersonal psychology about the transference of memory through DNA or subconscious communication from elder to child. My sister and I are both deeply affected by whatever happened in China in those years. We're not victims — and it seems to me none of the former internees feel or write like victims. We're something else. Are you/ we all "survivors" if an immense number of internees survived? What name applies?

*

I remember that there was a bit of a joke around camp on our constant diet of leeks, everyone seems to have become very sick of them, except me and I still like them. Someone put up a sign at block 3 in the form of a street sign....Leak Street. A surprise for all was when a Japanese guard pointed out the correct spelling should have been L E E K ! How embarrassing.

*



I remember that every Saturday in the summer was Battle of the Bedbugs time. It was a survival ritual. With knives or thumbnails we attacked every corner, every crack in those steamer trunks (it was them or us). We attacked every seam in sheets or pillows to crush hidden bugs or bedbug eggs. Some of us had mosquito nets that were streaked with blood where we had killed these blood-gorged bugs.

*

I love the philosophical thinking that is going on regarding our Weihhsien days. There certainly is commonality among us but there are significant differences also. Some of us were fortunate to be in intact families. Ours was such a family and the overwhelming feeling that I have from our Weihhsien days is that of adventure. The security of being with father and mother and siblings (two sisters and a brother) had immeasurable value for us, I am sure. Others were removed from family bearings; still others were freed from normal constraints and experienced a broader part of life. We were certainly a mixed bunch. "Cosmopolitan" describes us and our separate viewpoint expresses the screen of our own experience.

*

I remember those who pumped the water into cisterns day and night.

*

I remember those who caught and killed flies.

*

I remember that my father caught a dove — it must have been sick — and kept it in a cage in our room. Soon there was another dove that showed up, they must have been married, and Father placed it in the cage with the other one. These were "Red Burmese" doves as we found out much later. How the doves arrived from Burma I don't know, but there they were, and it is a wonder we did not eat them. When we left the camp, Father took the doves with us and they lived on happily in Tientsin. As they just did not want to leave us, even after a few attempts to let them fly away far from the camp, they still beat us home when we arrived at our block. There must have been a streak of homing pigeon in those birds.

*

I remember the cooks who fed us as best they could, including the bakers (our Dad was one) who worked eight hour shifts stoking fires and punching dough in cold and heat.

*

I remember those who taught us in makeshift schools without text books, paper or pencils.

*

I remember those who gave adult classes in dozens of languages, art, music, theology, philosophy and countless other disciplines.

*

I remember those who organized sports, ran clubs and scout and guide troops.

*



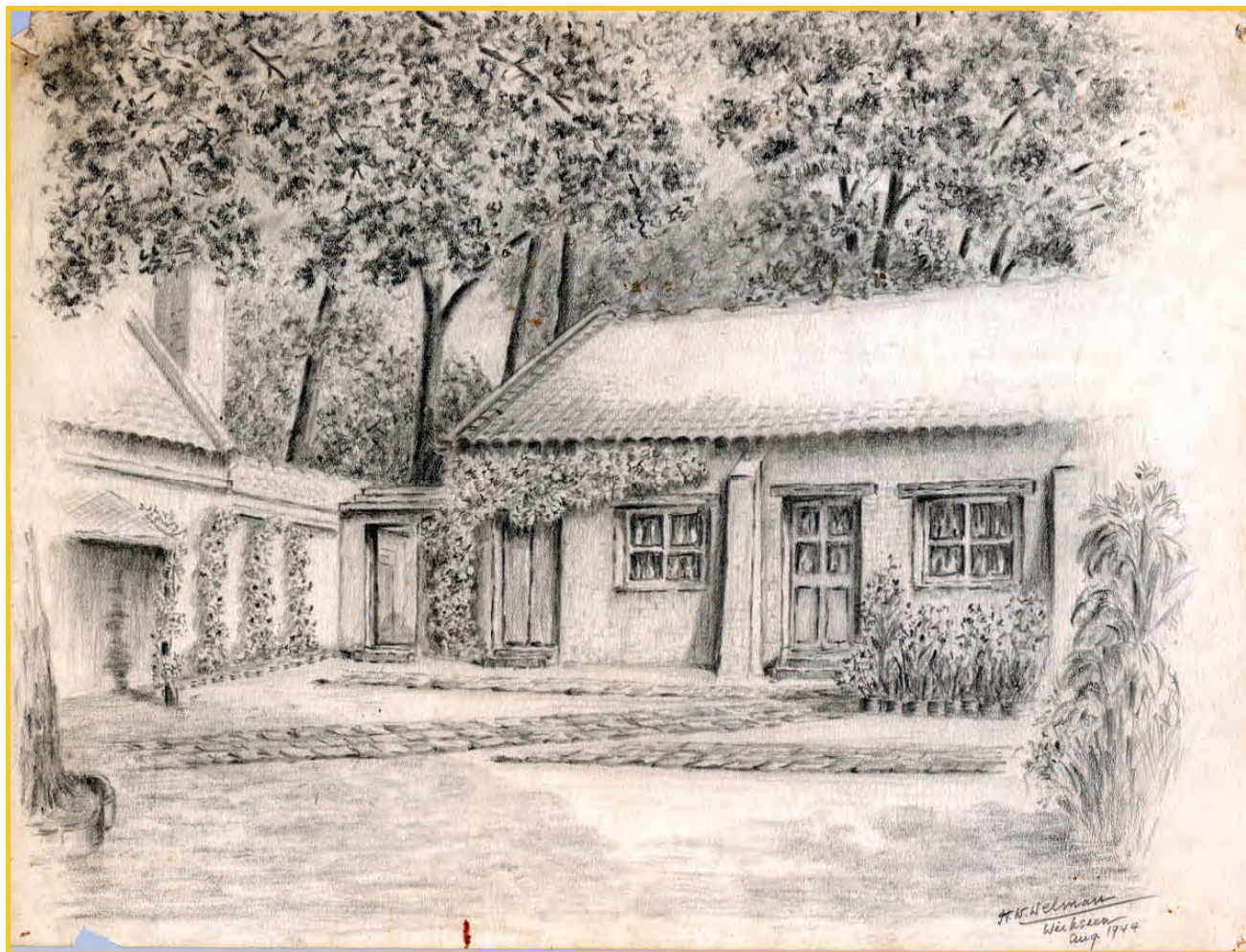
I remember the story of our arrival in Weih sien as seen by the local inhabitants. It is recounted in the following poem, entitled 'The Two Hundred and Ninety-seven.'

"Hooray! The Chefootes have all arrived at last!
 Right heartily we cheered them as through the gates they passed,
 They trudged up Guardhouse Hill, their baggage in the lead,
 We 'Servers' nudged each other, 'Great Scott, more mouths to feed!'
 That's not a nice expression but our rations were so low
 And they had come from what we'd call luxury, you know.
 They joined the Tsingtao Kitchen, school-children big and small;
 We fed them on bread porridge, and they ate it, one and all!
 We felt sorry for them when we filled their cups with bitter tea,
 But they said, 'If you can drink it without sugar, so can we.'
 Then came the real calamity, the camp ran out of yeast.
 Our manager said, 'Doughnuts! Make twelve hundred at least!'
 The boys soon took to 'Pumping' and other hard work too;
 Some girls became dishwashers, others joined the kitchen crew'
 We've grown fond of these school-children who so bravely stood the test
 And should they ever need our help, we'll gladly do our best!"

I remember Jack, himself, my contemporary at Chefoo and Weih sien, and roommate for a while across the hall from Patrick and Jessie (Cassells) Bruce, had a gentle nature (down deep) and I clearly recall him kneeling beside his bed, earlier on, when our room was across the hall one floor lower. Mr. Stanley Houghton had come in to our room and had said, Boys, if you've never prayed before, pray now. We all- about four to six boys in that room got up and knelt beside our beds and prayed silently but with real feeling for Brian Thompson who lay dying one floor below while the Weih sien medical team kept up artificial respiration until around ten o'clock that night.

I remember the members of Christian churches who shared the same building for two years, showing respectful oecumenism before the word was common.

I remember those 'big league' games that you mentioned. They were actually referred to as the 'major league' with teams that were most prominent, being known as 'the Stokers', the 'Cooks' and the 'Bakers', 3 that come to mind. And earlier in our internment we had the 3 Kitchen teams. But when the Peking kitchen was vacated to accommodate the Italian contingent, we were reduced to the Kitchen 1 playing Kitchen 2, as the 'main game in town'. Of course I must mention we had the 'minor league' as well and also the junior games, where I started.



Mary Scott I most certainly can remember the "5-foot ball of fire" 'character'. How could I put it without sounding rude, she was sort of ' 5 x 5' ? (oops) Let's say she was on the solid side, ok?

*

I also remember watching Mary Scott trying to organize a girls game but was a bit short of players. For the fun of it, I put up my hand. Much to my surprise, I was accepted but was made to play left handed. Throwing was a real problem! That's my 'silly' bit of trivia but it's true.

*

I remember that we were served leek soup, corn flour and waster custard (didn't we call that blanc mange?), dry bread and tea that day.

*

I remember that it was a well known fact that the Catholic 'Padres' were a 'pretty' good bunch of softball players. With Fr Whellan pitching, Fr Joe Fontana 'catching', handsome Fr Andy Penfold on 1st and the 'flashy' Fr. 'Windy' Kline (played some 'pro' baseball before joining the priesthood) playing 'short stop' etc., they were almost 'unbeatable'. The biggest attraction, at that time, was the 'Padres' vs the 'Camp', and these games were usually real tight and low scoring affairs.

One of the best, I think was the last one, which was nil all at the bottom of the 9th and with 1 out, we managed to get a man (possibly speedy Aubrey Grandon) on 3rd with a couple of stolen bases.

Up to the 'plate' stepped Jimmy Pyke (our P.E. teacher at old P.A.S. pre 1943.) and slammed the longest' sacrifice drive deep to Center Field, almost to the guard tower, and you guessed it, brought in the winning and only run. What a finish it was, it couldn't have been better scripted. I will never forget it.

Fred.....your room's rear window looked out over that field, do you remember that game?

*

I remember that the Chefoo Schools contingent arrived in Weihshien in September 1943 -- about a week before a group of American and Canadian prisoners were released in a prisoner exchange. Among those released were Chefoo students Jack Bell and Grant Hanna. They travelled home on the M/S Gripsholm.

*



I think there is a lot to be said about the effect on children of their parents' experience...how could this not be so? It is bound to have a bearing on the field, though of course, need not control the field. You bet I tell children and grandchildren about Christmases when we had no more than a balloon and a cup of cocoa...but that doesn't have much effect on their Christmas preparations!

I suppose what we are all talking about is the cruelty of unnatural limitation.....and to a certain extent, that limitation is experienced everywhere. Just as the depression was an example of the extremities of supply and demand, so the war and the camp was an example of taking limitation to the extreme. And we struggled for survival more obviously, more aware, then, than perhaps we are now that the organizing principle of current society is driven by the concept of survival. This is probably not the place to enlarge on the limitation we experience and impose in our unconscious and conditioned way in twenty first century America.....but as for Weihshien, so for now. Healing has to come to all who are scarred by limitation. It has to come on all levels.

On the physical level we will rejoice once again on August 17th. We are doing it on the emotional level as we swap memories. On the mental level we do it when we look at what qualities lead to that limitation, what qualities developed in that situation, what qualities are being utilized now. There are victims, there are survi-

vors, and there are mediators, utilizing everything sent our way in order to build awareness. I'd like to mention once again the value of Victor Frankl's book "Man's Search for Meaning" As a psychiatrist who was a prisoner in a Nazi camp, he was able to discover and formulate the structure of conscious living. He was so very aware of all the different levels, even of the level of the Eric Liddell's in his world ('the best of us did not survive'). I have seen this book work well with those with Post Traumatic Stress. And on books, Joseph Chilton Pearce's "The Biology of Transcendence" show both scientifically and humanly the wondrous equipment we have been endowed with, the actual physiological sequence of circuitry in the body which shows we are designed to handle experience in a particular way. In demonstrating that it also shows that as members of the human race we are handling it in a less than skillful way. Misusing the equipment we have leaves us stuck in the interplay between the mammalian and reptilian brain, in having emotional fixations on a physical focus. He encourages us to use all that we have been given for life abundant.

I remember the emergency, middle-of-the-night roll call we had. Definitely one of the most unusual of my boyhood experiences!

I remember the baseball ump known as "Pineapple".

I recall him as a colourful, roly-poly little man whom we all turned to see what he was going to call the play — in those marvellous 'big league' games such as Britain vs. America. Pineapple must have known what he was doing because there wasn't a great deal of arguing with him! And yet he always had a friendly, sort of mischievous little smile playing about his lips. He was, I think, a bit of a 'legend' in his time.

*

I remember Tad Nagaki. I was full of memories when I tracked him down fifty-two years later. I cupped the long distance phone to my ear and listened to his voice. Wave after wave of memories blurred my eyes. I was a wide-eyed 12 year-old again listening to the drone of the airplane far above the concentration camp. Racing to the window, I watched it sweep lower, slowly lower.

*

I remember that "The Fall of Japan" devotes only one paragraph to Weihshien. Here it is: "At Weishien, parachutists found their biggest problem the civilian internees. Overjoyed by the sight of healthy-looking Americans, some of the women proved almost unmanageable in their affection."

*

I remember there were two classes in kindergarten, "Rabbits" for the little ones, "Squirrels" for the big ones who were learning to read.

*



I remember that the baseball umpire was in fact Huzzi Rumph's father. The other umpire "Pineapple" was so-named because the Weihsien band was called "The Pineapples".

*

I remember that Lt. Jim Hannon was injured in the parachute drop -- an injured shoulder, I think. Hannon tells me that he had to push Eddie Wang, the young Chinese interpreter, out of the B-24 when Wang froze with fright. Hannon was well trained as a parachute jumper, but pushing Wang out ruined the start of Hannon's jump. They tell me the start of a jump is everything. August 17 was a windy day and the team jumped at only 400 feet in order to give the Japanese less time and space to shoot at them as the rescue team floated to the ground.

*

I remember JIM MOORE. He lives in Dallas, Texas:

"After all these years, it's a pleasant blur. The jump itself was hairy — a bit of a windy day and all the people rushing at us. Once in the camp the first person I wanted to see was PA Bruce (the head master of the Chefoo School)." Jim Moore had attended the Chefoo Schools in the 1930s and had been taught by several Chefoo teachers who were at Weihsien. Jim speaks often to me with deep affection for Chefoo teachers, Gordon Martin and PA Bruce.

*

I remember those who maintained the latrines and cleaned the shower huts.

*

I remember Fr. Hanquet telling me that before Chefoo arrived, the camp organisation was well under way and that he took to heart to try and get the young teen-age kids out of the "mischiefs" of their age, they balked at school work, so he kept minds occupied with card games, music, (later scouts and sports) An adult, a Baptist called Hubener was wonderful with his guitar... Fr. H. with Fr. Palmers and British teachers Cockburn and Mac Chesney Clarck, all ex-scouts started a scout troop...

Father Hanquet was very happy when Chefoo arrived, the school was remarkably organised, everyone then shared the educational work, Catholics and protestants, teachers of Chefoo and from Tientsin Grammar School... I personally feel that Weihsien camp was in a state of permanent grace thanks to the Chefoo missionaries and the catholic fathers. Their generosity worked wonders throughout all the difficulties, I remember being sensitive to this very tangible "spirit" feeling, and very much aware of the loss of it when camp necessarily dislocated. Weihsien was unique, compared to other family camps, like Lunghua and Stanley (our family later met with friends who had been interned there) the children were so marvellously cared for...

Towards the end of the war a resistance group was formed, — bachelors only — with among others Roy Choo and Wade, they were "armed", Roy with an axe... and wore their red nationality armbands (from just before

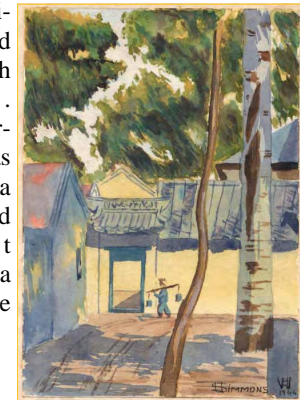
camp). When the Duck Mission parachuted, all precautions were taken as no one knew in advance if the Japanese would surrender or fight. Father Hanquet was one of the few first to greet them in the fields high with Chinese maize. Staiger, walking towards the gates, then said the team had searched somewhat before they knew it was "us" because we were wearing clothes in all kinds of colours: there was nothing else to distinguish our camp from any other Chinese walled village, but the Chinese only wore black or blue clothes!

*

I remember that in our little group of priests, most spoke good Chinese and since we intended to keep in touch with the Chinese people outside, we chose to take care of the toilets. You may remember that the toilets were the only place visited by the Chinese coolies with their wooden buckets. They came everyday to empty the cesspools. Therefore, for us fathers, the toilets were a special place to meet the Chinese and talk with them.

Our purpose was to get a good contact for a possible evasion.

*





I remember that the window in our "cell" was busted by a softball a couple of times and wooden slats had to be affixed but I have no idea how that was arranged given how hard it was to get wood, also glass was impossible to get so my Mum covered the window with cloth.

*

I remember that I was only twelve years old, yet I can still remember trailing these heroes. I didn't want to let them out of my sight. We little kids got the boring mementos like buttons and pieces of parachute. Our older sisters got treasures like the men's insignia. Rescuer Tad Nagaki told me that one woman cut off a chunk of his hair for a souvenir.

*

I remember TAD NAGAKI. He lives in Alliance, Nebraska:

"My memories are vague now. I remember coming down in the corn field and all the people running out there. I remember the air drops of supplies and trying to keep the people out of the way from getting hit."

*

I remember the Chinese who traded with us and those honeypot carriers who brought us news.

*

I remember that I had also forgotten all about ' that character ' called "Pineapple" until David mentioned him, the other day, as a 'no nonsense' type of umpire. And I've since been 'wracking' my brains trying to recall the name of ' The daddy of all NO NONSENSE umpires ' we had in camp (until the US repatriation in '43.). He was a real 'rough and tough' ol' US Marine from the Peking legation detachment, who also played a 'wicked game 'of Ice hockey on the same 'interport team' my father played in, in the 30's. (Those of our age group would remember the 'interport' series between the 3 main Chinese cities, but Tientsin and Peking seemed to figure in it the most.) Carl or Karl RUMF (no relation to Hazzie Rumph.) is the closest I can get. He would have been aged about 50, then.

Well, the big game I can recall was not a softball game but a true baseball game. Yes, ' a few' went over the wall, but solid 'hits' were few and far between, that afternoon.

I was just 14 and managed to look inconspicuous up against the centerfield guard tower. And even from that distance his piercing ' ssttrrikke' or 'baaalll' and accompanying actions, is something I have never forgotten.

*

I remember I loved school. Slates were distributed, with elegant, long, thin, white chalks. Then, with all the chalks used up, the slates were stacked away. I learnt to draw my alphabet with a precious pencil on precious paper.

*



© William A. Smith, 1945

I remember that Father Palmers and Uden decided to work in the bakery. That helped our group a lot, since every three days, they could bring back a big loaf of bread that was issued as a premium to us heavy workers, going to work at 5 in the morning.

*

I remember those who were black marketeers, and kept us informed about the outside world.

*

I remember the kids who used to play around that dug out cesspool hole, daring each other to jump in. The bigger kids scrambled out, the younger ones didn't even try, but then, my little brother, bravest of all at 4 years old, jumped, rolled over unhurt, and couldn't get out! After some taunts and jeering, we had to go fetch his Dad.

*

I remember the priests and nuns who showed me Christian faith in action.

*

I remember by the end of spring 1945 the cesspool on Market Square regularly overflowed. It was decided to dig a second cesspool on the other side of Market Square, about 8 feet deep, same diameter. We were liberated that summer so it was never put to use! (Or maybe yes, but I don't remember).

*

I remember those who rushed out of the gate at the risk of their lives to rescue the rescuers.

*

I remember that I chose to work in kitchen number one and got a job as the 5th "roast-about". Every third day, I had to work hard there, beginning at 6 a.m., and learned the job as much as possible. So much that, after ascending every rank in the team, I was finally assigned the job of "chef-cook". We were a happy team of 7, joyful and cooperating. My assistant was an American named Zimmerman who had a Russian wife who knew a lot about cooking and helped us to create and prepare new dishes. At the beginning, in that kitchen, there were no ladles, spoons and special utensils to ditch the food out, so, we had to ask the repair shop to make new instruments out of tins. The same for the covers of the "kuo". There were 5 of them, large kettles of which the bigger one contained twelve buckets of water.

We even had a team song, that was taught to us by a young British from Tsingtao and we sung our song every now and then, especially when we saw some protestant reverend passing alongside the small windows above our kettles. We sang it with a certain smile and even a point of derision for the Holy Book --- it goes; (like a nursery rime)

*" The best book to read is the ...
Bi-i-i-i-ble (bis)*

" If you read it every day

" It will make you on the way

" While turning in our kettles,

(at this point, we yelled) **"OUPS!"**

*" The best book to read is the ...
Bi-i-i-i-ble*

" ---- and so on ----

*



I remember some women running on to the fields and wrapping themselves around the men who were landing. We were all beside ourselves with joy at the appearance of the men from the skies. We were also greatly surprised that we were not stopped by the guards at the gate. They moved aside and later, I believe, disappeared from view. I do not remember grownups following the soldiers in camp. The soldiers did not know where the Jap soldiers were, and what they were going to do, and naturally were most anxious not to be "bound" by loving arms.

I also remember that I along with several others was asked to serve the men "breakfast". We served what we normally had for breakfast, tea or ersatz (?) coffee. One of them turned to me and asked for cream and sugar. I reminded him that this was a concentration camp, that we had not had cream and sugar for a long period of time. I remember his unthinking remark to this day, and the feeling that it brought about in me.

We, the internees of Weihsien, were indeed blessed. We may have been hungry, but we were not starving, nor did we have to resort to eating rats etc. We were cold, but we did not freeze. We did have medical assistance.

*

I remember the "Russian women... Bristling slightly, "he" said that no person more than another was "unmanageable in their affection" towards the parachutists, we were all and each one overjoyed. As a child of six, I remembered following them around too, but from afar and very awed!

*



I remember JIM HANNON. He lives in Yucca Valley, California:

"I remember my amazement. We didn't know what was in the camp. I expected (P.O.W.) soldiers. What we found in the camp: — civilians and children."

You may know that Americans hastily assembled these rescue teams when they got information that Japan might try to kill its prisoners or use them for bargaining. They assembled 7-man "humanitarian" teams in Kunming, each with a Chinese interpreter, a Japanese-American interpreter, a medic, a radio operator and a couple of leaders. The book, *The Defeat of Japan*, gives fascinating details about these teams. Men of one of these American rescue teams were roughed up and came within moments of being executed by the Japanese at one of the camps they went to liberate.

Another of these teams "chickened out" of its rescue assignment. If I hear the story right from our Weih sien liberators, that team then flew back briefly to Weih sien and tried to say they were to be in charge of Weih sien. Major Stanley Staiger would have none of it. Staiger headed our team, the "DUCK MISSION."

*

I remember Mrs. Kelly, she had a big mole on her left cheek.

Just before our liberation she had the mole taken off by the doctors. Wagging tongues said the doctors did it just to practice their surgery, which couldn't have been true!

*

I remember that our boy scout motto was: — "All for one, and one for all"

The emblem was, a lily flower on a clover embroidered by the boys' mothers and sisters. Father Hanquet explained that the Japanese forbade us to use the emblems of the Royal Families. The "fleur de Lys" is the emblem of the Kings of France and that is why the clover was used. But what the Japanese did not know was that the "clover" was the emblem of the Scouts of France. !! The scarf was a white handkerchief dipped in blue ink.

*

I remember our conversation with Father Hanquet in 2002. He very affectionately remembers Eddie and Joyce Cooke and Zandy, and yes, he did chuckle when he thought about masses beginning at 6.30am and the necessity of finding boys to help, so all the different services could finish in time for lunch! The Japanese willingly permitted all the religious ceremonies, a catholic priest (of German nationality) came regularly (with Swiss consul Eggar) bearing a communion wafer box. This box had a double drawer in which messages were able to be transmitted. The Japanese never found out.

*

I remember that our kitchen team also left meat to simmer, so we could scoop out the top layer of fat and use it as butter.

*

I remember of a chemist who worked for Kailan. He invented a way to make yeast from sweet potatoes, and the bread was the best in the world!

*



I remember that midnight roll-call, when we were herded into the Assembly Hall grounds. Everything had a curious dream-like quality as I don't remember being out at night before, colours blending with darkness, so many people all together, all waiting for something. I could feel that my parents were very, very nervous.

*

I remember working in kitchen no.1 with Hugh Hubbard as team leader. Zimmerman, as my assistant, had a Russian wife who loved cooking and gave us full of good ideas, so very creative work was done with just beets (and all!...) and we ended up as real "chefs"! Our arms turning around with long wooden paddles in huge pots, we sometimes sang cheeky songs to tease the protestant missionaries.

The best book to read is the Bible.

The best book to read is the Bible.

If you read it every day,

It will help you on your way.

The best book to read is the Bible.

(Traditional)

*

I remember that "the very beginning of the Scout patrol was constituted by 7 or 8 boys. Junior Chan, a Canadian-Chinese, catholic of 14 years old who could be the patrol leader, Sandy, an Eurasian, the de Zutter brothers, Belgians of 14 and 12 years, and also 3 to 4 Britons. There was a good mixture of Catholics and Protestants and there even was an Orthodox boy. With A. Palmers, we decided to give the responsibility of the group to Cockburn and we accepted to work more as assistants than as priests. "

*

I remember those who mounted plays, gave concerts, put on variety shows, arranged talks.

*



© Louis Schmid — Kitchen No. 1

I Remember that Mary Scott chose the chore of cleaning the latrines. Here's a bit of her description: "A latrine which we called the "cow shed" was assigned to the ladies. Each of the six "stalls" consisted of two narrow cement platforms on the sides on which to stand, a cement hole for the solids and a slanted front which carried the urine to a trough. In the morning a Chinese "night soil" coolie came to scoop out the solids (it was valuable to him as a fertilizer). Sometimes the odors were so pungent that our noses literally burned when we came near, especially in the summer.

But there were very profitable lessons to be learned, even as a latrine cleaner. My godly, sanctified rail-roader father, brought up a Canadian Presbyterian, had taught us around the family altar that a Christian can do anything that is right to glorify God. I shall never forget one Wednesday morning ...I was on "latrine duty" and in the midst of that unpleasant task, I looked up and said, "Now, Lord, help me to clean these latrines in a manner that will glorify You."

And I felt that the Lord himself came down. He took hold of the bails of those two big, five-gallon gasoline

cans that had been made into water pails. He helped me carry them to the latrine. He took hold of that little, stubby brush and together we dug into the corners and the crevices trying to get every place as clean as we could. He got down on His knees when I got down on my knees; and with a little old cloth, no disinfectant or soap, just plain cold water, we got every place as sanitary as we could.

When I finished, I looked back and said, "Now, Lord, does it please You?" I couldn't see a place where I could have done a better job. I wasn't cleaning latrines because I'd been assigned it, or because that particular week I'd volunteered to do it. I was cleaning latrines for my Lord. That was one of the sweetest and one of the most real experiences I've had with the Lord in all my Christian life.

But even this task was not without its physical and material rewards. As one of the "dirty workers," latrine cleaners were allowed to take a shower every day even during those times when others were limited to one shower a week! "

*

I remember my big sister telling me something about "coloured pencils". The treasure of treasures.

*

I remember that I had my first "ice-cream" in camp after the Americans came with the B-29s' droppings. The 4-year old boy I was, said I preferred it hot. They all laughed.

I still remember that wooden keg and all those gears that had to be put in movement with a big handle on the side. And then, that small cylindrical container with that divine milky-vanilla mixture in it, turning and turning and turning. And all the ice water cubes dancing and bouncing between the wooden bucket and the metal cylinder and after what seemed to be a long wait, the ice-cream was served.

*

I remember celebrating my seventh birthday in July of 1943. My parents recorded my presents as follows: "tooth brush, soap box, cake of Toilet soap (Jap.), rubber ball, belt (Daddy made from briefcase strap!), bottle of ink, dark glasses, and 3 bottles of pop. Guests (with gifts) included Aunty Lois (small box of candy); Mrs. Mungeam (small towel & 6 candies); Astrid Danielsen (pencil & candies); Scovil family (box of colored pencils); McNeil children (rubber ball); Aunty Lillian (12 cookies); Uncle Ralph (10 candies). Favours at the party -- palm-leaf fans. Home-made ice-cream -- the first in 4 months! (Fish was served for supper, so Daddy got ice and made ice-cream in the Connely's freezer. It was all unexpected.)"

*



© Louis Acland — Hospital & De Sales Fathers' quarters.

I remember that we also promoted a leisure club open twice a week to all the boys and girls from 12 and more. We met in the evenings, and, with one of the Sisters, we had much fun teaching them how to play cards or other games. We also started discussion groups. At that time, we occasionally met with Mr. Hubbard and another Reverend from the British community whose names, alas, I cannot remember. Both were excellent advisors on educational matters.

*

I remember that I worked in kitchen number one for almost a year. After that, I was assigned to making noodles with two new friends, Langdon Gilkey and Robin Strong. Somebody had discovered in the attic of the old mission a machine that looked like a wringer for drying the laundry. The machine was made of two cylinders turning in opposite directions and closed together. After many trials of mixing flour with the right proportion of water --- neither too much nor too little --- and by feeding the device with the good mixture between the two cylinders turning slowly, we obtained noodles that could be boiled as such for a few minutes and were a regal for all of us.

*

Yes! I remember that with Father Palmers we were the first to contact the "Education Committee" about the perversion of the young people by certain internees. Before we did anything, some parents had created a system of "proctors" going around the alleys of the camp during the long winter evenings. The "discipline committee" had already taken some very afflicting but necessary measures, to protect the morality of the young people of the camp. One alley of 12 rooms was decreed "out-of-bounds" for the youngsters, since in one of the rooms, a woman was inducing the boys to visit her and --- have dishonest

manners with her. We recommended to the responsible people of the "Education and Discipline Committee", to organise study hours in one of our kitchens, after 6 in the evening for the youngsters aged 12 to 18. The study time lasted 2 hours and was compulsory. It worked out well although some of the adolescents complained, but they never knew who the authors of such a measure were.

*

I remember that it was in the south field during the month of September '45 that we managed to plant a tent and have a real camping time with some of our boy-scouts.

*

I remember that during the last summer in camp, I was asked to work as butcher for our kitchen. There was work whenever the Japanese issued meat, brought in their quarters by the Chinese coolies. That was another occasion to get some news from them during the rare moments the Japs were not there. The meat distribution was done in their quarters and then brought to the meat-room of kitchen number one. The quota assigned for 600 mouths to feed was miserable.

One morning, in early August, I got the news from a Chinese cart man as I was asking about the behaviour of the Japanese merchants in town. The answer was clear and comforting for us: "They are all packing". So, on my way back to Block 56, I spread the news amongst my friends. One of them stopped me: "Let us celebrate", and we went to his room to get a few small glasses and a small bottle of whiskey, cheerfully adding: "If it's not true, you will have to give it back".

Fortunately, a few days later, the parachutists arrived.

*

I remember that to keep teenagers out of trouble, Eric Liddell organized evening activities in Weihsien. I'm guessing that he was occupying their time --- among other things --- to divert them from sex.

*

I remember that Father Palmer used to stroll with one of our Chefoo girls --- I think it was during roll call --- teaching her conversational French.

*



Arthur Hummel, 1945

I remember that several years ago, because our daughter was working for the Philadelphia Inquirer's economics columnist, I was invited by this columnist to a posh dinner meeting of erudite Philadelphians at which Arthur Hummel was the speaker. Hummel, as you know, had served as the U.S. ambassador to China and spoke about China and U.S. trade -- economics stuff way over my head. As a post script for the evening's event, I was asked to stand and recount the story of the escape of Hummel and Tipton from the Weihsien Civilian Assembly Center so long ago.

*

I remember the morning after the escape of Tipton and Hummel, I was very anxious to see what would happen as the guard and my Father got to the spot where Tipton should have been.....a lot of hand waving went on, yells and the stamping of feet, then my Father started miming the "going over the wall" signs. We all laughed at that which made the guard absolutely red with rage, I thought that something terrible would happen to my Father. The guard then just spun around and rushed off with as much dignity as he could muster, leaving Father standing there and not knowing just what to do. We waited a very long time after that, and eventually everything was sorted out.

*

I remember the tolling of the bell at midnight from Block 23 and I thought it was the celebration of the Victory in Europe, not the escape of Hummel and Tipton. I certainly remember the Japanese summoning us out of bed for a lengthy midnight roll call as a result of the ringing of the bell.

*

I do remember that night. We were told that there had been an escape....however...we did not know who they were. I remember it being so very cold.....I also felt very apprehensive at the situation...wondering what was going to happen next. As for the roll call...it seemed like it would never end that night.

*



JAMES JESS HANNON

MARCH 16, 1945
NAPLES, ITALY

Photo taken after escape from POW Camp, Oflag 64, in Schubin, Poland and subsequent 1500 kilometer journey with final rescue in Cluj, Romania by General McNarney.



JAMES JESS HANNON

I remember that after the rest of the rescue team left for Tsingtao in August 1945, Lt. Hannon stayed in Weih sien to help arrange evacuation of internees. Hannon was the only American team member who was not a member of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). He was in the Air Ground Aid Service (AGAS), a unit that specialized in rescuing downed airmen.

Lt. Hannon, you may recall, injured his shoulder when he landed from the

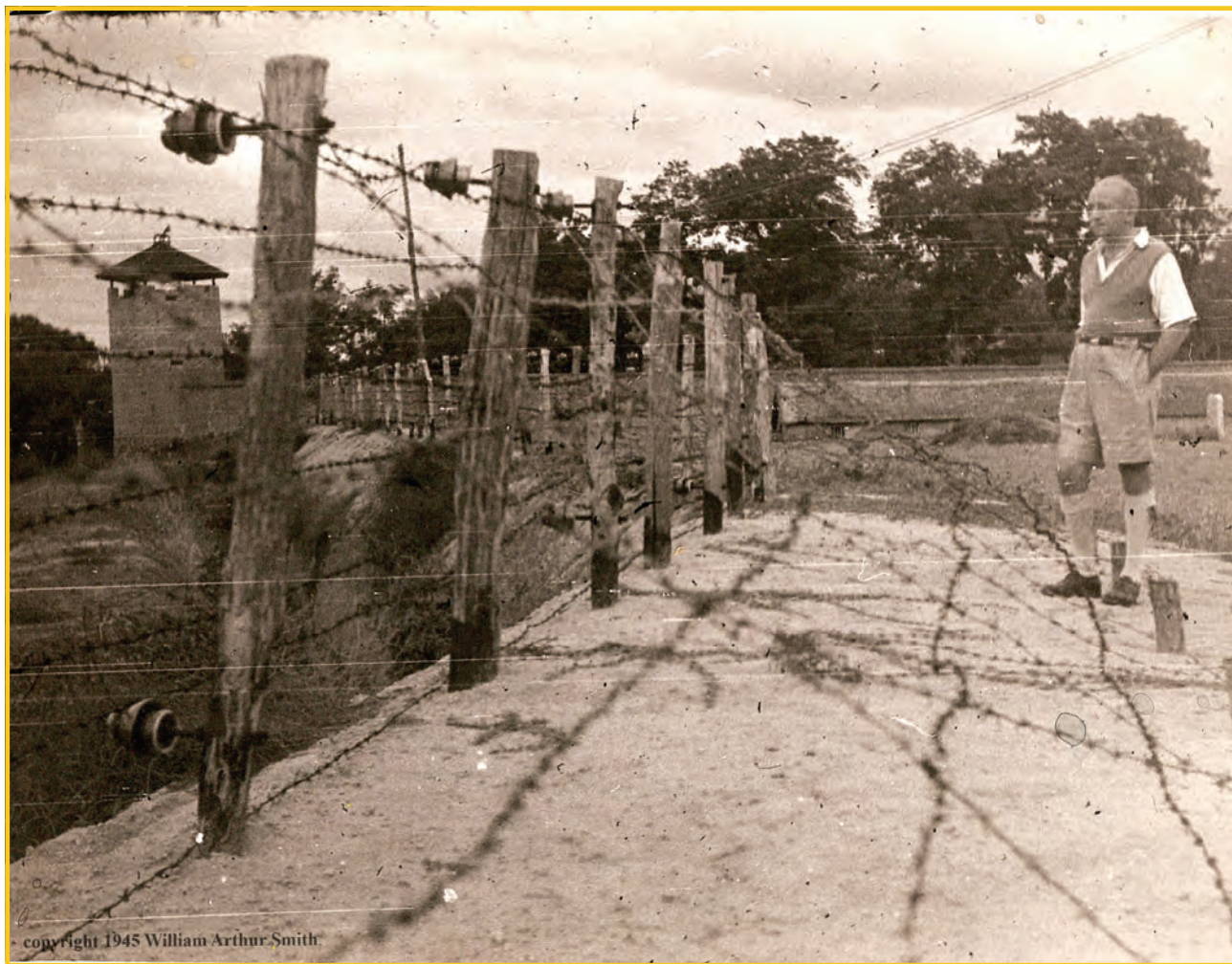
parachute jump from the B-24 bomber on August 17, 1945. The men tell me that a successful parachute jump depends almost entirely on a successful start. Hannon -- unlike some of the others on the rescue team -- had trained extensively in jumping by parachute in the USA when he joined the American Army. But Hannon says that he got a bad start on that fateful August 17 jump because Eddie Wang, the Chinese interpreter on the mission, hesitated. Hannon says he pushed Eddie Wang out before starting his own jump.

The men have reminded me that August 17 was a windy day-- not good for parachute jumping -- and that they decided to have the pilot descend to only 400 feet so that the Japanese would have less time and space to shoot at them as they drifted to the ground. Can you imagine jumping at 400 feet?! (Major Staiger told me they used British parachutes, which, he said, open more quickly than American 'chutes.)

Jim Hannon tells me that he had advised the team against jumping heavily armed. He says he believed that too many weapons would send the wrong message to the Japanese. So when they jumped, the team carried only one side arm apiece.

In 1944, Lt. Hannon had himself been a POW, after having been captured by the Germans in Europe. He was held in a Prisoner Of War camp there before escaping and walking across a chunk of Europe until he met up with American forces. He tells me he has written a still-unpublished book and screenplay about that experience.

*



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I remember that the Tsingtao group was the very first to be brought to the compound in March 1943. The place was a mess and obviously had not been inhabited for some time. We (Tsingtao) had been interned in Tsingtao since October 1942.

*

I remember a time of 'fear' was when I was dragged from the baseball field to the guardhouse and beaten. I was unable to recognize people for three days. (this was the result of being the smart mouth in a group of children — and taken as the instigator of the group.) We live and learn.

*

I remember that my grandmother told me that "prisoners were not allowed to touch the trees".

*

I remember that we were moved to No.1-block into three rooms. The location was better for the clandestine traffic over the wall that mother, Ida Talbot and Robbie carried out. We children all slept in the middle room, and the packets of sugar etc. was stored under our beds until distributed. One day when mother and Robbie were away, there was the dreaded knock on the outside wall, the Chinese had been sighted by the guard, who was on his way to our compound. The contraband was tossed over the wall to my father, Sid, who was caught red-handed and marched off to the guardhouse.

He spent two weeks in solitary confinement. At the time he had dysentery, so Robbie obtained permission to take him food and visit him. On his first visit, my father found a book tucked under the food. The title: 'My First thirty years in Sing Sing.' Sid had a very good sense of humour, but I wonder if it was good enough.

*

I remember the "Five C" club. The five C's stood for "Concentration Camp Children's Courtesy Club," obviously an effort to help the younger children with manners.

*

I remember peanut oil lamps — yes, we certainly used peanut oil and cotton wick lamps at night. I remember well lighting the Chefoo School Lower School Dormitory (LSD) in hospital with the peanut oil lamps.

*



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I remember August 17, 1945, the B-24 and the parachutes. About that day, I must precise some details, as I was one of the first to leave the camp through the Main gate, running in the fields to reach the grave mound that Major Staiger, the head of the team, had

chosen as an observatory to give his orders. "We are six parachutists and we dropped 20 parcels. Help us gather everything here". When all was assembled, after almost one hour, we started a big procession with Major Staiger on

our shoulders going through the fields of Kaoliang. But, as we approached the walls of the camp, the Major told us to stay behind and let them go in first, since they had special orders for meeting with the Commandant of our camp ---

*

I remember and I'm quite certain that the ringing of the bell was to celebrate VE Day. There's no way that we in the camp would have called attention in the middle of the night to the escape of our fellow-internees, Tipton and Hummel! The Japanese did not learn of the escape of Tipton and Hummel till roll-call in the morning. So they certainly weren't in our bell tower ringing the bell.

Incidentally, I'm sure that the bell tower was on Block 23. I lived there for a while myself until after the escape of Tipton and Hummel, when several dozen of us boys were moved to Block 61 (the hospital) to occupy rooms in the attic that looked out over the walls of the camp into the Wei River valley.

The bell ringing was done by internee pranksters at about 11 pm on the night they learned about the Allied Victory in Europe (VE Day). I clearly recall being roused by my chums to go outside and stand under the black night sky illuminated by thousands of tiny pin pricks of stars. The Japanese were so drunk it took them four times to count everyone. We got back to our beds after 2 AM.

The news of the Allied Victory in Europe probably reached us via one of the radios that was patched together with parts stolen from our captors--perhaps even by that rascally classmate of mine, Jack Graham!

*



From left to right
 Larry Tipton//Father Raymond de Jaegher//Arthur W.Hummel
 Centre front
 Father Tchang// ... and his Chinese friends who helped L.Tipton and A.Hummel to find their way to the Chinese guerrillas ...

I remember Father Tchang. He did not live in the camp. He helped Tipton and Hummel after they left camp and the picture was taken with them, after we were liberated by Staiger and his boys.

*

I remember:
 All those who were in Weihsien prison camp know that Tipton and

Hummel had made an evasion during the month of June 1944, but what they don't know, is how it was prepared and how, finally, it succeeded.

For a few young and dynamic prisoners who didn't have family responsibilities, evading camp was a constant dream. I was one of them. It was also a means to lessen the monotony of the camp days.

Well, to do so, there were a few conditions to respect. Firstly, absolute secrecy was a major clause. Father de Jaegher, who was one of those young and dynamic elements, and with whom I shared the same room, had the same desire of evasion. We however never spoke about it.

Every one of us, without the knowing of the others, was trying to put up a contact with a Chinese from the exterior. That was the second condition to accomplish: to find a serious arrangement with a Chinese from the exterior who sometimes came into camp. This service would

have to be well paid for, and that would be done by Larry Tipton, often seen with Father de Jaegher and who had a few gold bars, a necessity for the transaction.

Tipton and R. de Jaegher were often seen in the mornings, walking to and fro on the sports field pretending to improve their Chinese language while, in fact, they were exercising their

muscles for the long walks they would have to make, once outside. That was during the winter period of 1943-44.

Meanwhile, R. de Jaegher kept on trying to establish a contact with the cesspool coolies that came daily to empty the prisoners' latrines. As for myself, I was lucky enough to meet and make friends with a Chinese carter bringing the vegetables into camp. I talked about it to R. de Jaegher, and we decided that I could maybe try something about it. As my Chinese friend seemed trustworthy and quite serious, we promised him a good reward by the means of Larry Tipton's gold bars. That was during the months of March-April, 1944.

One day, my Chinese contact brought me a written message: "our plan is well established, and on the chosen day, we would be met and provided with donkeys or mules on a road boarded by trees, situated beyond the valley at the North-East end of the camp. We were to have a little flag with the mention: "welcome to our foreign friends". We hoped to travel by night so as to reach a safe enough point by the following day.

We had now to select the date. We had observed the moon and decided to choose a night when the moon would rise after midnight, which would ease our moving about. Don't forget that in those days, there was no street lighting. That got us in the whereabouts of the 10th of June.

In the meantime, Father de Jaegher had had difficulties with our immediate ecclesiastic superior in camp, Fa-

ther Rutherford. He had been informed of our project by another Father, (N.W.), and had pronounced an ecclesiastic sanction in the terms of: "suspensus a divinis" if ever he left the camp. He had to, he said, because it was vital to avoid the eventual reprisals by our Japanese captors towards the Christian prisoners in camp.

Tipton was very disappointed. He absolutely wanted to leave the camp with a missionary. You must know, that in those days, local churches easily welcomed the travelling missionaries.

Father de Jaegher told me of this interdiction, and it was agreed between us that I would take his place. Alas, whilst sitting on my bed, and while, in great secrecy, I was confectioning my back sac, my colleague, Father N.W. saw me doing so and quickly concluded that I was going to take Father de Jaeger's place in the escapade. He told so to Father Rutherford who called for me and pronounced the same banning as he had to R. de Jaegher.

A hasty meeting was held, and we decided that Tipton would ask Hummel to take our place. He immediately accepted which allowed us to keep the schedule previously established for the getaway.

Now, we had to choose the place and the exact time such as to involve the smallest amount of people and however succeed in our task. As for the place of the breakthrough, we quickly found complicity at the end of an alley (in the vicinity of n°10) where we hid

a ladder, absolutely necessary to go over the boundary wall high of more or less 2.40 metres. In those days, on the other side of the wall, there was just a fence with 6 to 7 barbed wires of which the uppermost was electrified. We believed that the current was put on that wire only after 10 P.M., which was curfew time, and also the moment when a Japanese guard switched off all the lights in our compound for the night. We weren't sure about that and told the escapees to wear rubber-soled shoes and rather put their feet on the big porcelain isolators while climbing over the fence.

We had also to make sure that there were no Japanese guards around. On the chosen night, our group of 6 or 7 friends were all in place and watching in the different alleys in order to get the ladder in place, against the wall. The time was then, 9.30 P.M. and in less than 5 minutes, Tipton and Hummel were beyond the wall and over the fence.

We were, however, very anxious to avoid any mishaps, and had previously arranged with them for a recuperation procedure if ever they missed the "contact" at the scheduled location. That is why, between 6 and 7 in the morning, the following day, I had to be waiting for them near the boundary limits not very far away from our bloc n°56 at a place, behind the wall that was invisible from the watch towers. I hid myself just behind the morgue ready with a thick strong rope. If ever I heard the cry of the owl, I had to thrust the rope over the wall to help

them back into the compound.

You can easily understand that on that particular night, we didn't sleep very much and that I sighed with relief after 7 o'clock in the morning when I got out of my hiding place just behind the morgue.

Now, we had to give the best possible chances to our two escapees in order to let them get away as far as possible from the camp. As we know, the Japs made a roll call every morning at 8 o'clock. At that precise moment we all had to stand in a row in front of our respective blocks and in the order of our badge-numbers. Tipton lived with us, on the first floor. Actually, it was Mc. Laren who was responsible for us towards the Japanese Commandant. I secretly informed Mc Laren of our projects and arranged with him that as warden of our bloc, I would give the alert as late as possible. At the roll call, I would simply say that Tipton was already working

in the kitchen. It is only around 10 o'clock that morning, that I mentioned Tipton's absence to Mc Laren. He then asked me, in the presence of the camp's Commandant, to go and make sure that he was not in the toilets or anywhere else. The same thing happened for the missing of Hummel. While I was going all over camp to search

for Tipton, the rumour spread fast, and at about 11, I came back empty-handed, and informed the irritated Commandant. He was very sure of himself and absolutely certain to recapture the escapees. As a precautionary measure, he put all the escapees' roommates under room arrest. Even, days after that, and from time to time, they had us rounded up in the middle of the night and guarded by armed Japs.

As for the escapees, they rapidly managed to reach the Chinese guerrilla forces and shared their lives with them for 14 months. They managed to smuggle a radio, in small parts, as well as medicines for the hospital and supplements of flour.

It is only the day after the parachutes came with the Americans that we saw, one morning, and our two escapees all tanned by the sun and in excellent health.

*





I remember that Fr. Hanquet spoke of staying on with other catholic priests (Frs. de Jaegher and Uden from Ankuo, Key-molen and Wenders who taught in Suanha seminary, Gilson procurator in Peking, Palmers and himself from the SAM missionaries, also four nuns....) When the rest of the congregation was sent back to stay interned in two convents in Peking, — so as to leave more space in Weihsien — "our" catholic priests with permission from their superiors, opted to stay on. Young, healthy and bachelors, they felt they could best serve their faith in camp.

*



I remember the very beginning of our camp life. It was around the 21st of March 1943. We were in total confusion. No one knew what to do or what was going to happen.

During the day, much of the "chat" was done around the church (assembly hall), since there were a few benches to sit on and it was close to the main gate. It took us a few days to find out how everything would be gradually organised. We were told to give our qualifications and our preferences for certain jobs to be assumed in the camp. My first job was cleaning the toilets!

*

I remember that after rescuing our rescuers on August 17th and as we entered the camp from the gao-liang fields, I was very surprised to see Roy Chu and some other internees, patrolling inside the camp with axe and knife. They had already taken position to defend the internees as a secret "corps franc" prepared by the strongest men of the compound. . Fortunately, nothing wrong happened, and the Japanese authority rendered their weapons without difficulty --- but since the communists around the camp threatened to take us as hostages, the Japanese guards continued to stay on duty during the nights until the final closing of the camp.

*

I remember how the Japanese counted and counted and counted us over and over again at roll call when they discovered that two men had escaped.

*

I remember that we lived in block 2 (Gilkey's map, the bottom of the "L") just above Joyce and Eddie Cook and their parents. It was, I believe, the only 2nd floor single family quarters in the camp. The room was surrounded by glass windows. It was cold in the winter and hot in the summer, although we could open the windows to catch whatever breeze there was.

*

I remember my scout logbook from that period. It describes some little tasks or "good deeds" that we, as scouts, were asked to perform as a service to the community: Sifted coal and carried water for man at boiler. Carried 3 garbage boxes to dump. Carry parcels for Post Office. Carried and dumped 2 boxes of ashes for bakery. Shovel and carry coal for man at boiler.

As scouts we had to know where all the doctors lived and the logbook lists the doctors and their locations. Dr. Corkey, Block 6/1; Chan, 5/3; Robinson, 1/2; Grice, 42/5; Prentice, 50/D and Hopegill,(?).

*

Do you remember being my first boy friend in school? We were about 9 or 10 then and we used to write "billet doux's" to each other?

*

I remember that my grandparents were permitted to bring one pillow case filled with items when they were "arrested". My grandfather, a doctor, filled most of the space of 4 pillowcases with medical supplies. He also packed a deflated football which Eric Liddell inflated later on (one of the family stories). A black market was also established with people outside the gates; through this more supplies could be brought in.

*



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I remember that this history teacher started the project to make sure that this generation hears the World War II stories from real people -- not just from history books. Realizing the value of the project, the school allows the guests to speak in every imaginable kind of class -- not just history. Last Wednesday, I told the Weihsien story to teenagers in three consecutive classes for their whole class periods. I always punctuate the story by unfolding my piece of parachute silk embroidered with the Weihsien rescue scene -- the B-24 bomber in the sky and the seven descending parachutes embroidered in navy blue and next to each the pencilled auto-

I remember that I was 9 when I left the camp, but certain things have never been made clear to me.

There has always been the problem of not knowing how certain actions were performed, and how certain supplies reached the camp. Take, for example the slates that we used in school. How were they supplied, and by whom? As well as colored pencils and other stationery items.

How did our raw products for food preparation reach the camp?

How did the hospital get medical supplies and from whom? I remember getting the wrong eye medication for a problem, and my Mother yelled and screamed to someone until I received the correct medication. Who were the people concerned?

How did the inmates get tools and building supplies? I remember that a very kind gentleman came to our room and built a small stove from bricks, with an empty kerosene tin as an oven. How did he get the supplies? I also remember my father, together with George Cox, cutting down a tree at the South Field, and then carrying it (with others) and hiding (?) it along the back of Block 84, where it remained for a time, with the Japs not noticing it because it was too obvious. How did the boys get saws and other supplies?

All these things could not have been brought into the camp through people's hand luggage, or, there must have been a trick to it all.

I remember that we arrived at WeiHsien in March 1943. There was nobody there when we arrived and we had to clean up in preparation for the arrival of others. There were about 500 of us in this first batch. All from Tsingtao where we had been in civil assembly centre at "The Iltis Hydro" from October 1942. From 7 December 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bombed we had been under house arrest in Tsingtao until ordered into the Iltis Hydro.

*

I remember that the Japanese would sometimes cut electricity during concerts or plays. We lit tiny homemade peanut oil lamps used to provide light at these times and during night when lights were extinguished. I remember how the electricians would scamper all over, looking for the source of the problem, but it was always in the Japanese area of the camp where the main switches were.

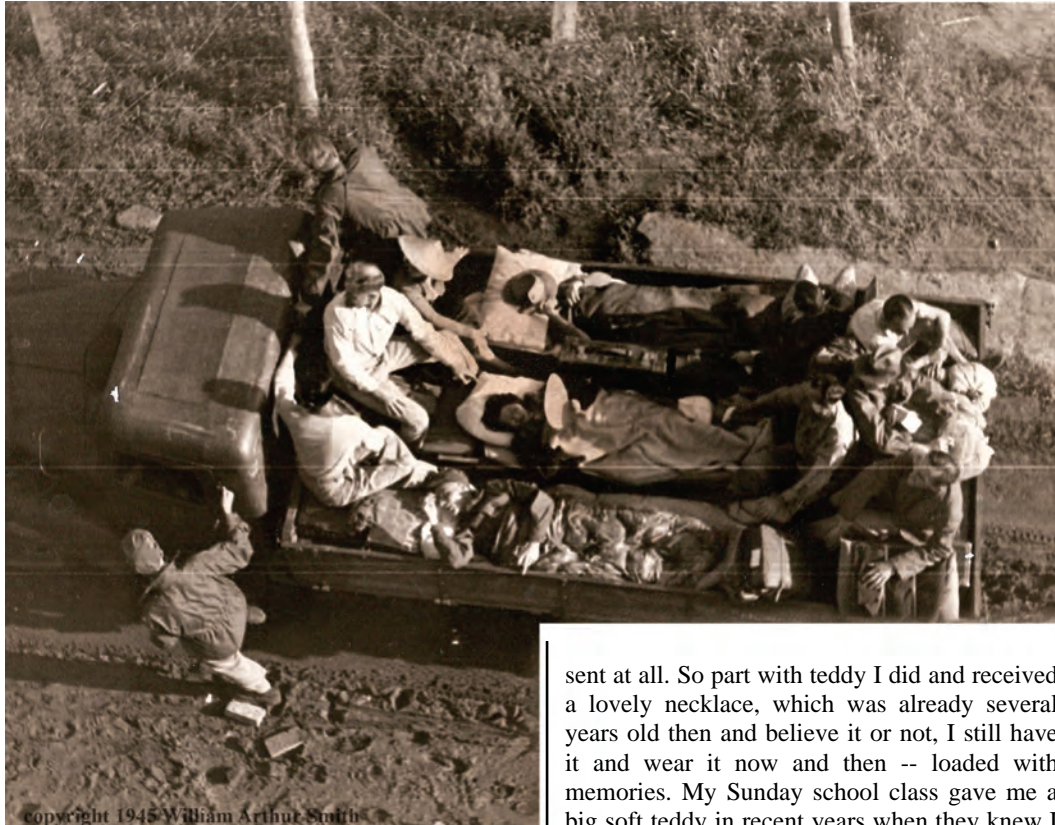
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graphs of each of our heroes -- passing it around. Sometimes the kids cry. Sometimes the teachers cry. I love doing it each year. But the numbers of veterans is dwindling -- just as our team of heroes is.

*

I remember my mother telling me she heard a scream outside the wall in our block 2 when a Chinese black marketer accidentally came into contact with the electric wire. I do not know whether he survived the shock or not.

*



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I remember the last Christmas [1944, I guess]. There were no Red Cross packages, no money and nothing to buy, so we all decided to get into our trunks, yes, the same ones we had put our clothes, books and treasures into the night before we walked to concentration camp on Temple Hill.

That Christmas as we looked into our trunks, each one picked out a gift to swap with one of our roommates. I had my teddy. Could I possibly part with it? Yes, I could, for we had all decided this was the only way we would get a pre-

sent at all. So part with teddy I did and received a lovely necklace, which was already several years old then and believe it or not, I still have it and wear it now and then -- loaded with memories. My Sunday school class gave me a big soft teddy in recent years when they knew I would be needing lots of hugs. I named him Agape [Greek for Unconditional Love] and I finally felt I had my teddy back. It would be such fun if I ever found out whatever happened to my teddy and who was the former owner of my silver necklace?

*

I remember the two underground tunnels for air raid shelters. I realize they were out of bounds, but on occasion some of us children would go down into them — to get away from the unbearable heat.

*

I remember that Weihsien opened as a Civilian Assembly Centre in March 1943. The first arrivals were from Tsingtao, followed by Roman Catholic Missionaries from the hinterland and the main bulk from Tientsin (now Tinajin) and Peking (Beijing). The Allied civilians in these last two places received indications in the last week of February 1943 and early March that they were to be transported between the 23 and 31 March 1943 to Weihsien. The train journey was overnight with a change of Trains at Tsinan arriving before noon the following day. Assembly areas were former US Legation Compound (Beijing) and Former British army Barracks (Tianjin) were inmates were walked carrying their bags to the railway station. The Beijing Group started out 25 March 43 and the Tianjin Group 23 March, 27 March and 30 March.

What apparently people are muddling is that there was phoney phase immediately after Pearl Harbour when movement was slightly restricted but permitted with "Red Armbands" with character "Ying" or "Mei" in Tianjin, and the letters B or A in Shanghai. By the end of

September 1943 the Japanese started consolidating and moving people into local "concentration areas" Tsindao the Iltis Hydro. Tianjin the Talhati House Hotel although some were allowed to remain in their houses until March 1943. When the bulk of people were moved to Weihsien there were a few aged/infirm who were allowed to remain accompanied by to look after them.

*

I remember my mother used to make bread pudding pancakes with the bread and water pudding from breakfast. When we were exchanged on the Gripsholm, I told my mom "I can hardly wait to get to America where we can bread pudding pancakes as much as we want." She laughed and said, "Once you taste the food in America you will never want bread pudding pancakes again." She was right! But I still remember how good those pancakes tasted in comparison to the regular fare of camp food.

*

I remember the Japs and their "YAH" practice, when they suited up with padded body armor and face masks and practiced bayonet attacks on each other near the front gate to the school? Suddenly we were prisoners.

*



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I remember where I was when the news of Pearl Harbor came over the radio spoken by Carol Alcott an American radio announcer in Shanghai. I was 13 years of age in Tsingtao and within an hour we were visited at our home by Jap Officers and immediately put under house arrest. I still have my "B" (British) armband.

*

I remember the Sixth Division Marines coming to Tsingtao from Guam and Okinawa in 1945. Their OC Gen-

eral Shepherd and later General Clements became quite friendly with our family whilst their Marines were protecting our part of China for some time after the war. I believe these marines had been scheduled to participate in the invasion of Japan. No doubt many of these men were, like myself grateful that the war ended so suddenly and dramatically as many would not have survived. I also believe that the Sixth Marine Division was the only marine division that did not actually serve in USA as it was formed during the war on either Okinawa or Guam.

*



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I remember that in our Lower School Dormitory we had an old hand-crank gramophone and two songs which we played over and over again: Harry Lauder singing A

'Roamin' in the gloamin with a lassie by my side" and "Go to sleep, my dusky baby; sleepy-sleep, my angel baby, tell your mammy rest a little while." Those songs still sing in my head.

*

I remember using peanut oil lamps after hours, I particularly remember studying by that dim light after 10pm cramming for my final school exam late 1944.

*

I remember that in August of 1943, eleven 6th Form students of the Chefoo School took their Oxford exams -- and passed. In 1944, my sister Kathleen and her 13 classmates took their Oxfords. They all passed. In August 1945, eleven more sat for their Oxfords. Nine passed. And when the war was over, Oxford University confirmed the results.

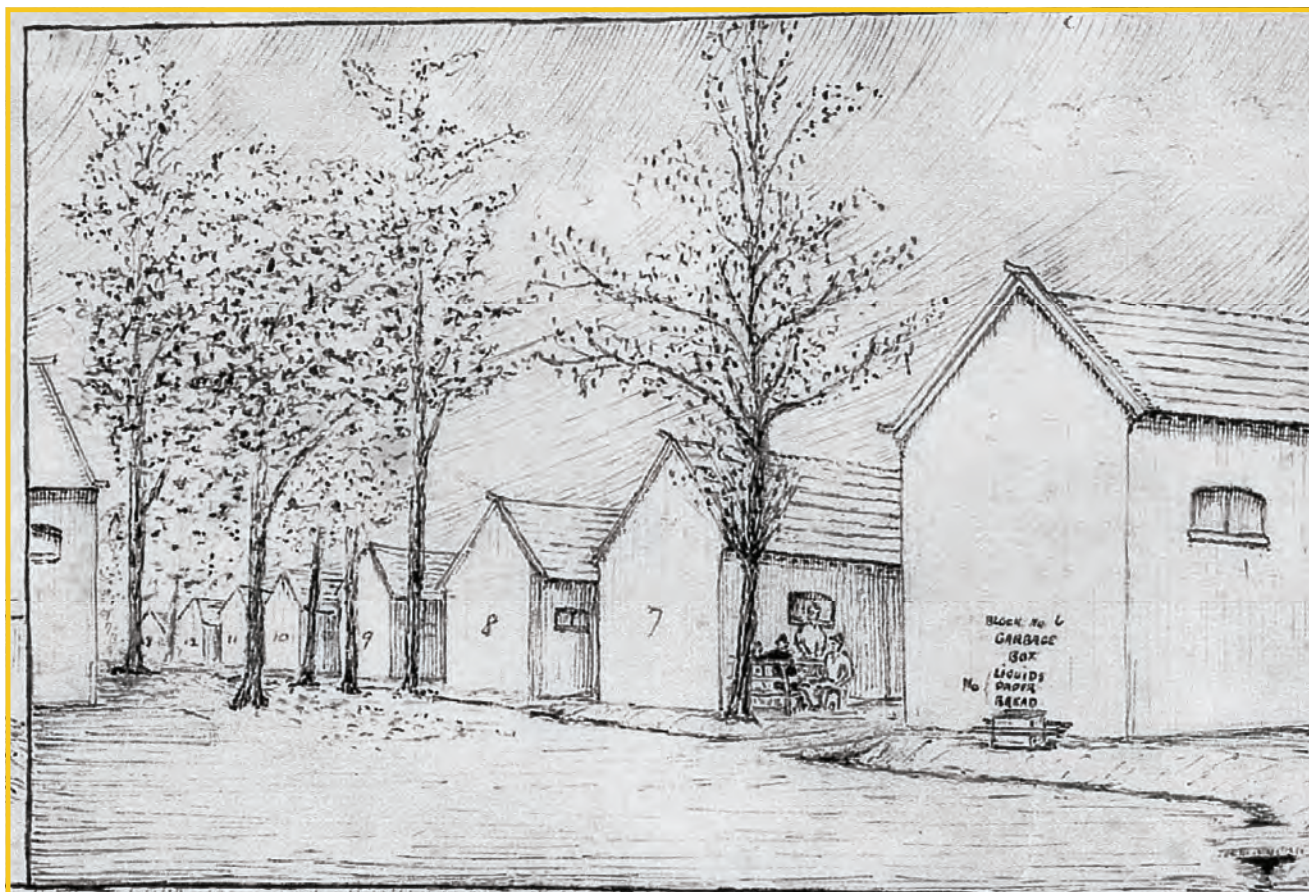
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I remember the peanut oil lamps but I only recall using them after lights out at 10pm. I think at first we had lights out at 9pm but later it was extended it to 10pm.

*

I remember how permission had to be obtained to cross a creek to hunt for frogs for dissection purposes, which the Japanese considered a barbaric practice!

*



I remember that one of my chores was being a "woodcutter", chopping wood for the stoves of the hospital. I was alone on the work that I did on a place very close to our Block 56. At the beginning, I was given an axe with a wooden handle, but we had to replace it with an iron pipe. Since there were no more logs to be cut, they were replaced by roots. Fortunately the sewing shop and the good Miss Scott provided me with strong gloves.

*

I remember Dick Whittington's pantomime. Music was always important, the hymns and songs, the Salvation Army band, the jazz band. What power music has to lift the spirits? What a test of people's essence this time was and how well they rose!

*

I remember that my job was pumping water at Kitchen #1. I was also a Boy Scout and a hockey player. I attended school and did my share of stealing from the Japanese compound, particularly books from one of their mansions.

*

I remember that we shared the hold with captured horses from the US Cavalry units in the Philippines. More than one internee reported the horses were treated better than we were.

*

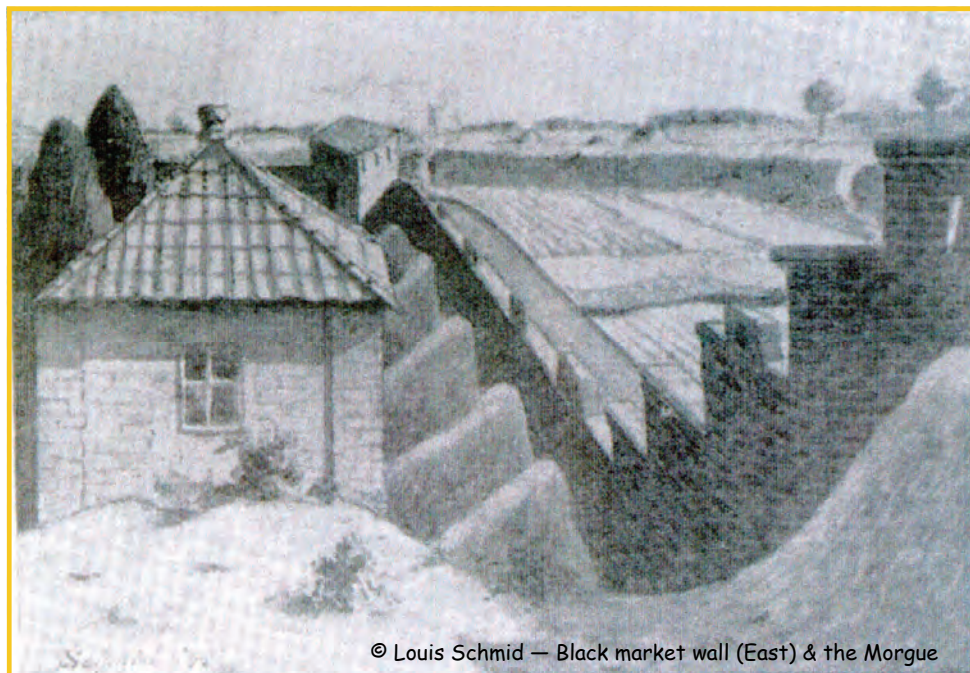
I remember our two families. The Whipples and the Waltons, occupied Block One next to the wall from March to September, 1943. The wall provided many black market opportunities for our parents. On one occasion my father, Elden Whipple, was keeping watch while my uncle, Nate Walton, was receiving about a hundred eggs over the wall. They were caught red-handed by a solitary guard who took them into our quarters and reprimanded them severely while he was counting out the number of eggs. At the same time, my mother, Marian, and aunt, Lois (who incidentally just died last month at the age of ninety-five) were clandestinely taking a few eggs for the families unbeknownst to the Japanese guard. We ended up with about a dozen eggs on that occasion. Apparently, the guard never reported the incident because we heard nothing about it after that. The only penalty was a lecture on the spot from the guard with the help of a Japanese/English dictionary!

*

She remembers:

She was interested in the job assignments & writes about her days in Weihsien. She was a member of the vegetable crew with responsibility for washing and preparing vegetables. She mentions stokers who kept the fires going under the giant food kettles. She mentions those on latrine duty -- who were permitted a shower a day when everyone else was rationed to one shower a week.

*



© Louis Schmid — Black market wall (East) & the Morgue

I remember that my family of four had a stove in our family room in block two, which was the only two story small block with the de Zutters above us. It was either a mud or brick stove and was in the corner when we took up residence. We made many coal balls and dried them in what sun there was. We did our own laundry and made our own clothes line in our little compound, which about six families shared. We had a tin tub with two handles and a scrubbing board.

*

I remember that the lorry bounced along the rough road and turned a corner through some trees. We were now driving towards the entrance of the camp, a large Chinese gate, over which were three Chinese characters meaning "Courtyard of the Happy Way." Japanese guards with bayonets were standing on duty. I remember that the streets were lined with hundreds of internees staring at us curiously. The men wore only khaki shorts, were bare-foot, tanned with working in the sun, and looked like creatures from another world. As we clam-bered off the lorries they cheered and surrounded us excitedly, asking all kinds of questions. Their accents were American, Russian, Greek and British, a cosmopolitan group indeed.

*

I remember that the little building in the market wall picture is the morgue. It was also used to confine Father Scanlan, the Trappist monk made famous for his "black market" activities. He was caught and put in solitary confinement without food or water in that building. It happened that a priest who had died of cancer was being buried while Father Scanlan was interned, and Father Hanquet recruited me to slip down from the funeral and pass a flask of water to Father Scanlan, as they were not giving him food or water. He was later released.

*

I remember that I was about 14 when entered and about 16.5 when the American Heroes dropped in from the sky. I remember the day well, I was actually casing the Japanese compound for what I could pilfer from there that night. I saw this glimmering sight of an aeroplane and I knew immediately that it was our salvation. It was beautiful! I immediately ran to the north gate and just about made in the rush to get out to the field and bring back those wonderful GI to the camp.

*

I remember tat you and my brother, John, had a fight shortly after you arrived at the Weihsien camp and subsequently you and he became friends. You may have been in his patrol in Boy Scouts.

*

I remember three bishops in Weihsien prison camp,:

Mgr. Leo De Smedt (62 years old), Mgr. Louis Morel (64 years old) and Bishop Scott who was an Anglican Bishop.

The two first ones were transferred to Peking in June 1943 as well as nearly all the other priests and the nuns that were in camp.

Only a dozen stayed behind, and those were:

— 6 Samists: Raymond de Jaegher, Emmanuel Hanquet, Michel Keymolen, Albert Palmers, Herman Unden and Nicolas Wenders.

— 2 Jesuites: Fathers Dallaire and Ghyselincq,

— 1 Benedictin: John Martin,

— 2 Franciscans: Fathers P. Rutherford and Schneider --- who stayed in camp to the end: (October 1945).

The third Anglican Bishop stayed with us — I think — until the end or maybe was he repatriated on board of the Gripsholm - I'm not quite certain of that.

*

I remember the boy was who was so terrified by looking into the morgue and seeing the wind blowing the cloth over the coffin. He was sure the body was alive...but he could not escape because he got stuck in the window frame. What a horror!

*



© Louis Schmid — Lazarists' quarter

I remember that when the Japanese commandeered our Chefoo School to make it into a naval base, they marched us across town and interned us in a Presbyterian mission compound in the Temple Hill area of the city — yes, just below the temple on the hill. Most of us were crammed into three houses that had been residences of missionaries. The Presbyterians had run the Temple Hill Hospital in the same neighbourhood of Chefoo (Yantai). Right in that hospital, Dr. Young and Nurse Luce saved my life on my 7th birthday in 1939 after my appendix ruptured.

*

I remember that we rattled and bumped along a dusty road for several miles past Chinese farm fields. What we gathered must be Weihsien Camp sprang into view. Rows of juniper trees, long lines of dormitory blocks, the red-tiled roof of an Edwardian style church hall surrounded by a wall with electrified wires and with cement boxes here and there.

*

I remember that during the warm evenings, young and old gathered outdoors to chit chat etc.

*

I remember that we were herded through a Moon Gate into a court-yard which was outside the administrative offices. There we stood listening while the chairman of the camps Discipline Committee, a fellow internee, read out the camp rules and regulations.

*

I remember that we had both indoor and outdoor concerts and gatherings in the church, Kitchen One, and out behind Block 23. And of course roll call afforded lots of time for meeting with crowds of both adults and children. We often assembled for roll call a good hour before the guards arrived to count us.

*

I remember the beds: who had beds and who didn't!

Beds or no beds! This probably depended upon the city from which one was taken. I believe that most of us from Tientsin were allowed to bring our beds. We did have to enclose each bed in a slotted wood "cage". These planks of wood came in handy for shelves. Our beds were metal, and we had to take them outdoors for debugging.

*

I remember that bridge was a popular game in the camp, not just because it was a challenging card game but also because it provided adults a "cover" for discussing more serious matters going on, i.e. the black market. According to Granny, adults were not permitted to gather in numbers greater than 4. Hence, bridge proved the perfect "game" in more ways than one.

*

I remember that although I was a child in those days (thirteen at war's end), I was certainly aware of the fact that large numbers of adults gathered each Sunday morning for church services. I know that there were Bible study and prayer meeting groups during the week as well. Then there were drama groups who put on plays and concerts. Even the Salvation Army band never had any trouble gathering to practice and perform.

*

I remember my Grandmother telling me that: "In winter the bridge game was played over a small fire of twigs and coal balls set in the center of the table. Once, the small fire became a big fire, burned the deck as well as a hole right through the table. It was against the rules to have a fire going in a room, however all the prisoners did it anyway and seldom was anyone punished for it."

*

I remember that we were allowed to bring our beds into WeiHsien and I too folded all my clothes and placed them under the mattress. Tsolik Balianz from Tsingtao made me a lovely blouse and shorts from my mother's old dress.

*



I remember that well after our March 1943 arrival, sometime by the end of summer, Papa said I was to go to school. I'd learn to read and write and do up sums. Most of all I was to learn English so I could play with children my age. I was 4½ years old. Mama cut out a schoolbag from a pair of pink flannel pyjama legs. When it was all sewn up Papa embroidered my initials ... brown thread in long straight stitches! I have it still; it's become

shabby now with most of the pink faded away... Kindergarten classes took place at Shadyside hospital. We climbed the steps, and entering turned to the right and walked down a central aisle. To our right and left were high windows and hospital beds. The children were made to walk quietly and quickly down this aisle up to two big doors opening into an end room that took the width of the hospi-

sticks" I don't remember drawing numbers but we must have done! Squirrels learnt to read (Run, Rover, Run!)

Miss Davey was wonderful, I remember her as a young smiling dark-haired woman full of energy. She had a "big girl" to help her out who wasn't always present niether always the same. When we weren't using pencils or reading, Miss Davey had us play vo-

tal floor. Left and right were the same high windows, the fourth side of the room being a full wall. There were two long tables, each next to a window, and benches, all our size, they must have been made specially for us by our Weih sien carpenters!

Entering, on the left hand side, were the Rabbits, 4 to 5 years old, seated all around the table. On the other side were the Squirrels, 5 to 6 years old. In my age group I only remember by name Margaret Fraser and Helen Lane.

Paper and pencils were scarce, and precious. At some time in the beginning we each received a slate and fine grey-white chalk. These didn't last long so we handed back the slates.

Rabbits learnt to draw their letters, in turn from a

cabulary and counting games ("I spy with my little eye...") she read stories out loud and we listened in rapture, we learnt poems (Wordsworth's Daffodils) sang songs (Swallow tell me why you fly) played round games outside, just at the bottom of the hospital steps, learnt to skip, hop, jump, run... most of all learnt to relate to one another...

Very much later on, I often wondered who she really was, had she adapted just for us some kind of Montessori method?

"Miss Davey": all of you diverse Weih sien educators, we owe you so much!

*

Evelyn Davey's response:

I think that there is quite a lot of confusion, and I'm pretty sure she was talking about Nelma Stranks's class and not mine. Perhaps before the Chefoo contingent arrived. After that I was loaned to the Weih sien School, and taught 4 - 5 year olds, while Nelma had the 6 - 7s.

It would be easy to confuse us as we were both about the same age, and both with dark hair. My class was not in the Hospital, but in a disused laundry. It was located near the cobbler's shop and the barber's, some-where between the Hospital and camp headquarters. I don't remember many of the children's names, but I did have Margaret MacMillan, Mickey Pater-noster, a Janette, and a Gillian Pryor, and Andrew (Cess Pool) Kelly.

*



I remember that with the coming of the first winter in camp, we experienced the monotony of the long, endless evenings. The Sun was more generous than in Europe though, but it went down early and the long cold evenings began without radio and without TV. Television didn't even exist in those days!

For all those who had nothing special to do, the only distractions available were; reading books, walking around, or visiting friends and neighbours. As for book reading, we had a small library with various books brought into camp by the different groups of prisoners that came from Peking or Tientsin or elsewhere. There wasn't a fantastic choice, but, I must however tell you that I read a great deal of books all about life in China and also about Chinese history.

Besides reading, the few possible occupations were visiting friends and neighbours, singing and theatre activities.

About visiting: we had to find enough space to greet our friends in the little rooms where the only suitable seat was the bed next to the one you were already sitting on. There was always somebody around to listen to whatever confidence that you might be telling. That was why those visits were very rare, rather brief and had, for major purposes, the request of a favour.

As time went on and people got to know each other better, and becoming friendlier, it was customary to have birthday parties. The

Mothers did marvels in the baking of cookies without eggs or butter!

We had concerts.

Those concerts, in the "sing-song" style were performed two or three times every winter and gave a little joy and beauty in our otherwise boring existence. Those concerts and recitals, of course, had to be meticulously prepared and we used and abused our local artists' talents. Percy Glee (?) was one of those precious artists. He was an excellent pianist and sung with the wonderful voice of a tenor. He was also able to conduct a choir. Thanks to that, we became more familiar with English folk music, folk songs, as well as with Negro spirituals. The song that was highest in rank on the hit parade during those days was: "God Bless America", it was a song that warmed up our spirits and pride and gave us the energy to go on. Everybody learned the words.

We had plays.

Theatre had no lack of artists and more than once did the little groups of our younger folks prepare their performances with great care and meticulousness.

They recited poems or performed in short plays. Some even adventured themselves in giving a full recital.

But the musts, was by no contest, the performance of the Bernard Shaw's classic, "Androcles and the Lion". I must tell you about that, for I was closely involved in the adventure. The promoter and director of the play, lived in the same bloc as mine, but on the first floor. His name was Arthur P. and shared a room with Larry Tipton. He was a fine and distinguished English-

man, not very tall, with a soft voice and intelligent conversation. We were neighbours, and as "warden" of Bloc n° 56 I often had the opportunity of talking to him without ever really being his friend for as much. That is why he hesitatingly asked me — maybe due to my sacerdotal condition — that he allowed himself to take the risk to invite me to take a part in his project, as well as Father Palmers, to play the role of a Roman soldier!! I reassured him of our complete collaboration. That is the reason why I still have an accurate memory of my Roman soldier outfit. It had been carefully assembled at the repair-shop by the means of many tin cans that had been flattened and assembled together to finally take the shape of a helmet and a breastplate that fit us perfectly. To give more reality to the looks of our legs and arms that were of course all white, we painted them with potassium permanganate that got us all bronzed up. For only a few days though.

Nero appeared in all his majesty with his laurel crown and draped in a white cloth surrounded closely by his courtesans chosen amongst the prettiest women of the camp, dressed in green and rose gowns confectioned by the means of old curtains. Two gladiators armed with nets were trying to hold Androcles as their prisoner.

The show was a great success and we even had to do an encore to be able to satisfy all those who wanted to see it. A few weeks later, when the American parachutists came into camp we even had the honour to perform the play once again for them.

*



I remember being afraid in camp. I believe that once or twice, I feared reprisals from the Japanese guards, and for that, yes, I was afraid that something nasty could happen to me. I specially remember this little adventure that finally had a favourable outcome though it could have sent me directly to jail for several days if ever I got caught red handed.

You all know of the food shortage problems and how much we suffered from the lack of primary food necessities such as, oil, eggs and sugar. Sugar was in great demand by the children's parents who tried getting small provisions through the black market. We, adults, were quite accustomed to the shortage of sugar.

That is the reason why my friend C.B. made an inquiry to find out where exactly the Japanese stored the bags of sugar. In precisely which house in the compound it was kept, and when he finally had this valuable information, he decided to act immediately.

To act quickly, he needed an accomplice to watch our side of the compound wall while he was on the other side, in the Japanese quarters, rigorously reserved to the Japanese and them alone. Another problem to resolve was the hiding of the precious sugar before transferring it into little bags for the few families who had asked for it.

Just outside our quarters, (bloc n°56) there was, in a small garden, a dry well which must have been dug in the past years for keeping vegetables during the winters. That was an ideal place for our sugar. Safe and discreet.

So, on one autumn evening when darkness fell around us, my friend made a rendezvous with me near the wall, just behind the Japanese accommodations. I was watching while he was on the other side. I walked to and fro, trying to make believe I was just a passer by. After what seemed to be a long time, I saw a head emerging just above the wall, and all of a sudden I had in my arms, a whole bag of sugar of 10 kilos. It was quickly hidden in an old jacket and off we went to bloc n°56 to hide, the old jacket with the sugar in the well. We didn't meet anybody on the way.

The following days, C.B. made a few nightly visits to our little garden, taking in tiny bags, small amounts of the precious sugar to those who needed it.

I would like to add a comment about "scrounging" in camp. You can only imagine how we felt, as civilians, rounded-up, imprisoned behind walls and guarded by armed Japanese soldiers. To pinch away something from them was not an act of stealing, it was just a correct return of what they had taken from us.

*

I remember that NOBODY, to my knowledge, starved to death, but most of us were constantly hungry!

*

I remember the Italians:
For a few weeks already, sometime near the end of the year 1943, we learned of the imminent arrival of a new group of prisoners without exactly knowing their precise identity.

The Japanese had to make space for them, and to do so, they had already emptied all the rooms (bloc-43) situated alongside the North wall, not very far away from the guardroom near the entrance as well as near a more important bloc, n°44 and kitchen number III. The whole zone thus delimited was already secured by interior brick walls and the only thing left to do, was the making of two doors to lock the access, a job quickly done by the Japanese.

We found out, soon enough, that the scheduled arrivals into our compound, would be a group of a hundred Italians from Shanghai.

We must remember that in those days, the Italians had surrendered in Europe and that they were no more part of the Axis. Moreover, their economic interests in Shanghai were enormous (the real-estate business, navigation companies, banks etc.) and by interning the Italian company directors and owners, the Japanese could take over all those interests for themselves in the name of their Emperor, Hiro-Hito.

The great dilemma for us, was ; what behaviour would we choose to have regarding our new neighbours and we must also admit to say : our "enemies".

We were already behind the walls for 9 months now, and it was important,

we thought, to make no difference between ourselves because they were prisoners, just as we were.

Therefore, it was not long until we made our decision to welcome them and help them to settle down into their new quarters. As soon as evening came, that day, Father Palmers and I jumped over the wall (which wasn't as high as the camp's boundary walls) and made our first contacts with the eldest of them. That is how we met with the Tavella. He was an important banker in Shanghai and his wife was of American birth, the Gervasi family of whom the wife was of Belgian origin, the Rocco, with their three or four children and a few other families as well.

All those people had been accustomed to easy life with Chinese domestic personnel, and seemed to be completely helpless about their present situation. We tried to help them the best we could with all the experience we had as "elderly" prisoners and built for the Tavella family, the same evening, a little brick stove just outside their prison cell so they could begin cooking their ample provisions of canned food they brought with them in their luggage. The first item to benefit of the brick stove, on the second evening, was a tin of Maxwell grinded coffee. They insisted in making us taste the good coffee they had brought over with them. As we hadn't drank coffee since the beginning of our imprisonment in Weihsien, we had become very vulnerable to caffeine and that is why we didn't sleep at all that

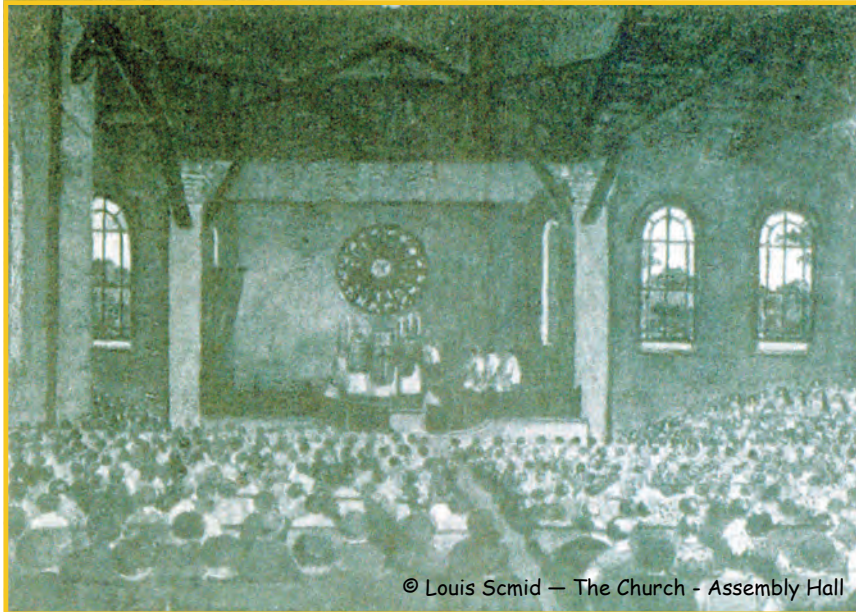
night after returning to our lodgings in block-56.

A few weeks passed, and permission was finally granted by the Japanese Commandant to open the two doors communicating with the rest of the compound. The Italian prisoners were so grateful of what we had done for them, that, after the war had ended; we received a letter from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, thanking us for what we had done.

*



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I remember:

It must have been in the afternoon of December 24th 1944, after more than a year imprisonment in Weihsien camp Dad suggested that it would be a good idea to go to the Christmas Eve celebration, that very night.

Mom would have gone anyway, but she went. The church was crowded and the X'mas ceremony began. All of a sudden, a voice from somewhere started singing the "Ave Maria" in solo. All were listening --- and Mom recognised our Dad's voice. She had tears in her eyes.

Our Dad, when he was much younger loved the opera and went to listen whenever he could. When he came to China and when he could afford it, singing became a hobby and he took singing lessons. He did so well that, one day, his teacher asked him to sing in public for a recital he was organising for a few friends. Dad refused. He said that a bank manager could not afford to make a fool of himself in public.

That was the end of the singing lessons.

*

I remember having interviewed well over 50 people, including ex Weihsienites, from over a dozen camps and no one has mentioned any prohibition against groups gathering. There were all sorts of activities and events going on which would have been impossible should this have been a rule.

*

I remember that we in Weihsien used cold water for laundry, very little soap, and lots of elbow grease.

*

My grandmother writes of using hot stones to "iron" clothes. I think what amazes me — as a descendant of internees, never having been an internee — is that ironing mattered. I suppose it makes sense: one would want to maintain as much normalcy of free life during incarceration; even it means the drudgery of ironing. Did a time come when such nods to pre-camp life no longer held sway? It is my understanding that by the time of liberation, everyone's clothing bore patches from others deemed no longer wearable. I imagine it as a true melting pot of sorts wherein no one's clothes belonged to anyone by the end, so patched.

*

My grandmother, however, also told me about a woman in the camp who suffered schizophrenia. She spent time with her, and one afternoon, well into the internment, the woman showed her a pair of brand new blue silk panties she'd been keeping for the day they were released. This particular story has held a lovely meaning to me — something so feminine, so beautiful in a harsh world.

*

I remember that we draped a poggai (sort of a quilt) over three steamer trunks put together and slept on that. This got us off the floor above the rats, but never away from the bedbugs. The bedbugs slept by day in every crack and cranny of these steamer trunks and marauded across our bodies at night.

*

I remember that there was a canteen, — (Elephant Shop) — but the things were very expensive. Sr. Esther did all our buying from the canteen. We could buy honey, sorghum syrup, peanuts, Chinese plums, eggs, and some fruit. Someone brought a grinder along to camp and we could borrow it so we ground the peanuts and put honey in it. Since that was the only spread we had for bread, we usually ate it dry. The Chinese plums were something like our prunes as you could cook them without sugar and they were sweet enough. That was our main fruit during the camp duration, and seldom did we get other kinds because we when we did they were quite expensive. I remember getting apricots and peaches, and not having fruit for so long, you just long to bite a fresh peach, but the nurse insisted that they had to be put in boiling water first.

*

I remember that our source of calcium was powdered egg shells.

Remember? I can recall the exact spot in our dormitory in Block 23 where our teachers would line us up, make us stick out our tongues, and spoon powdered egg shells into our mouths. Prisoner doctors in camp had advised people to save all egg shells to eat for calcium. I suppose the eggs came via either the black market or teachers bought eggs with "comfort money."

*

I remember my parents telling me that my father, lost 20 pounds during the period incarcerated.

*



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I remember that the Chefoo Schools 6th form was cramming for EARLY Oxford examinations on the day Camp was liberated. I was one of those 'swotters' and was fortunate to see, out of the window, the fantastic sight which I'll never forget of the parachutists baling out of the B 24 Liberator. There wasn't any more swotting for exams that day, to be sure, but the ensuing two weeks required a lot of self-discipline to complete our cramming while the rest of you enjoyed the fun. I'm glad to say that all but one of our group passed the exams successfully. And I did get a taste of the excitement out on the field where the parachute drops were made, getting out on the very last day. It turned out to be one of the scariest days of my life. After the last drop made by the B29s, one lone bomber wheeled around with its final load, just as some of us were out in the middle of the drop site. It roared over, bomb racks wide open, while I was making a tropistic bee-line for a nearby tree! Gee, it was scary!

*

I remember that milk was available for babies and very small children, but not to the general population of the camp, which included me (age 10-1/2 to begin with and 13 at the end). At one point during the 2-1/2 years that we were in the Weihsien camp, I was assigned by Dr. Chan to eat in the hospital dining room for two weeks because I was so thin. During those two weeks, I received more food than I normally would, including cake for dessert. I don't recall specifically whether or not I received any milk to drink. It was at least a year after our liberation before I weighed 100 pounds.

*

If I remember correctly, my father and uncle were ages 1 and 3 upon.

As a result of the malnutrition, my father is a full five inches shorter than the average male in his line, while his brother grew to full height.

The theory goes that this is a result of his not having ample nourishment in those early years.

My grandmother also told me a story wherein she brought a single sugar cube into their quarters and broke it with the heel of her shoe so the boys could each have some.

In her notes, she also states that she and the children "nearly starved to death" and "would not have survived another winter."

*

I remember that during the six months of their internment in 1943, my grandparents each lost about 10 lbs. My grandmother used to say that George would have lost more, but unlike most of the others, who picked the worms out of their bread and "stew.", Grandpa Wilder ate them. I'm not sure whether or not this was a joke or the truth, but it implies a certain amount of deprivation.

*

I remember that we never had rice in the Weihsien camp. We had bread baked in our own bakery, potatoes and sweet potatoes, but never rice, as we were in North China. Our grain was kao-liang, which I believe is sorghum. I may be wrong about it being sorghum, as I've never had an expert confirmation of that assumption.

*



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My research has turned up dozens of references to the larval insects found in the food at the various Civilian Assembly Centres. Some people ate them; others meticulously picked them out and lined them up on the side of their plate. Others started off by not eating them, then as time went by and they became less particular (or more hungry) they ate them. One joke told by a Roman Catholic Priest is that he was going to partake of his "Lutheran Breakfast" (Diet of Worms).

The confusion about grubs in the "rice" may actually stem from the fact that there were large stocks in China of cracked wheat which had been sent to China by American relief agencies before the war and had been in godowns for many years, in which time it became contaminated by various insect larvae. This cracked wheat was distributed by the Japanese at first to the British Residents Association, then after general internment to the various camps where it was often

ladled out for breakfast. I do not recall off hand if this cracked wheat was present in Weihsien but it was in the Shanghai and Yangchow camps.

Few, if any of the deaths which occurred in the camps were due to starvation alone. However, the very low number of calories provided no doubt made most internees susceptible to all sorts of other diseases and ailments, at a time when medical care was strictly limited.

By the end of the war daily calories supplied by the Japanese was sometimes less than 900 in many of the camps. Without Red Cross Food there would have been starvation deaths. Even with these parcels the next winter, if the war had continued, would have most likely seen a wave of deaths far in excess of previous years.

*

I too remember that there was NO RICE in Weihsien. It was not in a rice growing area and flour was Second Grade Flour.

The Swiss Consuls report on the Camp in late summer 1943 held in the National archives Washington DC the average Per capita intake per day in

- grammes (28 grammes to 1 oz) was:
- Potatoes 200
- Carrots & radishes 66
- Onions and Leeks 52
- Greens 162
- Flour 344
- Rice Nil
- Sugar 14
- Beef 121
- Butter 1
- fats & Oils 20
- Fish 16
- Eggs each 0.25
- Fruit Nil
- Milk 28

The most notable deficiency was Calcium.

These rations were about halved by summer of 1945.

*

I remember that our teachers had built a small brick "stove" in our dormitory where they cooked scrambled eggs for us. By the end of our internment when we had been moved into a dormitory on the second floor of the hospital, there were no more eggs.

While I've cooked and eaten lu doh in my grown up years as a reminder of Weihsien, I have NEVER, NEVER again eaten ground up egg shells.

*



I remember the "worms in the rice." We did experience that, but it wasn't in Weihsien. It was on the boat, the Teia Maru, the Japanese vessel commandeered from the French (m/v Artémis) during the war that we — expatriates — boarded in Shanghai and travelled on to Goa, India. We had a steady diet of rice which included little white worms. At first we tried to pick them out but it was easier to eat them (they had been cooked with the rice and didn't seem to do us any harm). At Goa we boarded the MS Gripsholm and went on to New York via Port Elizabeth, South Africa and Rio, Brazil. One funny incident during that exchange: my mother was told by the Japanese "waiter" the last morning on the Teia Maru that she better take some rolls (hard biscuits we had thrived on) with us because we might not get much to eat on the Gripsholm. Mother stuffed several of them in her purse but when we got on the Gripsholm a Swedish smorgasbord awaited us on deck, every imaginable kind of food. Many were sick from gorging. Mother threw the biscuits to the birds!

*

I remember our Tsingtao internment. There were definitely Japanese guards there and we did not pay for any meals as we were prisoners and not guests of the hotel. We had to do as we were told or else and our captors demonstrated that requirement to us in several cruel ways. I am not impressed that neither the Jap govt nor the UK Govt has any records of our being there. The Australian War Museum has a map showing all civilian internment centres which include Tsingtao and WeiHsien.

*

I remember having a vague image of the four of us around of what could have been a table (maybe an empty soap box) in a badly lit room and my Dad ceremoniously opening a can of "Spam" and cutting thin slices of this delicious stuff to accommodate an omelette cooked specially for my birthday.

*

Regarding the reason for the US Repatriation I quote from the NY Times of Thursday 14 Oct 1943 "More than 1200 American civilians who have been held by the Japanese in the Far East are being returned to the United States under a reciprocal agreement with the Japanese and will be exchanged at Mormugao the principal port of the Portuguese possession on the west coast of India south of Bombay (now Mumbai). the Americans are on the Teia Maru they will transfer to the chartered Swedish liner Gripsholm which ahs taken back Japanese from this country for exchange.... The State Department is trying to negotiate more exchanges but no progress has been made yet.

*

I remember that we ate boiled gaoliang "broom corn" — either whole or ground and boiled lu doh — soy beans. Can you believe it, today I keep in my kitchen a small supply of lu doh — bought at the Chinese grocery store up the street. It tastes EXACTLY the same as it did then. Only these days I DON'T eat it from an empty tin can with the lid curled under as a handle.

*



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I remember being hungry. We kids used to argue over the crust of the bread because that filled us up better. Our Dad (now almost 98 years old) lost about a lot of weight, as did most adults, I imagine.

*

I remember that we were all hungry particularly in 1945 when the Japanese were realising that they were going to be defeated.

*

I remember that most of us were malnourished and many may not have survived another winter, but I don't think anybody in the camp starved to death.

*

I remember that letter my mother wrote to my dad from New York in December, 1943, where she had gone to meet my grandparents arriving on the Gripsholm: "Mother and father are thin and not very strong. The first two months they had nothing much to eat besides bread "joe" and bread to go with it! Mother went down to 93 lbs is 101 now Father went down to 142 in camp and is 150 now. (My grandfather was about 6 feet tall, so 142 lbs was very thin.) In answer to a question, mother said, "Oh, yes, father ate everything he didn't even bother to pick out the worms but I did!" Then she added, "Guess he likes meat better than I do."

*

I remember that Robin Hoyte and I were the stokers in the basement laundry. There were laundry lines just outside the hospital. Each school group had a turn with the laundry work.

*

I remember Jacqueline de Saint Hubert. She was a highly talented singer who used to practice at Kitchen #1. I remember being quite awed by the strength and range of Jacqueline's soprano voice. It was rumored that she could actually crack a glass tumbler with her high notes.

*

I remember my Grandpa — over 80 years of age by the end of the war — had shrunk to about 80 lbs. when we were liberated. Because he was so fragile, he was fed from the "diet kitchen" in the hospital. I still have the vivid memory of Grandpa's licking his plate — an astonishment to me, because he was such a gentleman, schooled with impeccable manners. He insisted on wearing his suit even though it just sagged on his emaciated body. Good missionary ladies begged him to let them tailor the suit to fit better — to take it in. Grandpa said No! God was going get him out of that place, he told them. You know what? Grandpa was right.

Grandpa was in the first planeload of prisoners flown out of the camp — the oldest and the sickest. He was taken to England. I never saw him again.

*

I remember that I was only seven years old in 1943 but my memories are vivid of Weihsien. Our family was all together through it all and it was a great adventure for us kids.

*

I remember sisters Donatella, and Blanda as well as sister Hiltrudis. They taught me at the St. Josephs Middle School at Tsingtao before Weihsien. I graduated from the Peking American High School which was set up in camp by the principal Miss Alice Moore and I still have my certificate. But there was no graduation ceremony unfortunately.

*



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I well remember that no rice was issued to us in Wei-Hsien. I also remember trying to masticate the sorghum and my mother entreating me to try harder to swallow it because it was all we had. It was almost impossible to chew. The peanuts which were ground into a paste by the inmates were very nourishing and I have been told since that peanuts undoubtedly saved the health of a lot of children as they are very nourishing. Today, many children cannot eat peanuts due to allergies, including my own 38 year old son but I do not remember anyone in the camp being so afflicted. My main memories of worms (maggots) were when the Jap Officer's horse died and we were forced to eat it after the Japs left it to rot and become infested and then telling us we would get nothing else until it was eaten. My father showed us how to pick out the floating maggots as we were eating. It was made into a watery stew although I remember getting a small morsel which tasted lovely at the time. At that time we had not had meat for a long while.

*

I remember the rat catching competitions. Clubbing rats, trapping rats, drowning them in basins and throwing them in the bakery fire. Our Chefoo School won that contest. Norman, was it 68 dead rats your team brought in? Was it 30 on the last day?

*

He remembers:

"After repeated delays, I was at last able to travel on an airplane scheduled to stop at Weihsien in Shantung where all British and American nationals in north China had been interned by the Japanese. So without any warning we literally dropped from the clouds upon this camp where the unfortunate internees were still being kept, although it was then almost six weeks after V-J Day. Among them making possible another delightful reunion were Yenching faculty colleagues and many friends or acquaintances. During the twenty-four hours of the stop there, I was able to compare their circumstances with those of our trio. Physically we had undoubtedly been better off. In housing, food, service, etc., we were more comfortable.

They were very crowded and had to do all their own work, while forced to an intimacy with all sorts of people. We had privacy and leisure in abundance, but it was deadly lonesome and monotonous. They were able to organize not only for cooking, laundry, scavenges, etc., but also for social, religious, athletic and educational activities which gave occupation and a sense of being usefully busy"

*

Oh! Yes, I remember that my friend "Billy" lived in Block-15-room-4. He was born in 1942. We were two mischievous pranks (if I must believe my parents ---).

*



Obviously, each internee is entitled to their own opinion and interpretation on 'how it was'! My verdict is, given the fact that we were 'prisoners' of a cruel nation in a terrible war; we were treated remarkably well, even in the camp.

Once we were there, a large number of us were 'housed' in rows of rooms (up to a dozen) constituting a 'block'. And to the best of my knowledge they were always referred to as, "Rooms"!

Whenever I see those rooms referred to as 'CELLS', (and there have been 'one or two' occasions) it strikes me as a case of, over dramatising the situation. And to see it now referred to as a "Cellblock", makes me automatically think of stories about Al Capone and Alcatraz and Sing Sing and the likes. Those were really locked up 'affairs' with plenty of bars to keep those convicted criminals 'contained'!

Granted we may have been prisoners in that compound, but we could come and go within it, as we pleased.

We were internees, not convicted criminals behind bars. We were not locked in our rooms at night, by the Japs, nor were there any bars on each of the 2 windows in our rooms.

I dare say, some people were even able to make their rooms look quite comfortable and 'homely', given the limited resources at our disposal. A few of us, and I was one of those, was able to round up the necessary materials to build a brick stove (with an oven) in our rooms, to replace the cast iron 'heater' that was issued to us.

Believe me, we came out of our 2½ year internment looking pretty good!

*

I'm sorry to have upset you by using the term cellblock for the blocks in Weihsien. I understand that they were originally built for bible students and were known as cells for that purpose (as in monasteries). I am pleased that you both have such fond memories of Weihsien and am fully aware that for many children, internment was an exciting adventure.

However, for the older people there, I am told, it was quite different. They were at the end of their working lives and they had just lost everything they had. They didn't know how they would survive when they left the camp. Or where they would go. And the novelty of camp life was for them, physical hardship. My great-grandmother's husband was so old and ill that he needed nursing care which, in the community spirit of the camp, somebody was kind enough to give. But, even though she mumbled that the Japanese had not treated them too badly, my great-grandmother's memories of Weihsien were far from sweet. When a BBC television crew came to interview her — when her recipe book was first displayed in the Imperial War Museum in London, where it still is - she couldn't bring herself to talk about it. She was a vivacious and loquacious woman to the end of her 101 years, but on this, she simply couldn't talk. She even hid her recipe book away from everyone until 1977.

*



Electric current:

220 volts. It would be wise to take a few screw-on light bulbs. It is forbidden to take along electric irons, foot-warmers, electric stoves etc. but you can always try, for those are very useful items to have.

A useful thing to take with you is a small Chinese stove with no chimney, because the stoves we have here take a long time to get heated and are never ready before noon. There is coal, but it is more dust like and it would be very useful to bring along a rake to scrape it and also a little axe to cut the wood, as well as a saw.

The washing is done by ourselves, but there is a

Japanese laundry on the outside which accepts washing three pieces per person per week. This is useful for bed sheets. Soap can be purchased there for personal laundry and washing.

Useful things to take with you:

. Benzene, spade, cigarette lighter, a lot of cigarettes, bucket, jug, basin, . At the local canteen, you can buy local fruits, thermos flasks, soap, moth balls, toilet paper, shoe laces, carafes, small towels, very bad quality notebooks, pencils, . and all that for quite cheap.

All the food supplies in your possession upon arrival in camp can be kept, but you absolutely need very good quality trunks (2 or 3 maximum), for there is very little space in the rooms. The rest of the gear will have to be stocked in the baggage room where there are thousands (!?) of different trunks difficult to reach.

Essential food supplies to be taken:

. Bacon, animal fat, powdered eggs , powdered milk, cocoa, coffee, butter, flour, cheese, sugar, honey, jam, meat, vegetables etc. You can't buy anything from the outside. The first to arrive in camp (as a group) haven't been searched though isolated persons were. Bear in mind that the railroad system is insecure and that you must have two excellent padlocks with different keys for each trunk.

Take as much money as you can. Normally, you have to leave it all to the authorities upon arrival in the camp, but don't be stupid enough to do so. Out of that money, you have a monthly allowance of \$.50.-. Take with you as much medicines as you can because there is nothing at the camp hospital . You can keep all your personal reserves.

Meals can be prepared during the winter months with your personal provisions in your room, and on the common stove during the summer season. There are no facilities for reading, writing or studying because we are too badly housed in our rooms. Bring as

Roll call: 7:30h
curfew: 22:00hours
Meals at: 08:15h, 12:30h, 18:00h
Meals are served at the refectory.

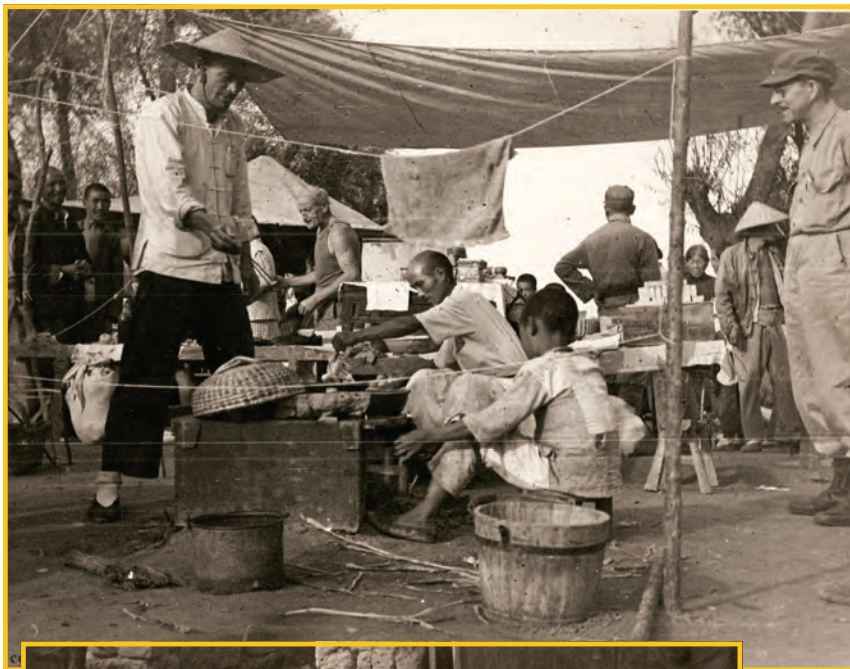
The food:

You can only count on enough bread and some Chinese vegetables. Occasionally, eggs, fish and meat are obtainable. However, besides these and other supplies, an additional half a pound of fish or meat per day per person would be more than adequate, to complement a meal.

Work and working hours:

Varied. In general, one day off, every three days for the men, and every two days for the women.

Labour is normal for our community life, (cleaning, coal transport, peeling of vegetables, etc.). It is advisable for men to take overalls with them, aprons or pinafores for the women and also, clogs for everyone. To be mentioned: there are three distinct kitchens and the one for the Tientsin folks is the worst of all.



many games as possible and also reading novels.

Shoes are quickly worn out over here, so take good shoes with you, and also working shoes, and if you have to pass through the rainy season, take wooden soled shoes or rubber boots. It would be judicious to take a bit of leather or rubber to replace the shoe soles: there are people with the adequate tools over here to help you.

For the communal showers wooden sandals are best (there is danger in catching "Hong-Kong foot"). The ladies must not hesitate in buying local Chinese shoes made of solid canvas, green or red, with good leather soles. I insist on the "shoe" item because shoes are the first to wear out.



Therefore, the valid men, those who will of course have to work, should have a working outfit, an overall, etc. because, when you are a stoker, or a mechanic, or a rubbish collector, or a flour bag carrier, or a baker, good clothes are unwise. The women must bring along aprons or old dresses. Usual everyday clothes or objects you must of course bring along, but I must point out a few practical items one might forget to take. Thus, for the kitchen stuff, each person must have at least three containers: i.e. two soup plates and an enamel mug which resists better. Those who want to, can also take an earthenware cup to sip their coffee in their rooms. No drinking coffee in golden cups, you could burn hands and lips. (?!!) This is probably a double meaning sentence!! Take a coffee pot, not too small,

especially for the families. Two cooking pots and a bigger one like a jam pan. Families must have an extra plate or two. Also, take a good tool for opening tin cans.

Take a raincoat or a big Chinese umbrella. It is very useful to have a good hammer, pincers, a pair of pliers, a screw driver, a length of iron wire, nails, etc., a saw and an axe (we are given small tree trunks, these are too big to light up the stove). It is better to take a small saw, and a saw for iron, a gimlet, etc. for those who are concerned: ink to mark your clothes, a good provision of benzene for the cigarette lighters, also take some for our older folks, a spade, a rake. For those who like "fricassée de lard" (bacon fricassee), pancakes, and fried eggs: a good frying pan.

Food to take with you:

It is useless, for the first days, to bring along a week's provision of bread and cakes, it takes too much place and it gets all dry. However do take (mostly for the families) what is necessary to make porridge, flour, a lot of sugar, salt, mustard, etc. according to each one's tastes. As for tinned food, take: butter, fat, jam, pâté, sausages, bacon, tongue, vegetables, sauces, vinegar, powdered milk, powdered eggs, cocoa, oil, coffee and cheese. Everything can be used. All this can be used as an everyday food supplement, mostly (as it happens from time to time) when the food served at the kitchens is uneatable. Don't worry however, we are not starving out here.

The families must take two buckets, a big jug, and a few basins. Bachelors must take a big basin, a washing board.

Please take a saw and a hammer for Mr. Pander.

As books; take easy reading novels. The children must take their school books. The camp library is well provided with books in English, loaned monthly.

This should be a good opportunity to learn Russian, it is the language of the future, but there are no Russian books out here. For money, it's as I have already explained, but if it could be possible for the gentleman to whom Mr. Pander left an amount of money, take \$.500.- and give them to the owner. I think he will be pleased with it because he put all his money in the bank and what he can take out every month does not cover his expenses. As for the foreign money, may each do as he thinks best. I should however take a few "golds", and those who have a gold watch or small valuables easy to handle, why not take them also, it can occasionally be used as exchange money. Be cautious, when you send your trunks along: close them well, with padlocks and special keys, for there are many thieves on the way and they are well equipped with many keys. A deckchair could be quite welcome. Also, the necessary material for the making of curtains for the windows and those who have old drapery should take them along to hang on the walls, it is cleaner. Also, carpets.

Do not take big beds, but good ones however. If you have matting to sandwich in between the mattress and the

bed sheets, as well as for the pillows: take that too, for in the middle of the very hot season, it comes in handy. Electric irons. The eventual electricians (and the audacious ones) should take whatever to tinker with, such as wall outlets, switches, etc. . but don't let them catch you!

Take woollen sweaters.

*





I remember a game of Ping-Pong:

© George David Birch

Stanley and I were completely engrossed in our game in Kitchen Number One. The little ping pong ball flew back and forth across the net in a white blur as two 13-year-old boys danced nimbly about the ends of the rough plank table slamming sizzling serves and returning furious drives. Each of us worked relentlessly to stymie his friendly foe before he himself was thoroughly trounced.

We were almost an even match, Stanley and I. He was taller, but what I lacked in height and reach, I made up for in speed and agility.

Although Stanley and I did not know it, World War II was fast drawing to an end.

Sons of missionaries, far from home and interned by the Japanese with our boarding school in occupied North China, we were whiling away a blazing hot August afternoon playing ping pong in Kitchen One of Weihsien Concentration Camp.

Breakfast in Kitchen One was really not all that bad when gowliang or millet was available. But we often filled our bellies with bread and water. And I don't recall that we felt particularly deprived.

Occasionally we had eggs. Our teachers saved the shells, put them through a hand grinder and fed the chalky powder to us by teaspoon as a calcium supplement.

Milk was a pre-war memory. Powdered eggshell--ugh! It was needed, no doubt, for the proper development

of our bones, but it was horribly distasteful to us kids.

Winters were viciously cold at Weihsien. They seemed to last forever. The Japanese supplied us with slack coal which we rationed carefully. It had to last us till spring.

We learned how to make sun-dried coal bricks by mixing coal dust and dirt with water. Employing a small tin can which might once have held sardines or salmon in one of the rare Red Cross packages that reached us during the war, we deftly moulded briquettes to keep the black pot-bellied stove in our little attic room glowing with welcome warmth.

But winter was still three months away when Stanley and I battled each other from opposite ends of the ping pong table on what may well have been the hottest day of that blazing summer of 1945.

The doors and windows of the old dining hall were wide open. Outside, the spreading branches of tall acacia trees lining the roadway past the big galley of Kitchen One provided only slight relief from the sun's broiling rays. The hard clay walkway blistered bare feet and heat waves shimmered above the dirt path. The thermometer read 120 degrees in the shade. I think you could have fried an egg right there on the ground outside Kitchen One.

Bats in hand and locked in furious combat, Stanley and I stubbornly refused to yield to each other. Zing! The little white celluloid ball sailed back to my side of the table and hit the edge of one of the rough planks.

Wham! I scooped it up and sent it burning back across the net!

Whack, zoom, smack, zing, whoooooosh!

It's almost surprising we even heard the sound of the approaching aircraft--so totally intent were we on our game, so complete our concentration. Our well-tanned bare skin gleamed as hot sweat streamed from us profusely.

A dull, thunderous roar began to drown out the sounds of ping pong in Kitchen One. Steadily growing in volume, the turbulence was soon deafening.

Dropping our wooden paddles, Stanley and I rushed outside. A huge airplane was passing directly over us. On its fuselage we recognized the emblem of the United States of America.

The great plane was so low that it seemed to me the green tops of the acacia trees were actually bending and dancing in the wind from its propellers. As we gazed up, our hearts pounding with exhilaration, the sky above us filled with fluttering leaflets.

Beside ourselves with stunned rapture, we read: "ATTENTION ALLIED PRISONERS OF WAR! THE JAPANESE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT HAS CAPITULATED TO THE ALLIES, AND YOU ARE ABOUT TO BE RELEASED!"

The huge aircraft, which Stanley and I learned later, was a B-24 Liberator, lumbered majestically over us.

Our game of ping pong forgotten, we raced barefoot over the baked ground all the way past Block 61 where we lived, until the plane banked

steeply to circle the wide expanse of peanut and gowliang (sorghum) fields surrounding Weihsien Camp.

Standing on a small hill overlooking the camp wall, I watched the beautiful Liberator approach us a second time. Then, with boyish wonder, I saw the sight of my young life. As I stood there looking out over the wall which had long held me prisoner, suddenly there appeared below the distant airplane the figure of a man. Above him billowed out the white silk of his parachute.

At that moment I thought of what I had learned as the young son of Christian missionaries in the great land of China. I knew that just as this American airman had come to us after all the years we had waited for liberation, so too my Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, for whom I had also waited so long, would come again one day, from the sky to set his people free!

And today, over fifty years later, I treasure the memory of that day — the day the great B-24 Liberator arrived in the sky above Weihsien Camp in the summer of 1945 and ended more than just a game of ping pong for Stanley and me.

*





I remember that you "ironed" your clothes by laying them flat between the steamer trunks and the poogai (sort of a quilt). You "pressed" them as you slept.

*

I remember studying the map of our old compound: — "this is the route we took from our Lower School Dormitory (LSD) to dine at Kitchen Number One. This is where Mrs. Bazire's concert or lecture announcements were posted -- or -- HORRORS! -- do you remember the notices posted when we were to get inoculations? I get goosebumps remembering. This is where Mary Scott taught us Chefoo girls how to play softball. This is the lane where I got asthma attacks when I ran during Eric

Liddell-organized racing competitions. This is the playground where we watched the Peking Panthers, the Priests Padres and the Tientsin Tigers play on summer evenings. This is the place where we lighted tiny fires in tin can stoves to earn our Girl Guide badges. This is where we went to Japanese quarters -- a chain of girl-bucket-girl-bucket-girl -- to get our ration of coal dust to fuel our dormitory's pot bellied stove in the winter".

*

I remember that the deJongh family must have lived in three "rooms" of block-22. I still remember that in the years 1950', two teenagers came to see us at our apartment building. They immediately recognised us. It was Antoon and Frans deJongh who cycled all the way from Holland to Brussels to see us. That was a surprise! A few weeks later, the whole Pander-family went to Holland for a long week-end invited by the whole of the deJongh-family. They made room for us and we all stayed in their home. Mr. and Mrs. deJongh and the six children (Ann, Louise, Henrietta, Antoon, Frans and Paul) showed us the whereabouts of Rotterdam and we had a wonderful time together. Of course, the parents told stories about Weih sien. I still remember Paul, the youngest of the family (he was born in Weih sien), playing the piano. A real artist.

*

I remember when the war ended and the paratroopers dropped down to us out of the clear blue sky in 1945, I was 13½ years old. Although camp was not a resort area, our morale was high - at least among the Chefoo and Weih sien kids I associated with! I recall those years of internment as some of the best years of my boyhood!

*

I remember our Japanese guards. We certainly were remarkably well off at Weih sien. I honestly don't blame them for anything! I think they were a home-sick bunch of friendly civilian police, and I felt and still feel a real affection for them!

*

I remember one of our pastimes which went on in camp. One of my correspondents related the following account of Ouiji. Since it was mentioned at Weih sien I thought others might enjoy reading about this.

"There was another game which we played in the Dining Hall that I should mention, although I suppose that it is really not a game in the truest sense of the word but I have no idea how else to describe it - certainly it was a game in the way in which we played it - and that was the Ouija. Usually used in spiritualistic séances and participated in the privacy of closed, often darkened, rooms - we only had the Dining Hall. Never the less we did make one concession to the "spirits" that we contacted in that we did try to find a table in a more quiet corner of the hall. I am not sure how we managed to hear of the Ouija but I believe that there were a few adults in camp who had an interest in spiritual matters and somehow we must have heard about it.

" We wrote the letters of the alphabet in capitals, the figures from 0 - 10 and the words YES and NO in pencil on scraps of paper - placed the letters and figures in a circle on the table in alphabetical and numerical order and finally put the Yes and No, set apart, in the middle of the circle. For the planchette we always, and this was without exception, used the same heavily bruised and battered aluminium cup (complete with handle). I have no idea who owned the cup but it always seemed to appear when we needed it. It was a bit of an obligatory

with us, we would not play unless we had that particular aluminium cup, and no other cup would have done.

«About five or six of us would participate at a time, each with the tips of two fingers on the cup. We would Call Up the name of a dead person, usually a deceased member of one of our families and if the cup moved to Yes, supposedly indicating that he or she was present - away we would go. We used to have great fun, often asking the spirit the most outrageous questions only to receive equally outrageous answers.

The cup used to move alright, sometimes it would fly around the circle spelling out an answer, that was probably when we were all ad idem. Other times the cup would remain quite stationary and then it was probably because we would all have been pushing against each other. And then there were times when we all swore that we would not cheat and push the cup and the cup would still move and spell some-

thing out. It was at those times that we said "Well, bless my soul!" — or some such other phrase!! But who would ever have believed Joey when he said that he had not been pushing, with his sense of humour and his imagination, he was in his element in this game. Who would have believed any of us for that matter?

I suppose that we did not start using the Ouija until we were about into the second half of our stay in Camp and on reflection I am surprised that our various religious leaders did not

try to put a stop to us, harmless though it was. Although the participation in the Ouija is frowned upon and I believe actively discouraged in the Catholic Church, more so then than now, neither of the two Fathers warned us against it. Perhaps that is what they thought, that it was harmless. Though one would have thought that endeavouring to communicate with the dead by children at any time, even in fun, would not have been acceptable by any of the churches. Never the less, as one can imagine we had some hilarious moments.

*





I remember that Weih sien CAC had a lot of trees — and consequently, attracted a wide variety of birds, as those of us who engaged in bird-watching in relation to our Boy Scout badge requirements well remember. I have a rather grainy aerial photograph of the camp, showing a largely treeless, agricultural countryside, in which the buildings of the camp are largely obscured by the trees.

*



I remember that my mother's family was separated as well. Being Japanese, my grandmother and two uncles literally went underground to escape from the Japanese Army, while my grandfather, aunt, and mother went to Weih sien. As the (later) three were ready to board a ship to come to the States, my grandfather overheard a nun talking of a Japanese woman with two American-looking sons they found sick in the jungle. Instincts told my grandfather to stay back and find them, while sending my mother (then 13) and aunt to the States by themselves.

*

I remember a blazing hot day in the summer of 1944. Some of us children had been moved to Block 61 from Block 23 to take the place of some young men in their twenties who were moved from their dorms in the attic of the hospital (Block 61) where they had been able to command a clear view of the countryside surrounding the camp. I had lost my little garden patch over by Block 23, so I was trying to dig

another patch by the wall over near the hospital, my new home. It was tough going! The ground was baked hard by the blazing sun, and I was hacking away at it with a big ungainly mattock and making very little headway. When all of a sudden I noticed a uniformed Japanese guard looking down at me. He had a kindly smile on his face, and he motioned to let me know he wanted to help me. I handed him my

heavy mattock and he readily went to work. He was bigger and much stronger than I, and soon had my little patch of hard dirt all broken and cultivated.

Then he smiled and gave me back the mattock and left. I continued to work with my garden patch and was able to plant flowers and vegetables in it. I was 12½ years old at the time. That was sixty years ago now, but I've never forgotten the friendliness and helpfulness of that Japanese guard. He was not the only one of our captors who showed us kindness in those days of internment!

*



© William Arthur Smith

I remember that I was just eighteen at the end of the war and our stay in Weih sien. I do not believe that those my age and younger, had any idea of the seriousness of our plight. I do not remember hearing the adults voicing their fears etc. We went to school, joined the many and various clubs and classes, tried to keep up with the difficult task of washing with little soap and in cold water, making coal balls for the winter, working at various tasks given to us, etc. I am sure that the older ones

knew what was happening, and what terrible things could occur. We were very lucky that we had doctors, teachers, and dedicated leaders. I recall Al Voyce, a few months after we got back to Tientsin, telling Athalie (his wife) and me, that those of us in Weih sien, should thank God for being in Weih sien rather than any other camp in eastern Asia. When I first came to the States, I tried to talk about Weih sien, but soon realised that people reacted to me very

strangely, they seemed to want me to break down, to tell horror stories etc. I stopped talking about the war years and camp. I am now very glad to be able to read about your experiences, and do not feel odd talking about mine. The years in camp helped me understand that new clothes, furniture etc. are not really important — they are nice, good to look at, but it is not the end of the world to be without new and expensive material goods. Let us hope and pray for peaceful years to come.

*

Remember:

Grown ups surely experienced Weih sien from a very different perspective than we children did. To this day, I can't begin to imagine the burden for our Chefoo School teachers to have responsibility for a whole school full of young children and teenagers in an internment camp — all separated from their parents. It boggles my mind. In 1985, when I was researching and writing my magazine story for The Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine, I travelled to England to visit several of these Chefoo School teachers — Miss Stark, Miss Carr, Mrs. Jeannie Hills Cotterill.

"I was not afraid of our Japanese guards or of being interned," Miss Carr wrote to me later. "There was no sense taking thought for the future, for there was nothing we could do about it anyway. Occasionally, I faced the end — whichever way it went — as being forced to dig a trench and then being lined up and machine-gunned into it, and prayed that my turn might come near the beginning." Grown ups knew about war — they all knew about the Japanese and the Rape of Nanking. We children did not.

*

I remember the adult's fears: "For some of the adults in Weih sien, the prospect of Allied victory was tinged with terror. If the Japanese knew they faced defeat, what would they do to us? Does a defeated army rape and kill its prisoners? Would it hold us hostage to prevent more bombings of Japan? Those were some of the unvoiced agonies of the adults.

*

THE CHILDREN:

		age in 1945
David	Allen	11
Peter	Bazire	14
David	Beard	16
David	Birch	13
Joyce	Bradbury née Cooke	17
Ron	Bridge	11
Mary	Broughton née Hoyte	15
Brian	Butcher	5
Kay	Canning née Allan	3
Norman	Cliff	20
Eddie	Cooke	13
Anne	De Jongh	14
Albert	de Zutter	13
John	de Zutter	15
Fred	Dreggs	19
Judith	Hamins	24
Emmanuel	Hanquet	31
Alison	Holmes	8
Estelle	Horn née Cliff	16
Georgeanna	Knisely née Reinbrecht	12
Janette	Ley née Pander	7
Pamela	Masters née Simmons	18
Stephen	Metcalf	18
Raymond	Moore	10
Leonard	Mostaert	5
Audrey	Horton née Nordmo	12
Stanley	Nordmo	18
Leopold	Pander	4
Natasha	Petersen née Somoff	18
Teddy	Pierson	10
Mary	Previte née Taylor	13
Kathleen	Rietor née Nordmo	15
Christine	Sandton née Talbot	3
Alexander	Strangman	16
Gay	Stratford née Talbot	14
Peter	Talbot	7
James	Taylor III	16
Stanley	Thompson	14
Sylvia	Walker née Tchoo	7
George	Watts	14
Dwight W	Whipple	9

& THE NEXT GENERATIONS

Hugh	Hubbard's daughter:	Gladys Swift
Grace	Hope-Gill's grand daughter:	Laura Hope-Gill
Gertrude	Wilder's grand son:	Donald Menzi
Jacqueline	de Saint Hubert's niece:	Anne de Saint Hubert
Lilla	Casey's great grand daughter:	Frances Osborne
Myrtle	Sharp's daughter:	Theresa Granger
	Old China Hand & Historian:	Greg Leck
	Historian	Rod Miller
William	A. Smith's daughter:	Kim Smith

Texts from Natasha Petersen's Chat list: <http://www.topica.com/lists/weih sien/read>

Layout by Léopold Pander: <http://www.weih sien-paintings.org>