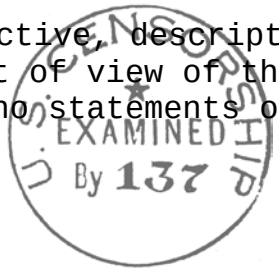
THE INTERNMENT CAMP AT WEIHSIEN, SHANTUNG PROVINCE, CHINA
March – September, 1943

An objective, descriptive account of the Internment Camp from the point of view of the writer's experiences. It is thought to contain no statements of political or international significance.



Howard S. Galt, 1943

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Shortly before the middle of March (1943) there came from the Japanese military authorities, mediated through the Japanese Consul General and his Swiss consular representative, an order for Americans in Peking to prepare for removal to the civilian assembly center (commonly called concentration or internment camp) at Weihsien in the province of Shantung. Heavy baggage, which might consist, for each person, of a bed, bedding, and not much more than two small trunks, was to be packed and ready for collection by Japanese trucks on Saturday and Sunday March 20 and 21. The Americans with their hand baggage were to leave Wednesday March 24.

On the afternoon of the chosen day we arrived according to a specified order on the lawn of the American embassy. There we were in the hands of Japanese consular police, who received us, arranged us in small groups, each with a leader, assigned to us numbers, and examined our hand baggage. Some persons had heavy articles, and articles not considered by the police necessary or suitable, removed from their hand baggage, but in general the examination was not that strict.

Hand luggage was limited in quantity to what each person could carry himself. It was interesting to note the containers people had used, or the devices adapted, to make the luggage more mobile, or to increase the amount. Many had made use of knapsacks strapped on the back, thus leaving the hands free to carry two or more suitcases. Some had made use of a small “knock-down” type of wheel-barrow consisting chiefly of small wheels at the end of a pair of short poles – a vehicle improvised for the occasion. A few had strapped roller skates firmly under the more rigid suitcases or boxes, so that they could be pushed or pulled along the asphalt-paved streets.

We had been told that each person must carry his own luggage – an ordeal giving the women and more elderly people much anxiety, for the Embassy grounds were about a quarter of a mile from the R.R. station. But there was much relief at starting time when the Japanese authorities, better than their word, appeared with two large trucks to carry to the station the heavier pieces of hand luggage.

The number of Americans was nearly 200, and as we marched out of the Embassy gate, down Legation Street and around through the busy Chien Men (city gate) to the Stadium, we presented a sight

interesting to multitudes of spectators, and especially interesting to Japanese camera men who were busy turning the cranks of their cameras, probably in the preparation of films to be exhibited in Tokyo.

On arriving at the station, we and all our hand luggage were loaded into the third-class coaches – very crowded, but everyone managed to find a seat. At Tientsin and Tsinan we were obliged to change cars, and were responsible for moving our own luggage, although at the Tsinan station porters were allowed to assist. Late in the afternoon of the second day (March 24) we arrived at the Weihsien station. Buses and trucks were waiting for us and in them we were conveyed past the city suburbs and into the mission compound nearly a mile northeast of the city.

This mission compound, a center of work of the Presbyterian Mission (first established about 1884) was an area irregular in outline – although approximately four-sided – of about 20 acres. It was well-filled with buildings and is probably one of the most extensive mission compounds in China. The Japanese had chosen it as large enough to accommodate about 2,000 people. The large gateway was on the north, and a short distance away, and almost parallel to the north wall, flowed a small river at the bottom of a ravine whose banks were irregularly terraced, and planted with willow trees.

Inside the front gate on the right was a large church building, designated by the Japanese authorities as the “assembly hall” for the camp. Extending southward from the front gate, and from the church yard, were two straight roads, bordered on both sides with many small courts in which were long, low one-storied buildings for students’ dormitories. Beyond the southern ends of these two roads was an extensive open area occupied by two large three-story buildings. These were constructed nearly forty years earlier for the union college located here, which later moved to Tsinan to become Cheeloo University. Still further south were several smaller courts containing the two-story residences of the missionaries. These residences were occupied by the Japanese authorities and so were “out of bounds” for camp residents.

A large area to the east of the general area just described was occupied by a variety of courts and buildings, dormitories or classrooms, for schools or for other purposes. Still further east on the border of the compound was the large three-story (plus basement) hospital, in the midst of its own rather ample court, large enough for a tennis court, a basketball court, and a garden.

The most numerous buildings were of the low one-story dormitory type, containing rows of rooms in size about ten by twelve feet, each with its own outside door. All of these rooms originally had brick or tile floors, but the authorities, in preparation for us, had equipped them all with board floors. All rooms had been freshly white-washed and the wood-work painted.

The whole compound had its own electric light system, but this had been largely removed and was replaced with current from the city electric light plant some distance away. The sources of water were several surface wells, equipped with iron pumps. Near four of these the Japanese had built low water towers with tanks to be filled by force pumps from the wells. Hot water boilers, shower baths and certain very defective plumbing systems were supplied with water from their tanks. The plumbing for the sanitary installations was particularly defective and the flush toilet equipment was wholly un-usable.

In general, it may be said that, although the Japanese authorities had spent much thought and considerable amounts of money in preparation, the buildings and grounds were not ready at the time of our arrival. There was a report, which seemed to us very credible, that the local authorities responsible for the preparation had telegraphed to Tokyo asking for two weeks extension of time, but Tokyo had not consented, and had ordered the grounds occupied without further delay. Upon our arrival evidences of incomplete preparation were everywhere. The scholastic furniture and equipment of dormitories and school rooms, not suitable for our use, had been hastily removed from the buildings and dumped in disorderly piles in the courtyards and unoccupied corners of the grounds. Among these things was, besides good school room furniture, much scientific apparatus – the equipment of physics and chemistry laboratories thrown out upon the ground without regard to value. There were also here and there many piles of left over materials and of rubbish left behind by the workmen.

The rooms intended for our occupancy were entirely unfurnished except for small cupboards or bookcases nailed to the walls. The numbers and locations of these little cupboards seemed to indicate that one for each individual was intended. The more necessary things, beds and chairs, were entirely lacking. It was clear why we had been advised to bring our own beds.

Those who were to occupy the camp came from three city centers. Peking, Tientsin, and Tsingtao – with a few from Tsinan. The contingent from Tsingtao, consisting of 700 or 800 persons,

was first to arrive. They had set up a kitchen and dining room establishment known thereafter as “Kitchen No. 1” Part of the Tientsin contingent was next to arrive, and their commissariat was known as “Kitchen No. 2.”

The Peking contingent arrived in the late afternoon of March 25 – too late to take any steps in the preparation of our own supplies. We were all rather hungry, for food on the train, consisting only of the lunch materials which each could bring with him, was none too ample.

Upon arrival we first lined up on the small athletic field, near the church, for a thorough check-up, roll-call and then were marched to “Building No. 24”- one of the college buildings mentioned above – for assignments of temporary quarters for the night. Men were placed in the basement classrooms and women in the classrooms above. There were no furnishings in these classrooms except a few reed-mats for the floor – not enough for all. There were, however, two or three stoves placed where their heat could temper somewhat the cold rooms.

After each of us had chosen his floor space, and piled up his luggage near by, we were assigned to Kitchen No. 2, where the Tientsin kitchen staff had by pre-arrangement, provided supper for us. Upon return to our rooms we spread out such rugs and pillows as each had brought with him and settled down for the night. The rooms were cold and our rugs did little to soften the floor, but we were thoroughly fatigued by the uncomfortable railway journey and that first quiet night in camp enabled us to catch up on a bit of sleep.

The next morning, after breakfast, also in the No. 2 dining room, we were ready for assignment to quarters. But first we were lined up by the authorities and required to sign statements promising good behavior in camp, and reporting how much currency we had brought to camp. We were informed that later this currency must be handed over to the custody of the authorities.

On the assignment of quarters, there was evidence of considerable fore-thought, especially in the placing of families. A man and wife were usually assigned one of the 10 by 12 foot dormitory rooms mentioned above. If there were children the number of rooms was accordingly increased, with arrangements in suites, if available. Single men and single women were for the most part divided into groups of different sizes varying from 4 or 5 to 25 or 30, and assigned to classrooms, or other large rooms in

the various buildings. In cases where they were assigned to the 10 x 12 dormitory rooms, three were placed in each room.

The place for the Peking contingent commissariat, designated as Kitchen No. 3, was made ready and a kitchen staff appointed. From that time on the three kitchens provided for their own groups. After a second contingent from Tientsin arrived, and a few others from other sources, the number was approximately as follows:

Kitchen No. 1 (Tsingtao)	=	750
Kitchen No. 2 (Tientsin)	=	600
Kitchen No. 3 (Peking)	=	400
Total,	approx. =	1,750

At the outset there were two sittings in each dining-room, but gradually, as the kitchen served each meal for about one and a half hours, the “queue” system was such that distinctly separate sittings were largely terminated.

Here it should be added that the Japanese authorities had in advance constructed a central bakery, which supplied white bread – from first to last the foundation of our diet – to all of the kitchens.

We have spoken of the total camp personnel as coming chiefly from three city centers. It is now time to analyze the total membership of the camp into certain general categories.

The missionary personnel were the largest occupational group, probably including more than half of the entire camp. This group naturally divides again into Catholic and Protestant elements. Of Catholic there were a total of about 475, with perhaps 350 priests and 125 nuns. They represented a large number of congregations and societies and among them were six bishops. They came from all parts of North China, and quite a number were from Mongolia. As to nationality, they were chiefly American, Dutch, and Belgian.

The total numbers of Protestants (including the Anglican or Church of England group) was approximately 400, including in this category missionary families. Among them were included all the denominations ordinarily met with, such as Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Lutheran, etc., besides many from the less commonly met denominations and from independent mission groups. Those under missionary appointment were probably quite

evenly divided between men and women. They were nearly all either British or American.

Among the non-missionary personnel business men from Tientsin and Tsingtao, with some from Peking, constituted the largest group. Among them were merchants, bankers, members of importing and exporting forms, clerical and professional men, and members of large companies such as the British and American Tobacco Co. ("B.A.T.") and of the Kailan Mining Administration.

Both within and outside of the missionary group there were a number of professional men and women – physicians, surgeons, lawyers, engineers, musicians, teachers, nurses, and university professors. In the non-missionary group there were not many nationalities represented besides British and American.

After the camp residents had all arrived, and provisions had been made for living quarters and eating arrangements, it was time for the permanent organization of camp life and activities. We had been informed in advance that the camp must be self-operating as far as labor was concerned – that no servants or workmen would be supplied to us, and that the work must thereafter all be done by ourselves. But organization included much besides labor activities. Recreational, cultural, educational, musical, religious, and other activities and interests were all promoted and regulated by the general organization.

The main fields of organization were determined in advance by the Japanese commandant, the supreme authority in the camp. According to his plan there were a number of committees to serve the whole of camp life, with Japanese as the chairmen. These chairmen were merely nominal heads who might exert a certain amount of directional and veto power. On each committee there were three to five members from the camp personnel, usually chosen to represent more or less equitably the three kitchen groups, and one of whom served as the real working chairman. These committees will be mentioned in order. (Factual details may not be entirely accurate as I must now depend entirely on memory. The manuscript of an exact account of the camp, with many notes and statistical material, was taken from my luggage by Japanese examiners.)

The General Committee

A small but important committee, taking charge of general affairs, as the name indicates. Its duties were in part residual – taking charge of many matters as they arose, matters which did not logically belong to the more specialized committees.

The Quarters Committee

In charge of housing, assignment of rooms, etc. Changes in the original housing arrangements and assignment of place to occasional newly arrived members were the functions of this committee.

The Employment Committee

In charge of the permanent and periodic assignment of work jobs. The scope and importance of this committee's functions will be readily understood. Its decisions and appointments affected the daily work of more than 1,000 people - all of the adults and many of the older children.

Of course there was much labor connected with the commissariats of all three kitchen groups. Accordingly there were three subcommittees to take charge of these divisional assignments. Taking the Peking (Kitchen 3) group as an example: The committee instituted an inquiry of all concerned to discuss the qualifications, aptitudes, skills, and preferences with respect to the great variety of tasks to be done. In the assignments special skills, aptitudes and choices were considered as far as possible. Some skills and aptitudes – for example those of amateur carpenters – suggested permanent assignments to jobs. In types of work perhaps not requiring much skill, or which were particularly hard and unpleasant, frequent rotation was most satisfactory. The week was chosen as the unit of time and so it came about that there was posted a weekly bulletin giving a complete list of assignments to tasks for the following week. These weekly lists probably contained the names of at least 100 people. Of kitchen and dining room activities more will be written below.

Besides the work in the three kitchen groups there were general tasks by which the whole camp was served. There was the central bakery, which operated more than half of the 24 hours of each day, thus requiring several shifts of workers. There were the pumps which supplied water to the reservoir tanks, and which had to be manned steadily all day long. There were the furnaces and boilers for the supply of hot water for the bath showers and for washing purposes, and distilled water for drinking. These required men with engineering experience. There were the sanitary installations to be cared for – work the more necessary and the more unpleasant because of the defects of the plumbing system. There were jobs for carpenters, blacksmiths, plumbers, metal-

workers, masons, and electricians. To these jobs there were usually permanent assignments as mentioned above.

The Supplies Committee

This central committee consisted of two divisions: one in charge of general supplies, and one in charge of hospital supplies. As to general supplies, chiefly food and fuel, for the first few months the operations were carried on in part by three sub-committees for the three kitchens. Later there was a large degree of unification and one general committee received supplies daily from the Japanese in charge, weighed or counted the total and made an equitable assignment to the three kitchens. Supplies were usually brought into the compound on Chinese carts and wheel-barrows, with Chinese drivers or runners in charge. But after two months or so, the Japanese authorities, becoming suspicious of secret communications with the outside world through the carters, ordered that Chinese bringing the supplies were not to enter the compound gate. From that time it became necessary for supplies committeemen to meet the vehicles at the gate and drive (or lead) the cart mules, or push the wheel-barrows, to the supplies depot several hundred yards distant near the south border. For the men concerned, and for spectators, these were new and interesting experiences. The Chinese mule has his own ideas about the language and methods of the driver and the mule's responses to a stranger are not always cordial. As to the wheel-barrow, the usual type is large and carries its load high, and an amateur's efforts to balance the load are not always successful. But on the whole the committeemen did well. There was no stoppage in the general stream of supplies and only one or two run-aways by the mules.

The tasks of the division in charge of medical supplies were quite different. After the initial opening of the hospital, orders for supplies for the most part had to be placed in Tientsin or Tsingtao in care of the Swiss Consuls. When these arrived they had to be carefully conveyed to the hospital and distributed for use or placed in the pharmacy.

The Finance Committee

The operations of this committee were much like those of a bank. During the first few days in camp all members were compelled to hand in to the bank their ready cash. To each person was issued a statement of account, corresponding to a bank pass-book. Subsequently, according to the regulations of the Japanese authorities, the bank would pay monthly to each depositor a fixed

sum (at first $50 North Chinese currency – abbreviation “F.R.B.” for “Federal Reserve Bank” – later increased to $100) for use in the camp. Such funds were needed to make purchases in the canteen, pay minor assessments to the kitchens for “extras” or to pay laundry bills.

Later when “comfort money” from the American and British governments was receivable, the specified amounts were credited to the individuals’ deposit accounts, and part payments were added to the banks regular monthly payments.

When those camp members whose names were on the repatriation list were ready to leave, the bank arranged for the transfer of the specified amounts (not to exceed F.R.B. $1,000 per individual) to Shanghai for use on the voyage. Provision was also made for the issue of smaller sums for use on the journey by rail to Shanghai.

Among camp members there were a number of competent and experienced bankers from the North China cities, and with their appointment to the Finance Committee, it goes without saying that the banking operations were well managed. It should be added that the actual cash was kept in custody by the Japanese, and the Japanese accountants “chop” (seal) was necessary for all cash transactions.

The Discipline Committee

The Camp was at all times under the ultimate control of the Japanese consular police and of the guards appointed by them – all under the supreme control of the Commandant. But the ordinary conduct of camp members – social or anti-social as the case might be – was under the control of the Discipline Committee. An active member of this committee was Mr. Lawless, an Englishmen whose regular position was head of the Legation Quarter police force in Peking. Mr. Lawless was a large, portly, impressive-looking man, usually very jovial, but at times very stern, admirably adapted to his task. This task was on the whole not very difficult, for the behavior of camp members was good, with few exceptions.

Perhaps the most difficult part in this committee’s administration had to do with the control of the so-called “Black Market” conducted “over the wall” between camp members and Chinese who were bold enough to approach the wall from outside. At this point it may be explained that some time during the months preceding the establishment of our camp the Japanese military had occupied and fortified the compound. Guard towers of brick had

been built at all corners and strategic points, and against the compound wall in the inside, at intervals of 30 or 40 yards, mounds of earth had been thrown up of sufficient height to enable guards to stand watch or shout over the wall. Some of the fortifications had been demolished prior to our occupation of the camp. It will be easily understood that the lower port holes in the corner towers, and the numerous mounds inside the wall could easily facilitate communications with people outside.

The chief market demand of camp members was food stuffs – especially eggs, and honey, sugar and other sweet products – to supplement the meager dining room fare. Tobacco and matches were also much in demand.

All such traffic with people outside was forbidden by Japanese regulations, but the Japanese guard was insufficient to prevent such traffic – especially at night. The Japanese authorities expected the Discipline Committee to cooperate in the enforcement of these regulations. But the Discipline Committee was half-hearted and rather indifferent in the matter. Contact with the outside world seemed hardly within the responsibility of the committee. Furthermore a large element of public opinion in the camp heavily favored these “Black Market” operations – partly on the ground that the authorities were not keeping the promises made in advance regarding the camp diet. With such conditions the Discipline Committee did not take much part in enforcing Japanese regulations relating to this traffic and these “over the wall” operations continued during the whole period – at least to the date of the repatriation of Americans (September 14). At times there were even suspicions that some of the Japanese guards were making “squeeze” money in these operations, and were not too energetic in enforcing regulations.

Besides the above-mentioned committees there were other committees of an un-official character – un-official yet making large contributions to camp life. A few of these will be considered.

The Education Committee

There were a considerable number of school-age children in camp. For most of these, provision was made in two school groups. Peking had a large and well organized “Peking American School.” There were in camp a few teachers and perhaps 20 or 30 pupils from that school. Places in the church or church yard for classes were found, school desks were assembled from corners of the compound and before many days the relocated but attenuated “P.A.S.” was

again in operation. Studies were carried on so successfully that the committee in charge felt justified in authorizing a "commencement" with official graduation of 3 or 4 members of the senior class. This graduation ceremony, prepared for and conducted in the approved and conventional American style, was a highly interesting event in the camp, with an audience which entirely filled the church.

In the British tradition there was the Tientsin Grammar School. In the camp were a few of the teachers and some of the pupils from that institution. They also were organized into a school and in quite a regular way were able to carry on their studies.

In addition to these schools, there was a large and well conducted kindergarten and also some educational classes for young children conducted by Catholic sisters.

Besides these formal schools there were organized many classes, lectures and discussion groups in the field of adult education. The curriculum subjects probably numbered as many as 20 or 30, studies in the various languages predominating, and among the languages Chinese most in demand.[1] Besides the lectures offered in series to select groups there were general lectures, usually one each week, on themes of common or popular interest.

The Entertainment Committee

After the beginning of camp life, not many weeks elapsed before a series of weekly entertainments was provided. These took many forms, dramatics and music programs being the most frequent. Members of the group coming from Peking – a city always proud of its cultural attainments – were most resourceful in preparing entertainment programs, but the Tientsin group was by no means backward. In many of the entertainments, both dramatic and musical, all three of the city centers furnished talent.

In this connection it is not improper to mention Mr. Curtis Grimes, a young pianist and conductor with a rapidly growing reputation in Peking. His most notable contributions were his own piano concerts, and the leadership of a chorus and an orchestra. The nucleus of both chorus and orchestra had been trained for longer or shorter periods by Mr. Grimes in Peking. These members were re-enforced by excellent musicians from the other cities.

[1] The Chinese language instructor was George D. Wilder, a retired missionary who had returned to Peking to teach in the College of Chinese Studies.

Among the musical programs of the chorus were three of the great classical oratorios.

In this connection it may be noted that, at the time of the establishment of the camp the Japanese authorities were good enough to give special permission to transport to the camp a grand piano from Peking. Later a second piano was similarly brought from Tientsin.

The church serving as auditorium with a seating capacity of 700 or 800, made possible the regular entertainment programs. It was soon noted that if programs could be given twice, the attendance of practically the whole adult membership of the camp was possible. Friday and Saturday evenings were usually chosen for the two settings, and on Thursday tickets for the two evenings in equal numbers were freely distributed.

Besides the evening entertainment there was an almost daily series of athletic sports. The grounds near the hospital, already mentioned, were used for tennis, basketball, and volleyball. An athletic field left of the church was larger and there baseball and hockey were played. By far the most popular sport was baseball – most popular both for the players and spectators. The size of the grounds cramped the game somewhat so that the soft-ball (or playground ball) was commonly used. For this also the grounds were really too small, so that some special “ground-rules” were necessary, one of the most important being that when the batter knocked the ball over the compound wall he was entitled to a “home-run.” In the selection and matching of teams all of the major divisions of camp personnel were recognized. Each kitchen group had its team, and at times a second team as well as a first. Each of the three cities – Peking, Tientsin, and Tsingtao – had its team. Some of the larger corporations, such as the B.AT. (British American Tobacco Co.) and the Kailan Mining Administration, had their teams. Other teams were selected quite miscellaneously by captains, appointed or self-chosen. There were boys’ teams and girls’ teams. But the team which, after many contests, proved superior to all was a team selected from among the Catholic Fathers. The whole camp was surprised at the proficiency of this team and at the interest both Catholic priests and nuns manifested in the game. One of the Catholic bishops took part in the game. The best player in the whole game was a priest whose nickname was “Father Wendy.” Although competition was keen there was the utmost harmony and good feeling. When the weather was good there were games almost every evening and spectators gathered in crowds. At some of the keenly contested games

probably more than half of the entire camp (often including some of the Japanese guards) was present along the sidelines.

Among entertainments there should be mentioned one organized not by the entertainment committee but by the Catholic Fathers. It was an out-door performance held Sunday evenings. Its leading spirit was a Dutch priest of great vigor and vitality, a good musician and possessing marked natural qualities of leadership. English was the language which was most used, of course, but the Father in charge had very incomplete knowledge of English, and his foreign accent, and the mistakes which he made, which did not at all quell his enthusiasm, were part of the entertainment. The program, largely improvised and prepared for each occasion, included much music, instrumental and vocal, the latter in the form of community singing. The words of the songs, usually adapted to familiar melodies, often referred to interesting camp happenings, or made “local hits.” Besides music, with a continual flow of interactions and humorous comments by the leader, there were simple dramatics, puppet shows and shadow pictures. A small movable stage, with suitable electric lighting, was set up for each occasion. These entertainments seemed to fill a Sunday evening vacancy in camp life and became very popular with an attendance of people, both sitting and standing, of 500 or 600. It may be added that the Protestant church held Sunday evening song services, but they were by no means as popular as this entertainment by the Catholics.

A very different form of entertainment, the game of chess, while not under the auspices of the Entertainment Committee, was quite popular, promoted and organized by a chess society. The players were classified and a systematic tournament was held.

The Medical Affairs Committee

The operation of the hospital and the general medical and sanitary care of the camp were the functions of this committee. There were a considerable number of doctors in the camp, among them a chief surgeon and a prominent physician from the Peking University Medical College. Although there was quite a little illness in camp and the resources of the Hospital were fully used, there was no serious epidemic and on the whole health conditions were quite good. One of the senior physicians was a competent and experienced oculist, and there was present a competent and experienced dentist. Offices for them were provided at the Hospital and thus the corresponding special needs of camp residents were cared for.

As to general sanitation the deficiencies in the sanitary installations of the Japanese were the cause of extra difficulties, dangers, and unpleasant tasks, but with careful safe-guarding, and general cooperation, the dangers were overcome.

Committee on Engineering and Repairs

This committee was under the direction of a trained engineer. In cooperation with the employment committee there were organized squads of masons, electricians, plumbers, metal-workers and carpenters. Some of the work of these specialists consisted of repairs, but much of it was of the nature of remodeling or rebuilding to remedy deficiencies in the original preparation of the camp. Some of the men among these skilled workers were men of special training in these vocations, but most of them were men whose avocations had attracted them into these fields and whose skills were those of amateurs.

In the fields of women's work there was some unofficial but very effective organization. A few sewing machines were available and so a center for sewing and repair of clothing was established. Repairs of course implied chiefly hard work, and this was distributed among a large number of women to be done in their homes.

As to laundry work, most people did their own, often in the midst of great difficulties and limitations. Washing was of course a necessity but many came to the conclusion that ironing was an unnecessary (or unobtainable) luxury. In the laundry work many women helped their men friends in voluntary and informal ways. However, a group of Catholic Sisters, taking advantage of facilities in the Hospital basement, organized a semi-public laundry, and eventually arrangements were made by them with skilled Chinese in a village outside to do laundry work on a commercial basis.

One enterprising woman widely known and experienced in the management of a shop in Peking, took the initiative in establishing camp exchange (known as the "White Elephant Exchange") where, besides some buying and selling, people could exchange their own useless things for things useless to other people – a process of transformation which rendered all things useful. This institution was not fully organized for several months, but when it was installed in its own quarters and clearly advertised, it rendered much service to the community.

Other aspects of women's work will be described below in connection with kitchen and dining room service.

There were three other forms of community service not mentioned in what we have reported about organization and employment. A barber shop was manifestly a great need and, when two men with the necessary skills were found, a room was provided and the shop opened. Shoe repairing was a second need soon widely felt, since the foot wear was deteriorating with the heavy work and a shoe-repair shop was opened. A third need was watch repairing. Several decades earlier the Catholics gained the reputation of introducing the arts of watch and clock repairing into China, so it was not surprising to find among our Catholic Fathers a man with skill in this art – whereupon a shop for his services was duly opened.

Thus, sooner or later, as almost all the practical needs of a community of 2,000 people became evident, ways of supplying these needs were found and adopted, so it might almost be said that our camp was a self-contained community.

Religion

The normal religious interests of a community of the size of our camp would present important aspects, but, as the camp had so many professional religionists in its personnel, religious activities had more than usual importance. Among the Catholic, Anglican, and Free Church groups there was enough cooperation to make common use of the church and arrange in a harmonious schedule the services of worship for Sundays and other days. The church building then became a very busy place during all the hours of Sunday. The Catholics began with two or three early services of Holy Mass, followed about 11:00 by the Protestant Anglican morning service of worship. In the afternoon the Free Church people of many denominations joined in a union church service.

The presence of so many Catholic priests and nuns and six bishops in a camp made possible their full ritualistic services of worship including Pontifical Mass, as well as the special services for Palm Sunday and Easter. With carpenter work by priests and decorative work by nuns a very beautiful and impressive altar was arranged. All other necessary requisites, altar furnishing, etc., had evidently been brought to the camp. The antiphonal singing by companies of well trained priests, and the polyphonic singing when nuns also took part, were features of interest to both Catholics and non-Catholics.

The Anglican or Episcopal members of the camp were not numerous, but all their formal services, with altar furnishings, bishop's robes, and fixed ritual less elaborate than the Catholics, were held regularly. Early morning communion, because of conflicting hours and fewer attendants, was usually held elsewhere than in the church.

Missionaries and laymen belonging to the free churches constituted a large group and because of varying practices in the different denominations, and more democratic procedures, presented more complications in organization. A representative but temporary committee was appointed which made plans for services of worship and other activities and chose the necessary leaders. After several weeks the temporary arrangements, without much change, were made permanent and the united organization developed its many activities under the name "Weihsien Christian Fellowship." The organization under this name, rather than under the title "Union Church" was adapted after much earnest discussion. The somewhat broader and less formal organization under the name "Fellowship" made it possible for the Anglican group to cooperate in many of the activities. There was hope that some of the more liberal-minded Catholics might participate also, but although unorganized and social relationships were very friendly and harmonious, this hope was not realized. However, there were some small discussion groups, interested in religious and theological themes, in which both Catholics and Protestants participated.

Dining

As to general living conditions in the camp some accounts, more in detail, of kitchen and dining room arrangements, is in order. By way of example the conditions in Kitchen No. 3, which served the Peking group, will be considered.

Kitchen No. 3, and its dining room, were housed in the lower floor of a two-story building in dimensions about 80 feet long by 40 feet wide. The kitchen occupied two rooms about 12 feet wide, across the two ends of the building, the central part being the dining room, and communicating with the kitchen rooms by broad doorways. For the kitchen fires the Japanese had built brick ranges, with grates for either wood or coal, and crowned with large, shallow, open kettles about four feet in diameter. These stove structures, with their big kettles, were essentially in the common Chinese pattern. The kettles were covered with round wooden covers. All processes of cooking had to be adjusted to this equipment. The dining room was supplied with tables and

long benches (no chairs) hastily built by carpenters. The benches were so poorly constructed that they soon began to collapse, and all of them (and those in the other dining rooms also) had to be rebuilt by the camp carpenters. East and North of the building was a wide open space, partly shaded by trees. In this area supplies of food and fuel could be unloaded, meat and vegetables could be prepared for cooking, and queues for entrance to the dining room doors could be formed.

The kitchen 3 group was fortunate in having among its personnel a few cooks of almost professional status. There was an ex-Marine from the American Embassy guard in Peking, a Catholic "Father," and a group of two or three Dutch nuns. All of these had had experience in group-kitchen cooking. Assistants were appointed for these and they took charge of the heavy cooking labor in rotation through weekly periods. Besides the cooks a large staff of women and men were required for specialized tasks. The preparation of vegetables, the pumping and carrying of water, starting the fires, chopping wood, serving in the dining room, washing dishes, washing dining room tables (there were no table cloths) and sweeping the floors, carrying bread and other supplies – nearly all of these tasks required 3-times-a-day attention and effort. Weekly assignment to these tasks, involving perhaps 30 to 75 people, was the responsibility of the employment committee.

As to supplies for the diet, there were only two articles unlimited and always available: white bread and tea, and some of the meals, especially breakfasts, consisted entirely of these two articles. That more meals were not this limited was the result of ingenious planning of the cooks, rather than of the liberality of the Japanese supplies office. We have already mentioned the bakery as a central establishment. Flour and yeast were often variable in quality and at times the bread was quite inferior. But on the whole, the bread may be rated as good and wholesome. Tea was served without fail three times a day, but there were no "trimmings" to go with it.

Vegetables, next to bread and tea, were the most liberally provided. Potatoes were quite frequently supplied, but they were usually small and limited in quantity. For the sake of economy they were usually served (and eaten) unpeeled. Cabbages, leeks, onions, and other green vegetables were more liberally supplied.

Meat and fish appeared quite often, and were supplied more frequently than conditions in the cities we had left behind would lead us to expect. Beef and pork were most common, with fish occasionally. Eggs were issued in very limited numbers to the

kitchens, but a larger proportion of people had their own methods of securing eggs (either from the canteen or from the “Black Market”) and special arrangements were made in the kitchen for cooking eggs for individuals.

Fresh fruits, such as apples and pears in season, were issued occasionally to the kitchen in very small quantities. Some sugar and margarine were supplied. Salt and *chiang yu*, a Chinese condiment resembling Worcestershire sauce were issued in sufficient quantity.

Considering the limited and rather irregular issue of food supplies by the Supplies Office the cooks seemed remarkably resourceful and ingenious in introducing both variety and palpability into the diet. The bread and tea menu, which seemed so often indicated by the limited supplies issue, was often varied by making a kind of “bread porridge” out of the dried and leftover residues of the daily bread quota. This breakfast dish was served so often that it came to be called “Weihsien Porridge.” While many people tired of it, to be sure, yet it was a successful effort to make much out of little.

For the other meals the chief dish was usually a rich soup or a stew to which, in order to achieve nourishment and variety, all the ingredients in the days issue of supplies were added. One reason for putting most of the meal into a single soup or stew was the manner of service. Everyone had to supply his own dishes, carrying them to and from the dining room for each meal. With the number of dishes by this condition reduced to a minimum one large bowl or one deep plate was the most common equipment. Not only so, but speed in the serving process, with long queues waiting was important, and one large unit of food was most convenient. Economy in dish washing was also an important factor.

The food was served just inside the door from large containers brought steaming hot from the kitchen. As soon as served, people found their places at the tables, having mastered the art of climbing or hopping over the long benches already placed at the tables. In doing so, if you managed to kick only one of your neighbors already seated you were considered quite polite. At the table were found plates or trays of bread – frequently replenished by waiters appointed for the purpose. Another set of waiters poured tea or hot water or both as required. Besides these two types of floor waiters there was a third, a woman who went about with a cloth wiping the table after persons had finished, in preparation for the next to follow.

If the food for a meal was sufficient second helpings could be had by those with more hearty appetites. A second helping was usually served from a well-recognized extra container in the corner of the room, and was often announced orally by persons in charge, the formula being, for example “Seconds on stew!” For such an announcement, or for any other, to be made, there must first be a sharp table-rapping to silence the noise and secure attention. The talking and clatter in a dining room of 110 or 200 people reminded one of the noise of conversations in a large institutional reception, when everyone has to raise his voice to be heard.

Dish washing was a carefully systemized process. There were two or three units of operation, each in charge of one woman or sometimes two. For each unit there were two large containers of hot water, one for washing and one for rinsing. When people had finished a meal they “queued up” before one of these units, handed in their dishes (after each person, urged on by public notice and public opinion, had made them as clean as possible as he finished the meal) and received them again out of the rinsing pail. There was no dish wiping except as some of the more particular arranged to do it for themselves.

Although for the fastidious feeders and delicate diners, people who ordinarily make much of the aesthetic aspects of eating, the meals were not attractive, yet on the whole they were fairly nourishing and wholesome. There was a monthly weighing schedule, arranged by some of the physicians as a check on diet. The monthly weight records showed that, after the first few weeks, gains and losses of weight were somewhat evenly balanced.

This good result of diet should no doubt be credited in part to purchases of food from the canteen, rather than to the adequacy of the dining room diet. After the first month or so the canteen was provided with more adequate snacks, so that eggs, fresh fruit, honey and some other articles were available for purchase. With most of these commodities, however, the supply was limited, so that a system of rationing and systematic distribution had to be adopted. At first this meant long lines in queue, but later, after the system of wardens was adopted, the distribution was usually through the wardens, and long periods of waiting were unnecessary.

Block Wardens

As the warden system was something of a “second thought” in organization we did not describe it in considering that topic.

From the beginning of camp life the Japanese insisted on a daily roll-call, or check-up on members. The hour for this was at first 10:00 o'clock, but this time, in the midst if the dinner work period proved very inconvenient. Consequently the roll-call was changed to 7:30 in the morning. Consular police or guards made the rounds of buildings and rooms, which had been grouped in numbered blocks, and called for the prompt appearance of all residents outside their doors to be counted. It soon became apparent that in each block there was a need for someone to call people to their doors (considering the early morning hour) at the right moment, to save the time of all concerned. For this service, and also to serve as convenient means of communication in verbal notices or orders, wardens were appointed for the several blocks. (The clever reader, like the facetious persons in camp, perhaps cannot resist the temptation to call these functionaries "block-heads"-but this term never became popular!) The total number of these numbered blocks was about 60 and such approximately was the number of wardens, comprising both men and women.

The functions of these wardens, as camp life went on, became more and more numerous and complex. Their employment in carrying out the canteen's ration systems has already been mentioned. In the financial dealings between camp members and the bank, the wardens also came to serve a very useful purpose.

The daily roll-call, in which the wardens officiated, occasionally exhibited features both interesting and amusing. Late sleepers were often reluctant to appear outside their doors, the men frequently being seen in their pajamas, or with faces covered with lather for the shaving process. On the part of the police, as time went on the roll-call became more and more perfunctory. Frequently they passed the blocks rapidly, accepting the wardens' reports that all were present or accounted for (quite a number of persons were already at work in the kitchen or elsewhere at the roll-call hour) and scarcely looking at the line of people standing in the doors.

Occasionally the roll-call was carried out in a comprehensive and careful way. The whole camp personnel was assembled on the athletic field by the church, and lined up in numerical order according to the number which at the outset had been assigned to all. The consular police carefully checked each line, then added and compared results as a check on total attendance. Nearly an hour of standing in line was involved on each of these occasions, which occurred about once a month.

Attitude Toward Work

The attitude of camp members to the labor tasks assigned to then was noteworthy. The most laborious and distasteful forms of work were readily undertaken by men highly placed in ordinary social life – men accustomed to giving orders and to be waited on by servants. For example: in the mason work, brick and stone, sand and lime, had to be carried long distances. Carrying poles such as ones used by Chinese workmen were often seen on the shoulders of men accustomed to take their exercise in tennis, cricket or golf. Carrying crates, more adapted to occidental ways of carrying things, were made in large numbers by the carpenters. These were used for building materials, for food supplies, and for the disposal of garbage and other refuse. There seemed to be no shrinking from "coolie work" even of the most distasteful kinds. In woman's work there were similar conditions and the same attitude. The most unpleasant of household tasks were taken up and carried through without hesitation.

Clothing

To the general observer of camp life the daily costumes of the people were interesting. The costumes of the Catholic priests and nuns of course were of distinctive patterns. But among them also there was variety according to membership in different societies or congregations. The gowns of "sisters" were all wide skirted and full-wimpled, surmounted by hoods or bonnets with long veils. But in the specific patterns, and in the color of black, white and grey and their combinations, there was much more variety. For the "fathers" it was evidently permissible to exchange the long black priests' gown for the gowns and other garments of Chinese costumes, and so much variety was introduced into the fathers' appearance. And they, like other men, while at work in warm weather, removed outer garments, and some of them thus closely resembled the Chinese farmer or laborer.

The weather in camp, after the first few weeks, say from May to September, was quite uniformly warm – in July and August very hot, so that both men and women reduced their clothing to the minimum. Considerations of economy in the knowledge that while in camp clothing supplies could not be replenished, had the same influence as hot weather. For the women the most abbreviated "sport suits," following closely modern bathing-suit patterns, were common. Men at work or play, not only at the time and place of camp life but more universally during the last few years, having imitated the oriental farmer and laborer in discarding all

upper garments, exposed their bare backs to the sun and came to resemble members of the brown race.

Thus the exigencies and conditions of camp life joined to recent occidental tendencies in costume, which have shattered all the common and conventional patterns of apparel, resulted in extremes of variety in camp costumes that were highly picturesque and unconventional.

Communications

The communications facilities of the camp with the outside world were strictly controlled and very limited. Newspapers, especially the Peking Chronicle, were admitted, though quite irregularly and not in continuous series. There was a camp post office, which censored and much delayed incoming letters. Packages from outside friends in Peking, Tientsin, and Tsingtao mostly containing food (after reports of the limited camp fare had gone out) began to arrive in large quantities and after some delay were delivered upon the payment of small fees. Out-going letters or postcards were limited as to frequency of posting, content, and form of hand writing. Post cards were usually limited to 50 words, and letters to 150 words. In both cases, block letters or type writing were required.

In such circumstances there were some arrangements for secret communications “over the wall,” but these were very limited. In a community thus circumstanced rumors were rife, much discussed and quickly disseminated. They were concerned with all topics of interest, both serious and comic. Rumors in serious subjects were usually not taken seriously, but they offered interesting topics of conversation while we were so isolated from happenings in the outside world.

Population Changes

The total personnel of the camp, analyzed briefly in an earlier paragraph, underwent some changes before the summer was over. During the late spring and early summer there were rumors of the impending departure of the Catholic priests and nuns, since special arrangements for them were being made in Peking. In August the substance of these rumors became fact and 400 or more of the Catholics were withdrawn and sent to Peking. The Apostolic Delegate in Peking – a special emissary of the Pope – for reasons which we could not know, had influence with the military authorities which made such a change possible. This large group of Catholics departed in two contingents on different days, and at both times nearly the entire remainder of camp members gathered on

the athletic fields where the assembly took place, and at the gate to bid our Catholic comrades farewell. On both occasions cordial attitudes were especially expressed and there were many evidences of mutual regard and friendship.

After the departure of the Catholics the vacant space was soon filled by large groups of adults and of school children from the coast city of Chefoo. The pupils were from the C.I.M. (China Inland Mission) school and the others were from an internment camp. For reasons of convenience and economy the Japanese authorities thought it best to concentrate all of these in the Weihsien camp.

This general description of camp life, which here comes to a close, covers the period from March 21 to September 15, when the majority of the Americans in camp left for repatriation.