

January 10, 2027

Hello Family,

I hope this letter finds you all in good health. I know I made a lot of promises to write a book about Aunt Mary, but I'm at the point where I have to admit failure. I just don't have it in me. I'm deeply sorry for this as I truly intended to follow through on my promise. This whole thing has helped me realize how much effort goes into writing.

After Mom died and I finally had possession of all of Aunt Mary's letters and diaries, I faced the immensity of the task I had committed myself to. I felt completely overwhelmed and inadequate, so I decided to go the easy route and send out all the primary source materials. I had hoped this would turn into a book, but it didn't. I'm sending these to you because I think you may still enjoy reading some parts of them—even if it's not a book.

The box I took home from Mom's apartment contained three large manila envelopes marked by year: 1946, 1937 and 1919; a photo album from China; numerous snapshots from throughout her life; and quite a few newspaper clippings. I've come to the conclusion that Aunt Mary was low-key famous in Cleveland during her time.

It's taken a long time to sort through all of this material and at this point I've only managed to finish one of the envelopes. I'll get to the rest of it later and will send that along as it gets completed. I started with the 1946 envelope because the time she spent in China after the war always loomed large in my imagination, though I didn't know what she actually did there.

Thankfully Mom was diligent in her effort to decipher Aunt Mary's handwriting and she (Mom) transcribed most of the letters that Mary wrote home from China. Mary's writing was the definition of chicken scratch. It's amazing Mom could read any of it. There were also a handful of letters Mary received from friends and colleagues while she was in China. One woman (Rose) seems to have been a friend of hers from when she was studying social work at Catholic U. I thought long and hard about whether to include those letters. I decided to include them, not only because the handwriting is legible, but they also provide another view of what was happening at the time in China. I inserted the letters between diary entries nearest the date on the letter or where Mary mentioned receiving the letter. It's not exact, but seemed reasonable.

Mary's diary was another whole story. I "translated" what I could from chicken scratch to English, and included only those entries that helped move the story along. She liked to write about what she ate, so some of those entries have been "edited". I also included some of the reports she prepared for UNRRA about her work. I believe these were weekly reports and those that remain can be found in the Appendix.

As I remember her, Aunt Mary was a kind older woman who was proper and modest in both dress and speech, and a little bit quirky. I wish I'd known her better and asked her more questions about her life. What I do remember about her mostly demonstrates my ignorance. I remember she always referred to the toilet as the "twilight", which always confused me as a child. In thinking about it now as an adult, I just smile though I still have no clue why she would

have said it this way. She had a “princess” bedroom that my sister Betsy and I always loved to sleep in when we stayed with her, and there were those cute little Chinese fishermen statues in the shadow box with the mirror. She often spoke about her many friends and she placed great value on friendships and family.

Perhaps once you’ve read the contents of the box as I’ve presented them here you will have a few memories of your own to share about our beloved Aunt Mary.

I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Take care,  
Anne

**1946**

## Cleveland, OH

1st letter from Rose

July 21, 1945

My dear friend Mary,

How have you been? I hope you and your family are well. I'm sorry I haven't written in what, several years? My only defense is that I finally took your advice and went back to school to finish my education. I completed a master's degree in social work last year from the New York School of Social Work, it's part of Columbia University (that makes me a "fancy" person, right?). I know, I know, you told me not to drop out and, now that I have a few more years and a little more wisdom, I see you were right all along. It was a little more difficult being a student this time too. Could it be because after being out of school I didn't like getting all that homework? Maybe it's because the other students are so young now. It can't be because I'm older-can it?

Even more than looking for congratulations on completing my degree, I'm writing today to let you know about some plans I'm making for my next big adventure. I've decided to work as a welfare specialist for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA for short). One of my Columbia professors contacted me about the position last month. Have you ever heard of UNRRA? They've been in existence a couple of years and offer relief to people in war-devastated areas. They're hiring specialists who will help in the distribution of food, medicine, agricultural supplies, you name it. They want people who have a few years of experience, and you know I fit that bill.

I don't know where I'll be stationed exactly, but I'm hoping to work in China. I visited Europe to see my relatives when I was a child and can see myself going there again in the future, but what reason would I ever have to go to China? Besides, I think serving in China might cement my reputation as a bona fide rebel with crack pot ideas. What do you think? Seriously though, the problems in China right now are profound. What better place to see the immediate effect of social work?

I'm heading to DC in about a week and should be there for a few months of training so I'll write again once I get there to let you know more about what I've gotten myself into. DC-our old stomping grounds. I wonder if it's changed as much as we have? So far as I know, the plan is for me to be here in Washington through the end of November, so if you'd like to write, my address will be: 2109 F Street NW, Washington, DC 20052

Wish me luck!

Sincerely,  
Rose (Your Hungarian twin sister)

August 4

I'm so happy to hear from my friend Rose. We've kept in touch since we were students in DC, though our letter-writing has dwindled to an occasional postcard these last couple of years. We were good friends from the start, both a bit older than the other students. But most importantly, Rose has this great sense of humor and she can really make me laugh. We laughed so much that sometimes my sides hurt. We drank coffee, studied for our classes and laughed. I haven't heard from Rose in such a long time and I suspected she'd moved again. I was beginning to fear we'd never reconnect, so seeing her name on the envelope brought a smile to my face.

This letter caught me off-guard. Rose Galaida is heading to China, of all places! I hadn't expected this, but I'm not completely surprised either. I love getting her letters because she's always off doing something new and interesting. She thrives on challenges-like when she ran a school for poor children in rural New Jersey. She always said she gets bored when things are too easy. Somehow, I don't think she'll find China boring.

Mother's face was funny when I told her about Rose's latest adventure. Her eyes widened with surprise and she had a funny, half-smile on her face. She thinks Rose is amazing and has said so on numerous occasions.

I'm glad I bought this diary a few weeks back. I haven't written in one for years and it feels good to write and reflect on life. At least now I'll have Rose and her adventures to write about.

August 9

Fred invited Mother and me over for dinner tonight and to listen to the President's address. Kitty got the younger kids settled in bed but let Mary K stay up with the adults.

The President thanked the American people for fighting the Nazis. He was clear about the destruction of the German war machine and that it'll never be allowed to rebuild their military that way again. I hope he's right. He also said something that struck me as odd: he made it clear that the German people aren't going to be enslaved. I remember him using the word enslaved more than once. Odd choice of words, but maybe we learned something from the aftermath of the first world war after all.

One disturbing part of his talk was about these new bombs that have been dropped on Japan. They don't know yet, but there will probably be lots of civilian casualties. Deliberately killing civilians never seems like a good idea. He said scientists in the U.S. have been secretly working for years to create these bombs, racing against the Germans. I'm glad we won the race, but now the cat's out of the bag and the government will have to keep them away from our enemies. He called the use of these bombs tragic, which got to me. When compared to all the destruction already done by all the other kinds of bombs, these atomic ones are somehow much worse.

Afterward, we were talking about the President's address when Mother shared what it was like for her to grow up in the aftermath of war. She's always been so close-lipped about the details of her life before coming to the U.S. She was 4 or 5 when the war broke out and didn't have any idea what was happening. Mostly she remembered not having enough to eat and being afraid. It

was also around that time her father died of pneumonia, leaving her mother to raise five children on her own. Mother was raised to think of herself as French, even though after the war their town and the whole region was considered part of Germany. They were deemed German citizens and she traveled on a German passport when she immigrated to the US.

I can't stop thinking about Rose going to China. I'm happy to be able to imagine my friend as one of the people working to solve these problems. Truman said something to imply that winning the war was one thing but now we need to continue to win the peace by putting things back together. But with the war in Asia still going on it seems like a perilous thing to do.

August 14

What a difference a couple of days can make—Japan finally surrendered! A few days ago I was feeling down about never-ending war, and yet here we are. We were listening to music after dinner when they interrupted the program for the President to announce the Japanese finally surrendered! What a relief! It's hard to describe the emotion I had hearing this announcement. It's like a burden I'd been carrying for a long time was finally put down.

Then, within moments, a party began outside. First, people came pouring out of their houses, cheering, making all kinds of noise. A couple of young boys began banging pans with spoons and Harry Smith played Reveille on his trumpet over and over (I honestly think it's all he knows). Little Sarah from across the street blew on her kazoo until she was red in the face trying to keep up. Everyone was hugging each other and jumping up and down. Church bells were ringing, dogs were barking, and someone lit firecrackers in the middle of the street. I don't think I've ever seen this neighborhood spill over with joy like tonight. It wasn't limited to our neighborhood either. You could hear honking horns and fireworks throughout the neighborhood. I'm still hearing some in the distance now and it's past midnight.

The only person in our family to serve in this war has been Kitty's brother Walter. He enlisted in '43 and, thankfully, has been working as a mechanic in a shipyard on the east coast. We're so grateful that he wasn't assigned to a combat unit, but you can never be certain where they'll station you when you're in the military. As a mechanic, he could have been sent anywhere in the world. Unfortunately I know a lot of people who weren't so lucky. Mary Thompson's son was killed in the Philippines last year and Evelyn's son was injured pretty badly in France. We've also lost a couple of young men here in the neighborhood. One of the Johnson boys came home last week, but one of his younger brothers is still in Guam and the other one is in India. They won't be home for at least a few more months.

It's difficult to remember when we weren't at war. It seems like forever that we've heard reports of death and destruction from around the world. Listening to news reports on the radio has made this war seem so much closer than the last one. I think it's been more upsetting to listen to someone describe these things than it was to only read about it in the paper.

September 13

The V-J parade downtown today was a joy to behold with marching bands, military veterans, and confetti. I've never experienced a celebration where joy was expressed so freely! We all left

the CRB office early and managed to find a good spot where we could see the parade. Fred and his co-workers were somewhere in the crowd, but we never saw them. Too many people. We yelled and cheered until none of us had any voice left. It was amazing to share this with thousands and thousands of people.

## 2nd letter from Rose

October 10, 1945

Dear Mary,

How are you? I received your letter yesterday. It's so good to hear from you and to learn that your family is safe and healthy. Can you believe it? The war is finally over! The joy of being alive has returned!

The mood here in DC has been amazing. On the evening of the announcement, it was like an immediate party all over town. We (UNRrats-my pet name for folks here) are housed in a dormitory at George Washington University and we all ran out into the hallway. We were all jumping up and down and cheering. It was quite the sight (with me leading the pack). Then we ran outside where the real party was. People were honking their horns, some folks had flags attached to their cars, everyone was hugging and smiling at strangers. There were impromptu parades with lots of flags waving on the streets. Like one big street party! I'm so lucky to be here at this moment.

I have three nephews who have been serving-one in the Pacific and two in Europe and I've been worried sick about them for so long. No major injuries, thank God, though I'm not sure whether I'll see them before I leave the country. I don't know when they're expected home and I'm not sure when I'm leaving. Did you have anyone in your family serving overseas? I can't remember how old your brother's children are.

I arrived in DC in mid-August after visiting my sister in Philly for a couple of weeks. It's hard to believe it was only a few weeks ago when atomic bombs were being dropped. Just between you and me, I seriously considered getting back on that train and going home. It doesn't help that my sister thinks working for UNRRA's a bad idea. She begged me not to go-especially not to China. It did seem like a poor choice in the middle of all that bad news about bombs and invasions. But with the surrender signaling the real end of the war, I have a sense that this is exactly where I need to be.

Mary, I need to let you know about a conversation I had with an UNRRA recruiter yesterday. She asked if I knew anyone who might make a good UNRRA team member. Your name immediately popped into my head. Funny thing, you're the only other person I know who might be capable and adventurous (crazy?) enough to do this. They're interested in finding people who will be able to "effectively adapt to a constantly shifting environment". That phrase reminded me of your Red Cross stories. I told her what I knew about your abilities and gave her your address. I hope you're not mad about me giving them your name, Mary. I

do think you could do great things in this organization. Wouldn't it be interesting if our next cup of coffee together is somewhere in China?

I hope you consider this opportunity. If, for some reason, we don't see each other in China, perhaps we'll meet up after I return. I wish you and your family all the best.

Sincerely,  
Your friend Rose

October 18

This letter took me by surprise. Rose thinks I would be a good UNRRA candidate. But I'm such a homebody! No doubt she'll make an important contribution in China, and I would like to have a cup of coffee, but in Shanghai? I'm not so sure. I'll have to wait and see whether they even contact me before I spend too much time thinking about going to China.

I had told Mother about Rose's last letter and we discussed this one too. However I stopped short of mentioning Rose's idea of me signing up. I don't want to know how she'd respond to the suggestion that I also go live in a war-torn country. Mother's not getting any younger and since she had the flu last year she's become more dependent on me.

Big news—It's been a long time coming, but the United Nations was officially "born" today, without too much fanfare either. Funny, I thought it was official back in the spring when there was that big meeting in San Francisco. But then the Senate had to debate and discuss, all the other countries had to debate and discuss and now, finally, we have an agreement. No one's exactly sure how it will operate, but I'm hopeful, though not without some caution.

I was talking about this with the girls at the office today. It seems odd to me that the name for this new world organization is the "United Nations", since we've been using this name for the Allied forces for the last couple of years. UNRRA's been in operation under that name for the Allied and I wonder if there are negative feelings about it in other parts of the world. Oh well, to the victor goes the spoils. And if the spoils of this war include peace then I think we should claim it for the Allied side of things.

October 25

Among the bills and other mail today was an official looking envelope from UNRRA! I tore it open as fast as I could. It's a short note from an UNRRA recruiter named Mary Frank who indicates that Rose gave her my name and that she would like to speak to me about a position with UNRRA. She requested a written response. Just seeing that official envelope made me smile. I've decided I want to pursue this opportunity—especially now that the war is over.

I waited until after dinner to talk to Mother about the letter. I started the conversation by discussing Rose and then I mentioned the letter I'd gotten today from the recruiter. I couldn't have been more surprised when she suggested I find out more about this position. I honestly hadn't expected that reaction. I won't say she doesn't have reservations, she was clear about them, but she was open to the idea of me learning more about this opportunity. I find myself

feeling excited and scared all rolled up in one. I never imagined doing this kind of thing—especially at my age. But I guess I shouldn't get too caught up just yet, but I do feel energized.

October 26

Fred and I met for lunch today. I've been busting at the seams to talk to him about UNRRA so it was great to finally break the news. He said he knew I had a secret, but thought better than to ask. He was surprised when I told him what my secret was and he encouraged me to go see a new part of the world. Fred's great, always the supportive brother.

I couldn't concentrate at work. There are so many questions running around in my head, all at top speed. Should I seriously consider this? Am I crazy to think it's a good idea? Is Rose crazy for doing this? How would Mother manage if I go away for a year? Perhaps most important: if I pass this up will I regret it the rest of my life?

Mother and I had another long talk this evening. It's funny, she thinks it's a good idea for me to go! Never in a hundred years did I imagine she would have such a viewpoint. I'm starting to think the heart of that young woman who came here alone, not knowing anyone here, let alone English, still beats inside her.

October 28

I spent all weekend thinking about what to write in response to Miss Frank's letter. Then spent last night writing and rewriting it, my waste basket overflowing with draft copies. I want to know more about the work they do, the position they're trying to fill, and what kind of support they offer to people in the field. I've never lived overseas. I've never even been in a plane. I've also never lived very far from my family. I wrote a short note to Rose too, letting her know I was contacted by the UNRRA and I'm open to the idea—with reservations. I'll take both letters to the post office over lunch tomorrow.

Funny how easy it is to forget things over time. As I was getting ready for bed tonight I remembered a time when Rose worked to convince me to do something I was reluctant to do. It was our fall semester and the weather was gorgeous. The trees were in their full glory and afternoons were warm. She got it into her head that we required a hike in the woods in the Shenandoah Valley. One of the girls had a car and it was only a couple of hours drive each way. Rose worked for several days to talk me and several of our classmates into taking the trip. Generally I'm all in for such an adventure, but we had a big exam scheduled for the next Monday and I needed to study. She used her persuasive powers to get us all into the car and we "studied" by talking about the material we were going to be tested on. She was right. I got an A+ on the exam.

November 22

Thanksgiving Day and we had a wonderful time with Fred, Kitty and the kids. Kitty's sister Loretta joined us for a little while too, which was nice. I'm sure they'll both be relieved once Walter's back home.

Kitty made a turkey dinner big enough for an army unit with stuffing, potatoes and gravy, and cranberries. All the favorites. Most of the food rationing has been lifted so she went all out and made a great meal. The only thing still in short supply is sugar. Mother and I donated all our sugar so there was enough to make both pumpkin and apple pies for dessert. I've been home for a couple of hours now and still feel stuffed.

November 26

Life has settled down a bit now that the war has officially ended. People on the street are, in general, more upbeat than when the war was going on, but parades and fireworks are over.

The giddy feeling I had about writing to UNRRA has diminished somewhat too. Every day I check the mailbox. Nothing there. I'm feeling frustrated because it's been almost a month. Maybe they already have enough volunteers. Maybe Rose was wrong and they aren't interested in someone like me.

I've been reading in the paper about the many peace agreements made and broken between the Chinese Nationalists and the Communists. As soon as one is signed, it's broken with new fighting. General Marshall is over there trying to patch together a lasting agreement, but it doesn't seem to be working. I hate to think of her going into an area where there's active fighting going on.

### 3rd letter from Rose

November 19, 1945

Dear Mary,

How are you? Your letter reached me last week and I'm so happy to learn you're considering working with UNRRA. I completely understand your concerns about making a commitment like this. All I can say is the people I've been working with here are first-rate. All of them. Our instructors push us hard, but are respectful of the fact that we are all experts in our fields. I've met people from around the world who work in agriculture, health, education, refugee services, you name it.

Since I arrived in DC I've been up to my eyeballs in UNRRA-related learning, paperwork, activities, lectures, you name it. It's like having a full-time job with homework-almost as bad as being in school! The program is really top notch and includes language training, UNRRA policy, Chinese history, politics and culture, among other things. We're even getting some first aid training which I hope to never have to use.

I think the hardest thing for me is trying to wrap my mind around speaking Mandarin. I have daily lessons in Mandarin so I can humiliate myself on a daily basis. You know I'm not too musical (putting it mildly), so I have a hard time.

My big surprise is I'm probably going to be leaving soon, maybe in a week or two. My departure date got significantly moved up. Negotiations between UNRRA and the Chinese agency we work closely with (CNRRA) are expected to be completed by the end of the

week. When this happens UNRRA wants people on the ground as soon as possible. I'll likely be in one of the first groups sent. I've always liked thinking of myself as a "trailblazer".

I haven't had nearly enough language training, yet it may be good for me to dive in and be forced to speak the language. Also, staying in DC longer might be enough time for my worries to get the best of me. Given the dose of reality we get in our training it's hard not to let thoughts of quitting take hold. A woman in my group left last week. Her reason for leaving wasn't any one thing, she just felt she wouldn't be able to handle it. She's back in Massachusetts now.

So I'm heading to China! I'm not exactly sure when I'll be leaving. There are so many uncertainties right now. About the only thing I can tell you for sure is that mail can be sent to me at this address: UNRRA Embankment Building, 370 North Soochow Rd. Shanghai, China.

I should be in Shanghai for at least a week while my final assignment is determined and travel documents are prepared. I hope to be assigned to a province in central China, but I don't know for sure yet. Please write and let me know where you and I will be meeting for coffee. Until then, don't take any wooden nickels!

Sincerely,  
Rose

November 27

Another letter from Rose arrived today. Looks like she's getting on a plane to China! I have nothing but admiration for my friend and can't help wondering whether I'll be like her-or will I be like the woman who left and went back home? Guess I have to actually hear back from UNRRA first.

I found it hard to concentrate on anything today-nearly missed my stop to get off the bus on my way to work because I was daydreaming about China. I was wondering how different it must be there. Do they even have buses in China? It's been a month since I wrote to them to let them know of my interest. It makes me sad to think I may not go, but I guess I'll be safer this way. No warring factions in Cleveland anyway. I may be bored, but I'm certainly a lot safer. Maybe it's enough that I have a friend who's brave enough to go.

Mrs. Johnson's son Robert came back from France today. I don't think I've ever seen her so happy. I was sitting in the living room when I heard her come running out of the house screaming his name. At first I thought something bad had happened, but then I saw him. The moment Robert got out of the car, the whole family came pouring out of the house, crying and laughing. They all pounced on him, everyone hugging him at once. Mrs. Johnson was beaming. Robert is a full grown man now, a little taller and more lean. He's no longer the lanky kid who delivered our newspaper.

November 28

The long-awaited letter from UNRRA finally arrived today! It was a short note from Miss Frank saying she will be in Cleveland the week of December 10 and would like to meet me in person at that time. These last couple of weeks waiting for her response has helped me clarify how much I want to do this. I'll need to spend some time writing down my many questions. I'm excited and scared all at the same time. She included her phone number to set up the date and time, so I'm going to call first thing in the morning to make those arrangements.

December 10

This turned into one of the longest weeks of my life. I spent most of it talking with Mother, Fred, and my card-playing clan about the possibility of working with UNRRA. Fred's especially enthusiastic. I think he wishes he could go too, but I'm sure being a married father of four (and an accountant) makes it completely out of the question.

I'm a bit nervous about the interview. I hope I'm not setting myself up for failure. As I'm writing here at the end of the day, I find my courage waning and my self-doubt rising. What if I get there and learn I'm not up to the task or I can't handle the stress, the foreign-ness? What if I get sick? So many things can go wrong when you're far from what you know and the people who care about you. So many questions. I think I need to shut off the light and go to sleep.

December 11

I met with Miss Frank this morning for almost two hours at the CRB. She told me they've found people to fill all the open positions in Germany and Greece. Now they need only to fill positions in China. Looks like Rose and I may be having that cup of coffee after all.

She had dozens of questions about my education, life experience, and the kind of work I'm currently doing. She wrote down everything I said. She even asked personal questions about my life, how I handle difficult situations, if I have any allergies, my health history, the works. It was the most extensive interview I've ever had. If I'm offered a position it will be conditional on passing a comprehensive health exam and doing well in their training. She made it sound like it's not given that you're going until you actually get on the plane.

When I expressed my concerns about never having travelled overseas, she told me the training would be comprehensive, so even someone like me would feel well prepared. They teach volunteers the details of how to live in a foreign country. This helped calm some of my fears since I'm no world traveler. She also didn't think my age was a problem, so long as I'm healthy. She addressed each of my questions and made me think this was a once in a lifetime opportunity I couldn't pass up.

If I decide to do this I'll need a full year's leave of absence from the County Relief Board. I'm definitely interested in this opportunity and agreed to notify them of my decision after some more discussion with my co-workers, supervisors and, of course, my family.

After the interview I went straight to Belle's office and spoke with her and the County Commissioner. They readily approved a year's leave of absence and will ask Mr. Neff to take over my projects while I'm gone. He's already familiar with my work and knows the Wayfarer's

Lodge like the back of his hand. The general consensus around the office is: I should accept the offer-wherever it takes me.

We talked around the dinner table again tonight at Fred and Kitty's house. They all think this is a fine opportunity for me. Mother's reaction surprises me the most. I thought she'd be the one to tell me this was a scatter-brained idea and to keep myself at home. I think she understands the appeal of "parts unknown".

So it looks like I'll be calling the Personnel Officer in the morning to let them know I accept the position! I can hardly believe I'm going to do this because below the excitement and enthusiasm, there's an undercurrent of fear of the unknown. But I'm happy at the same time. I'm nervous and excited all at once. It's going to be hard to fall asleep tonight.

December 21

Christmas is only a few days away and all I can think about is China, China, China. Fortunately I have managed to do some shopping over the lunch hour in the last couple of months. I don't think I have to do too much rushing around at the last minute. I hate doing that, especially because the stores get so crowded and it seems like there's a frenzy of shopping.

I met with my card playing gang for lunch today and all anyone could talk about was my upcoming adventure. They all freely expressed their many opinions and concerns. There were also a lot of concerns and questions I couldn't answer which made me a little uneasy, but I think it will all get easier once I'm on my way. I'm feeling impatient about getting this process started. I know things like this can take a lot of time, I just don't want to lose my nerve and change my mind before I even get started.

When I got home I found a large envelope in the mailbox from UNRRA. It's the official offer for the position in China. Included with the job description are some forms I need to sign and send back before they can give me a start date.

Preparations for the trip are starting to take up most of my time, in one way or another. I've been busy at the office with my regular work and clearing files during moments of spare time. This will continue until my last day in Cleveland, no doubt. I feel a little sad to be leaving, if I'm being totally honest. Scared of important things like malaria and communists, and less life-threatening things too, like missing a year's worth of bridge games and dinners. I'll also miss out on a year's worth of watching Fred's children grow up.

I haven't heard anything from Rose for about a month. I wonder if she's in China yet.

December 25

What a beautiful Christmas day! There was even a little bit of snow on the ground, though not quite enough for a snowman. The kids were happy with the gifts they received and the dinner was delicious, though Kitty was a bit sad. She had hoped Walter could be home by now. His travel arrangements got held up, so he won't be home until at least the end of January.

January 8, 1946

Time is flying by! It's already the second week of January. Now I need to get serious about going to China. My health exam was yesterday and I came through with no significant medical problems. Hooray for me! Not bad for being 52. The serious stuff begins once I'm in Washington. The required shots are: Typhoid (3 shots); Typhus (2 hosts); Tetanus (2 shots); Plague (2 shots); Cholera (2 hosts); and Yellow Fever (1 shot).

I read in the paper about General Marshall's trip to China where he's trying to negotiate peace between Nationalists and the Communists. It's sad to think that fighting between China and the Japanese might be replaced by fighting among the Chinese themselves. It's worrisome. I don't want to get caught up in any fighting while I'm over there. An UNRRA representative told me we would be brought home if the fighting became too widespread and there was any danger.

#### February 1

Each day has been so stuffed with "getting ready to leave" activities that the time has flown by. I've been trying to plan what to bring along and figure out what is extra and can be left behind. I've been attending parties, meeting friends for lunch, dinner, drinks and breakfast, tidying up loose ends at work, and attending more dinner parties—it's exhausting.

I think it's good I'm leaving soon, before I lose my nerve. Right now, going to China seems like a faraway plan I can only vaguely imagine and that makes the planner in me uneasy. Once I get started moving, I think action will help calm my worries and I'll feel much better.

#### February 4

I've done a lot of shopping these last couple of weeks. I'm trying to assemble all the necessary things before I finally pack. I've got everything laid out on the bed in the guest room so I can stand there and look at it all and carefully think about what I'm bringing. I'll still have time to buy things in Washington, but it's easier to shop here since I know where the stores are and I have a car. Packing shouldn't be too difficult, but deciding what needs to be brought along takes time and reflection if I'm going to do it right. It would be helpful to know exactly where I'll be assigned, but I guess I'll be able to buy some clothing there if I wind up somewhere that's really cold in the winter.

This process of packing my trunk provides me with something I can focus my attention on before I leap into the great unknown. I've basically tied up all the loose ends at work so I'm not even going into the office this week, except to say goodbye to folks. I wasn't going to do it, but a couple of people made me promise to come in, so there you go. It will be nice to have a little extra time with Mother these last few days. She's still being supportive, which I am grateful for.

#### February 7

Went to a dinner party at Katherine's then rushed home for the final packing. There was so much confusion in the room and I became flustered. Fortunately Fred and the family had stopped by. Fred recognized my emotional state and took over the job with the help of Mother and Kitty. Joan and Danny distracted me by asking a bunch of questions about China. I want to snatch every moment I can with those kids since they'll be a year older when I return. I'm in a

real state emotionally. There's all this excitement added to a little fear and maybe even some dread. Tomorrow promises to be even more difficult.

February 8

I'm writing this while sitting on the train, headed for Washington. Finally! Today was my last day in Cleveland and what a day it's been. I started off by going to the office to say my final goodbyes. Fred and the family came over for an early dinner. Mother outdid herself by making steak and other things she knows I like. Her chocolate chip cookies were especially welcome and she packed the extras for my train ride. I'm eating one now. Fred kept prompting the kids to engage with Mother about what they did at school today. I think he wanted to distract her.

Mother was unusually quiet and didn't want to come to the train station to drop me off. She didn't want to make the scene too emotional. When the time came to leave the house it was hard to leave and we both shed some tears. She said she's happy for me to have this experience, but her eyes looked sad. I know she'll worry about me and I know I'll worry about her, but hopefully we'll both manage to be ok.

Fred has promised he'll take good care of Mother while I'm gone, and I'm certain he will. We've gone over the bills and he said he'll stop off at the house on the way home from work to check in on her. He also said they'll have her over to their house for Sunday dinner so she can spend time with the kids too.

We left the house and made it to the station by 6:30, perfect timing for a 7pm train. It was just Fred and me at the station, which made it easier for me. It's only been a little while since I decided to take this position and my emotions are running pretty high. It was nice to be able to say goodbye to Fred like I was only going away for a couple of weeks.

## Washington, DC

February 10

I was exhausted by the time I arrived in Washington yesterday morning. I don't know how people sleep on trains. I had a hard time catching a single wink. As instructed, I took a taxi to Headquarters (on G Street) where I met a few of the other trainees and then several of us took another taxi to George Washington University. We're all housed in one of their dormitories during training.

My roommate, Florence Ford, was already in the room when I arrived. She holds a PhD in Hygiene, she's my age, and will be in China to train nurses. We've been settling in, getting acquainted, figuring out where things in the dorm are, and perusing some of the program materials we were given at headquarters. Training begins tomorrow at 9am.

### 4th letter from Rose

December 29, 1945

Dear Mary,

Merry Christmas Mary! I hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday together. I received your kind letter after Thanksgiving while I was still in DC but didn't have a spare minute to write back before getting on the plane and it's been like that ever since.

I'm so happy to hear you're moving forward with joining UNRRA! I hope you'll join me in China too. Do you know when you're going to DC? I wish I had words of wisdom to prepare you for all of this, but I don't. If my experience of the last couple of months is at all useful, just jump. You'll be fine.

I arrived here in Hankou (central China) a few days ago after spending several weeks in Shanghai for additional training and getting paperwork in order. One of the travel documents I have has a message from the Generalissimo himself requesting the cooperation of anyone I show the note to. I may want to use that one liberally.

Shanghai's amazing, all bustling and full of energy. It must have been beautiful before the war. Not so much now. Everything is run-down and in need of repair, and there are so many people here-it's hard to believe.

I would not say my trip to Hankou was quick or comfortable. I traveled here with four other UNRRA employees. We travelled by steamer up the Yangtze River for over a week. The food was lousy, but the company was good. Don't get me wrong, I had wonderful meals in Shanghai, but the steamer's food was barely palatable. And that's really saying something-you know how much I like to eat!

But worse than the ship's cuisine was looking at the devastation along the shore as we motored upstream. The destruction of the countryside in this part of China is eye-opening, and I thought Shanghai was in bad shape. They tried to prepare us for this in DC, but I'm not

sure you can prepare someone to see this kind of destruction. Day after day, as far as the eye can see, as we travelled upstream.

Small towns and villages scattered along the shore have barely a single intact building. Piles of debris lie wherever you look. Sometimes a wall is still standing to define where someone's home used to be, but mostly it's just rubble. There aren't many people in the countryside either, at least from what I could tell. The few people I saw on the shore were so thin. Ragged is the only term I can think of. Maybe the situation is better if you're further away from the river.

Many people fled the countryside when the Japanese army came. They moved west with whatever they could carry or put in a cart. Now that the war's over they're returning to see what's left of their homes in the east-and they're coming in droves. So many boats were on the river-heading downstream. Our steamer was one of the few traveling upstream. Boats of all sizes and descriptions, junks, sampans, steamers, were filled with people and stuffed with belongings. It's hard to believe, but my language instructor in Shanghai swore that some factories in the eastern part of the country were disassembled, taken upriver, and then reassembled there.

Hankou is a mess. Most of the buildings that are still standing are in disrepair. There are gangs of bandits to watch out for, so we've been advised never to go out alone-especially after dark. I'm currently sharing a small room in a boarding house with another UNRRA worker named Irene. She's great. She's worked with the Red Cross for years under numerous conditions, so she's pretty savvy. My first task is to get several vaccination centers set up.

The Japanese only left this area a few months ago. Now a lot of the Chinese who fled the city during the occupation are coming back. Many of them are living in the street, or in makeshift shelters because their homes have been destroyed and they've got nowhere else to go.

I've been to my office a couple of times, and I am blessed because my CNRRA counterpart is a God-send. Yang Xiandong is the Deputy Director of CNRRA Hubei Regional Office. He is very kind and completely fluent in English so we communicate easily. He's got a PhD from Cornell University and he's helping me understand what's happening from a Chinese perspective. I think we're going to get along quite well.

I hope you'll be following in my footsteps, Mary, it would be great to have a few laughs here in the Middle Kingdom. After seeing what this place looks like, laughter may be in short supply. Please write to let me know how you are doing and what conditions are in your part of the country. My address here is: UNRRA Hankou office, Hualou Street, Hankou, Hubei

Sincerely,  
Rose

I was handed an aerogram with Chinese stamps this afternoon after our training session. I knew it was from Rose right away. I nearly destroyed the thing in my haste to open it. The paper is thin and easily torn.

Her description of the countryside is bleak and makes me wonder what I'm going to see and experience in China. I've seen my share of sickness and poverty, but not the devastation of war. Flood damage can devastate entire landscapes, but it's different when the destruction is intentional.

I quickly responded to Rose with a short note, to let her know that I'm in DC and starting my training. I wonder whether we'll see each other in China? Sometimes I think I'm overestimating my flexibility and nerve? I wonder, I wonder, I wonder. I think I should do something practical with my nervousness right now, rather than wonder myself into a tizzy.

February 16

Time flies when you're busy! This week was spent filling out forms, signing papers, and getting basic orientation to UNRAA's mission and how it operates. We had to fill out reams and reams of paperwork in triplicate. My hand hurts!

There were about 250 people in the general sessions. I met people whose assignments will be taking them all over Europe, Asia, and the Pacific. By week's end they broke us up into smaller groups based on the country or region where we'll be assigned. My group of folks heading to China has about 50 people in it.

We've had a few lectures with the promise of many more to come. One presentation that stuck me was by a political scientist who spoke about China's culture and recent history. The situation there is so much more volatile, complicated, and violent than I knew. The Japanese occupation has been brutal and China's been left in absolute shambles. But there's more trouble looming. Since Japan has surrendered now it looks like there may be a full-blown civil war. I hadn't planned on that. I (wrongly) assumed General Marshall had it all figured out a couple of months ago.

Political analysts watch the political situation very closely and we were told they will notify us if it becomes unsafe. I hope those analysts are good at what they do. I may need to be careful about what I write home about.

I feel like my eyes are being pried open to a new understanding of reality. Poverty in China and the conditions people live under are far worse than anything I've seen.

It's a decent walk from the training center to our dorm and I've begun walking back there at day's end to help me collect my thoughts. There's a lot to take in. Sometimes I walk halfway and sit on a bench in Lafayette Square looking at the White House, pondering all I've learned. I've seen real poverty in this country but it's nothing compared to the photos we saw today. Entire families living on the streets, villages destroyed, famine, orphans, thousands of people displaced. I hope I'm up to dealing with all of this.

## Mary's 1st letter home

February 17, 1946

Dear Mother, Fred, Kitty, and kids,

Another day has gone by and time is passing quickly already. I arrived here in Washington a week ago and it seems I'm back in school again. We have lectures and training every day with weekends off, of course, so we can write letters home, and study.

The children will get a kick out of this—we've been trained on how to kill a cobra! You do this by breaking its back. Though how you first grab it without getting bit is still mysterious to me. We were also trained on what to do if we meet up with scorpions. We weren't trained with living snakes or scorpions (thankfully). I hope I'll never have to use any of this information, but I do feel like a much more interesting person now. We must take sleeping bags and duffel bags with us and we all wear UNRRA uniforms when traveling. Won't I look cute with my duffel bag over one shoulder and a small overnight bag on the other?

We've been told to expect warm weather and lots of rain when we arrive. UNRRA is sending over a thousand people to China so don't worry, I'll have plenty of company all along the way. Life certainly appears complicated right now with order changes and no word yet on when I'll be leaving. I'll let you know my date of departure as soon as I find out. I'm glad Kitty's brother will be using my car while I'm gone. I miss it a lot already and have to 'foot it' wherever I go here in Washington.

My China address will be: MFF (that's me), UNRRA Embankment Building, 370 North Soochow Rd. Shanghai, China.

Love, Mary

March 3

These last couple of weeks have included more orientation/lectures, making new friends and then saying goodbye when they leave for their assignment, and, most challenging of all, trying to learn Mandarin. Mandarin must be the world's most difficult language. I hope I get a good translator when I get to China because I'm not making much headway with these lessons. I can mimic some of the sounds (at least I think I can), but understanding what someone else says is nearly completely beyond me. I also can't make heads or tails out of the characters. Thank God for hand gestures and smiles!

I've learned so much about China since coming to DC. We've had lectures about the people, languages (over 300 of them!), geography and, of course, its history. I never thought about the US being a "baby" country until I realized how very old China is. We're not expected to keep all the dynasties straight, but having a notion of how long their history stretches into the past gives me a whole new perspective.

They're not sugar-coating any of their information they give us about current conditions in-country either. Our instructors are brutally honest about what we're going to see and

experience. Epidemics and famine are not uncommon, and the poverty is profound. There's been nearly constant war and rebellion over the last 50 years and it has heaped misery on these people. Transportation by train is nearly nonexistent because the rail lines have been bombed repeatedly. Roads are in disrepair, bridges are out, there's a general lack of housing, lack of proper sanitation, prevalence of disease (TB, malaria, cholera, the plague, dysentery), orphaned children dying of starvation on city streets.

One of our instructors encouraged us to seriously consider withdrawing from UNRRA and going home if we felt this was too much to handle. They'd prefer us to turn around now rather than go all the way there and then drop out. He really made me question whether I'm up to this task I volunteered for. I've thought about going back to Cleveland a lot since that lecture. I've worked with sick and poor people my entire adult life, but China seems unlike anything I'd experienced. It stirred up emotions related to when I served at Camp Sherman where I was completely overwhelmed by the speed at which people got sick and died. That whole experience was horrible and I hadn't thought about it in a long, long time.

After a few hours of mulling over the situation yesterday, I've decided to stay with my decision. Maybe I am a bit bull-headed as Fred likes to say. I'm also a lot more mature than I was as a young kid fresh out of nursing school working with sick soldiers. And, I won't be treating people directly since I'm no longer a nurse. Being a social worker is a bit less personal. I'm not keen on putting up with snakes or scorpions, but they did teach us how to kill a cobra, so I guess I'm not completely unprepared. In reality, it's not snakes or shots weighing so heavily on my heart, it's having to see children starving on the street.

A new Director General of UNRRA was recently appointed-Fiorello La Guardia (former mayor of New York City). He's a no-nonsense kind of guy which surprised some of the UNRRA staff since the former director was more of a diplomat. But if we're going to achieve our goal of lifting people out of their current misery, maybe we need more direct action and less diplomacy. I found part of his acceptance speech very moving, so I'm going to copy it here into my diary, in case I need it for motivation:

This is all so new; it is all so hopeful. Have ever before in the history of the entire world 48 nations come together to save lives? We are united to preserve life, to build, not to kill, not to destroy. There is precedent for the spirit of UNRRA in the Old Scripture, in the New Scripture: to love our neighbor, to aid the needy—that is not original. It just has not been carried out. As the sun moves from place to place, there is one continuous prayer to God asking for His heavenly kingdom to come to earth. In every land, in every dialect which is spoken by man, the prayer is spoken: Give us this day our daily bread. Our task is to respond to that prayer. We then become a great army of mercy, a great army carrying out God Almighty's response to the call for daily bread.

March 15

I went shopping this afternoon for a few things. Why can't I find a good, solid pair of oxfords in my size? A bigger question is always-when do we leave? And will I travel by ship or plane? I also got fitted for my UNRRA uniform and rain coat today. Many articles such as duffle bags, sheets, blankets, flashlights had to be requisitioned, so I'll pick them up in a few days.

This evening several friends and I joined a cocktail party today at Florence's brother's home. She's leaving in a couple of days and he wanted to give her a good send-off. This party turned out to be the cure for my discontent. There were so many people at the party who were all celebrating before going their separate ways on various assignments: France, China, Italy, etc. My apprehensions about China seemed to melt away in this crowd of amazing, worldly people.

March 18

Florence leaves for China tomorrow morning. She's been busy with last minute chores and saying goodbye to friends. I spent my day in lectures and had yet another physical exam. Still healthy.

We were trained today about the kind of reports we'll be preparing while we're in China. We serve as observers, an extra pair of trained eyes to verify whether donated food and medicine are actually reaching their intended destinations. We get paired with a local counterpart which can be a somewhat delicate situation. They're trying to instruct us how to manage this diplomatically and while respectful of CNRRA, be watchful for irregularities.

Sometimes supplies are given to organizations free of charge and sometimes these supplies are sold. This is so different from Red Cross protocol where we basically decided who'd receive what kind of assistance-following all those Red Cross guidelines, of course. UNRRA's way makes a lot of sense to me because we have no knowledge of what's happening on the ground.

One often-repeated policy is that all supplies need to be distributed in-country based on need, without regard to politics, race, or religion. This was good to hear. We're also supposed to report discrimination of any kind in distribution of goods. Minority groups must be served the same way as the majority. This also goes for distribution in both Communist and KMT-held areas. I'm not fond of communism, but I like the fairness implied in this policy.

March 19

Went to the airport this morning to see Florence off, then I returned to my dorm and found my name on the alert list. I am scheduled to leave Washington by plane March 24! I'm feeling both excited and unsettled. That's only a few days away and not at all what I expected. I've only been here for about a month. My language skills are less than "not good". Terrible, in fact. I just don't think I'm ready. I'm also not thrilled about going by plane. I've never flown in a plane before, which adds to my list of concerns. It also severely limits the amount of baggage I can bring. My trunk will be sent by ship, but when will it arrive?

March 20

I was joined by a new roommate today, Asa Black, a public health nurse from England, who's leaving for China on the same flight as me. We had a nice dinner together at a restaurant this

evening. Her eagerness to try different foods is amusing. She got her nursing degree in '38 and was fortunate to be assigned in northern England before the bombing of London began. I'm glad we'll be making this journey together. It seems less daunting to know I'll be traveling with someone else—even if we just met.

After dinner we went back to the training center where we watched a film that brought us back to why we're here. The film was about the millions of children who've been orphaned. They estimate there are more than 10 million orphans in Europe alone, many of whom are starving. When no one takes them in they have no choice but to beg.

March 22

I've been quite busy since finding out I'm leaving Sunday. I've been to the tailor's, shoe repairman and bank, signed out at payroll, health services, and the travel office. I've spent hours washing, moving and packing and re-packing my clothes. I finally realized why people leaving for their assignments dreaded these last few days. To plan for a year is not easy, especially when there's a limited amount of weight I can bring on the plane. How much soap, and writing paper will I need over the next year in a place where I don't know what I'll be able to buy or what other items I may need? How many pairs of shoes should one take for such a trip?!

March 25

My trek to China began today.

I phoned home this morning. It was not easy to say goodbye, so it was a good thing Fred was at the house when I called. He kept our conversation short. He told me he'd watch after Mother and then he wished me "bon voyage". I guess he knows his big sister well. I tried to keep my emotions in check, but my voice was wobbly as tears rolled down my cheeks.

We left the dorm at 3:30 this afternoon with my coat and suit pockets filled with bottles, paper, mirror and other small things. Our plane left at 5pm and stopped in Toledo, Chicago and Denver before landing in San Francisco for the night. Good flying and good food along the way. It's an amazing adventure already for me. What a sight to look down on the Earth below! I don't know why I was ever afraid to fly.

Mary's 2nd letter home

On board plane, March 25

Dear Mother and All,

We left San Francisco at 7:30 this morning and our trip has been pleasant so far.

I'm travelling in a large Army transport plane with canvas bucket seats connected by straps to the plane's roof. We sit in rows along each side of the fuselage, facing each other. There are pads for the floor when we want to stretch out and blankets to cover ourselves up. About a dozen people are already sitting or lying on the floor. There are 21 passengers on board, all UNRRA employees. Most of us are headed for Shanghai and this group is about two thirds women, just a few men.

We had only a few hours in Hawaii (stop #1), but no time to sightsee. We saw Waikiki Beach, mountains and water before landing. It is so beautiful. I'll definitely come back for another visit. We flew at 8,000 feet all the way and I feel fine. I don't know why I was so concerned about flying. It's been amazing to see the world from up in the sky.

Johnson Island (stop #2) wasn't much more than a landing strip in the middle of water. I sure hope we don't get left here! Too dark to see much. The poor soldiers at the mess hall looked so lonely on this tiny little spot of land. They didn't seem too happy about our visit in the middle of the night either, since they had to cook for us.

Back on the plane at 3am and everybody was back on the floor to sleep (or at least lay down) until we landed at Kwajalein (stop #3) for lunch. While we're eating or walking around, soldiers unload cargo from the plane and load it up again. Our pilot told us the vaccines on board are the most important of all the cargo-more important than the people! If a choice had to be made between vaccines getting to China and UNRRA passengers getting there, the vaccines would win. I think he was joking but I sure wouldn't want to be left on one of these tiny atolls in the middle of the ocean. We also passed over some of the Marshall Islands and saw coral atolls. The color of the water is beyond description.

I'm going to add a little hurried note from Guam (stop #4). We arrived here at 6pm and now have four hours before taking off again. We've already had dinner at the mess, then off to the nurses quarters for a shower. Now a nice soldier boy is taking us for a drive. He's invited a few of us to have a beer with him, and I'm looking forward to it. This is a beautiful place, but hot. There are lots of military camps here from all of the armed services.

We have a short stop at Okinawa and then it's only 2 hours or so to Shanghai. We may be there around noon. We've already crossed the international date line and so many time zones I'm not sure what time it is or even what day it is. Keep well and please write often. I'll drop this note in the base post office before we take off. Please let me know when it arrives.

I have already seen places I never dreamed I would ever visit.

Bye bye,  
Mary

March 27

Kwajalein is a small flat, mostly barren island. One soldier told me all of the vegetation here had been destroyed and the Navy has made some sorry attempts to grow flowers and trees. We had a little time to walk around after our meal which helped my back feel better after trying to sleep on the plane.

Our pilot collected our cameras when we reboarded because we flew near where they tested those atomic bombs. The military doesn't want any photos taken. I didn't see anything out of the ordinary, or even know what to look for.

We arrived in Guam at 6pm and had a most welcome shower at the Army Nurses quarters. It was surrounded by barbed wire and there were military guards on duty, which caught me

off-guard. It's a beautiful place but there are reminders of war everywhere. We took a little tour in a Jeep and saw foxholes and wrecked ships sticking out of the water. The soldier who drove our Jeep said he and a friend had found the bones of two decomposing corpses last week, back in the jungle. They were sure the bodies were Americans because the teeth had gold fillings. He also said there are still a few Japanese snipers in the jungle who are unaware the war's over. That's why there's barbed wire and armed guards at the nurses quarters. The reality of war is all around us now-it's no longer just a photo in a magazine or newspaper for me.

March 28

We left Guam at 10pm (cameras in hand) and arrived in Okinawa at 3:30am. I'm getting more accustomed to sleeping on the floor and getting up at any hour. Am I accustomed to it or am I merely completely exhausted? We had two hours here for more food, refueling, cargo resupply, etc. Our pilot gave us a low-flying tour of the island as we began the last stretch of our journey. It was still before dawn but we could make out vague outlines of villages and mountains. Two and a half hours to Shanghai.

## Shanghai, China!

March 29

When we landed in Shanghai yesterday we still had to wait a couple of hours before we could get out of the plane. First, Chinese immigration officers and doctors boarded the plane and looked over all of our documents very carefully, especially our shot records. Unbelievably, they insisted that we all get another smallpox shot. They said it was for "Chinese smallpox". I'm pretty certain there's only one type of smallpox and I know I'm up to date, but knowing there was no way to fight this, we all took the shot. Then we had to wait several more hours before finally being transported to our hotel by bus.

I will be staying at the New Royal Hotel while I'm here. This hotel is completely filled with UNRRA people and I was happy to bump into my friend Florence in the lobby. She arrived about a week ago and is waiting for her assignment, probably up north. My first impressions of Shanghai are definitely colored by the fact that I'm exhausted from travel and disoriented in a way I have never before come close to experiencing. I've had no sense of time since we crossed the international date line and all those time zones. Drinking coffee at night didn't help much either.

Let's begin with the obvious-this place is completely jam-packed with people. There are so many people buzzing around everywhere it's beyond belief. People are everywhere! It's a babbling mass of humanity, an amazing number of rickshaws traveling every which way, street bazaars, cars, filth, wagons loaded with barrels, children, bicycles. Reading any sign on a store front or in the street is impossible because I cannot make out a single character. Everything feels so completely different from anything I've experienced before that I feel unmoored, like I'm mentally dizzy. There are some beautiful old buildings in Shanghai, but much of this city lies in ruins.

We were given a few hours to rest and then our group was taken to the UNRRA Central office for introductions. They use converted Army trucks here as buses for UNRRA staff. We were introduced to office staff, Division Leads, and then attended a short presentation about UNRRA's China Program. I'm trying to learn as much as I can but I have to admit to being exhausted and more than a little overwhelmed. It's a lot to take in-even just from looking out the bus window as we go from place to place.

Later in the afternoon Asa and I took a walk to Soochow Creek. We left our hotel and walked in one direction, thinking that was an easy way to investigate a bit without risking getting lost. The streets and alleys off the main road are quite small and jam packed with people and activity and there are smells here that startle my senses. Dodging traffic is difficult. You have to be careful not to get run over by quick-moving rickshaws or bump into someone carrying large baskets balanced on either side of a 6-foot pole balanced across their shoulders.

We took an "UNRRA bus" back to the Hotel and had dinner at the Italian Club which serves good food but doesn't have much choice. There's a nice garden there though. I'm glad Asa's on this adventure with me. It's comforting to have someone I know in this foreign land.

3rd letter home

Sunday, March 31

Dear Family and Friends:

Our plane trip was fascinating-as smooth as could be and the scenery, mostly clouds and water, was beyond description. We had beautiful weather and the ocean was so many different shades of blue. Hope you have received my letter from the different islands where we landed. I cannot describe the thrill of first seeing China's coast. Miles and miles and miles of farmland, villages with thatched roofs dotted the landscape, green rice paddies, irrigation canals, etc.

Shanghai at last and I am bewildered with it all. Of course, I expected to be transported to another world, but I was not completely prepared for this. The ride from the airport through Shanghai's business section was pretty chaotic by Cleveland standards. The UNRRA truck swung back and forth, dodging the poor men pulling rickshaws, men and boys on bicycles, and all the people walking on the narrow streets (I guess sidewalks are too crowded). No right or left side of the road for driving, in and out, and the one who gets there first is the lucky one. Needless to say, after two nights sleeping on the floor of the plane, I was all set for a bath and some rest.

I have a room with two other UNRRA women-not bad, although I sleep on a cot. We have hot water for baths three times a week and a dining room where meals are fairly good, but expensive. I changed a \$5 US bill when I arrived and received \$11,000 chinese dollars (yuan) for it. I felt like a rich person for a minute. I had a difficult time paying for my supper-luckily another UNRRA worker who's been here a while helped me out. Today I received a CN\$75,000 advance for maintenance. It sounds big, doesn't it, but not when you begin spending it. Breakfast cost me CN\$2,100 (about \$1.05). I had canned pineapple, toast, and two cups of tea. Both meals cost CN\$2,500 to \$3,000, depending upon what there is on the menu-usually only one choice for dinner. UNRRA has a dining room where food costs a little less and I plan to eat there whenever I can.

Florence and I went on a walking tour of the downtown district this afternoon. She was my roommate during training in DC. I bought a bottle of ink for CN\$1,500 (\$0.75US). I feel like such a big shot when I pull out my bank roll, but it's actually a nuisance to have to carry it. We walked among milling crowds, dodging rickshaws, automobiles and carts. We tried our Chinese words in a few shops and the smart young clerks got a good laugh at our expense.

We walked down the "Bund"- quite the street in Shanghai-it's along the waterfront facing the Huangpu River. We paid a small amount to get into a park where we rested under a shady spot and watched boats on the water. So many boats of all sizes: huge US Naval boats, smaller PT's, Chinese junks (flat-bottom wooden boats with square sails), and sampans (smaller flat-bottom wooden boats with paddles or oars). They use the most peculiar oars that are bent like an arrow at one end and the part in the water looks like a rudder. Women seem to do most of the rowing-often with babies tied on their backs. Junks come in all sizes

and I think the bigger ones are used in the ocean while smaller ones stay on the rivers. It's hard to know which is the busier route in Shanghai-streets or rivers? Both are packed.

But the picture that's beyond belief is Soochow Creek, near UNRRA's headquarters. I walked there with another friend, Asa. This stream reminds me of a crowded street in a large city, except it's also a parking lot. Families live on these long, wooden sampans that are all packed together like sardines along the riverbank. There are so many sampans parked along both sides that there's only a narrow space in the middle for boats to move through. Dried fish is strung up on poles, old rags hanging from lines, and a canvas or woven straw mat forms a small arch used for shelter. People cook on these boats, hang out their laundry to dry, everything! Sampans used to carry cargo are loaded to the gills with crates, bales of cotton and sacks of all kinds.

Rickshaws move all different directions on the streets and they are all fast. These are 2-wheeled carts pulled by a man who is jogging. Most of the rickshaw drivers are very thin, wearing only ragged shorts and shirts and sandals. But they are fast and graceful as they race along. There are also men pulling heavy carts loaded with lumber, coal, whatever, exactly as our beasts of burden would do at home. They strain from under the weight of what they're hauling. Sometimes there are 3 or 4 men pulling a heavy load and you can hear them sing or chant while they work-perhaps to forget their agony.

I can't get over how busy the streets are here. There are people moving in all directions, makeshift stands set up to sell produce or whatever, and there are people begging on every corner. Some more well-off Chinese men wear business suits (like in the US), or a mandarin type garment over trousers or pajama-like pants. These are usually blue, but gray and black are popular too. Many women wear dark tunics and loose trousers. I have also seen a few women in western dresses or straight cut dresses made of silk (they call them cheongsam). Children are cute and when they're clean, I want to hug them. They are as bright as can be.

There aren't many foreigners walking on the street or in the market. I've mostly seen foreigners in cars, Jeeps, rickshaws or sedan chairs-those are covered chairs carried by two people using wooden rails (I think you have to be wealthy to be in one of those). The end result is that foreigners (like us) who do walk on the street stand out.

I could go on and on but had better save something for my next letter. I will know more about life in China in a week or two. I will try to write regularly and my new hobby will be dashing to the mailbox each day to see if any letters have arrived. I hope you will not disappoint me. I am so interested to know what is happening at home, at work, at my club, etc.

With my best wishes to everyone,  
Love, Mary

April 1

Breakfast at our hotel, then off to headquarters where there was a lecture and some training on protocol. Dashed out with some folks to have some calling cards made with our names in

Chinese on the back. The meaning of my name in Chinese (Mai Lei Fei) is “beautiful stove”. Interesting. Good thing I had Florence there to help on this little adventure. I am still like a babe in the woods most of the time-all wide-eyed, mouth gaping, and looking around, trying to take it all in. I got disoriented a few times and she grabbed my hand so as not to lose me in the crowd. Adults don’t pay much attention to us. I think they’ve seen plenty of foreigners here in Shanghai. But the children stare or point and then giggle, especially if I make eye contact with them. We’re also both taller than most local people on the street, so we pretty much stick out like sore thumbs.

April 2

Went to headquarters and met the China Director and also the Welfare Chief. They were both welcoming to our little group of newcomers. Then we attended a talk by the Health Division head who described current disease outbreaks throughout the country and how they are being addressed. Met some more new staff members who are all interested to know “where do we go from here?” Six of us went to Sun Ya, a Chinese restaurant, for dinner. Very good: shrimp, chicken with walnuts, sweet and sour pork, beef and bamboo sprouts, egg foo young and rice. There are many good restaurants in this part of Shanghai, but UNRRA’s dining room at the hotel has been recommended because it’s regularly inspected to be sure it meets certain health standards.

April 6

Today I walked to a bazaar where I got my name stamp (“chops” as they say here) and purchased several gifts. I’ll need this stamp for my reports and other official documents. It’s considered the same as a signature.

I’m starting to get the hang of bargaining at the market. It can be fun. It’s not easy because my language skills are so poor, but Florence is a good teacher. She said she learned how to bargain a few years ago while on a trip to Mexico. Hand and facial gestures help a lot. I’m also beginning to feel more comfortable with the sheer number of people you see every day, on the street and in the market. I get jostled quite a bit, but being a little taller than the average Chinese person helps.

April 12

A routine has settled in. Basically mornings involve lectures and/or training and afternoons may include a short meeting or we might just be free to do as we please. Today we heard from UNRRA’s agricultural experts who are predicting this year’s harvest will be bad. Between spring flooding, drought, civil unrest, displacement of farmers and war damage, it could turn into a food crisis. I’ve not been in China long, but with the level of poverty I see here in Shanghai, a poor harvest sounds like it would be devastating. People are already so close to the margin. Malnourished people are everywhere, children with bellies bloated from malnutrition, and some of the beggars are so thin they look like they already have one foot in the grave.

I finally got my assignment. I’ve been assigned to Canton and frankly, I’m a little disappointed. I had preferred a more inland province, though given the information about crop failures, Canton

may be easier. It will be hot as blazes there, though, and cholera's an ongoing problem. I'll also need to take a long boat trip to get there since there's no direct way to get there by rail. But Canton it is. I made a quick trip to the market to pick up my "chops", then dinner at the Italian Club followed by a long walk through the International Settlement with friends.

Florence received her assignment today too. She's going to Qingdao next week. It's a port city north of here, about halfway between Shanghai and Manchuria. She said there's a strong American military presence there so she feels comfortable despite the fighting going on in outlying areas. I'm going to miss her. We've had many great conversations and, while I like all the people I'm around, it's also been nice to talk to a woman my own age.

April 18

I attended a lecture today about the large number of orphans here. Orphanages are overcrowded and underfunded, most children are malnourished, and many of them are also sick. There's a steady flow of orphans to cities from the countryside. UNRRA feeding stations and vaccination clinics are starting to make some headway where they've been established, so at least that's encouraging.

My ankle's been bothering me since I twisted it last week when I got off that overcrowded bus. It's swollen and it throbs. Asa noticed I've started to limp, so she convinced me to see a doctor tomorrow. I hope it's not bad enough to get me sent home. It would be a pity after all this time. Fingers crossed it's only a sprain.

Mary's 4th letter home

April 21

Dear Mother, Fred and Kitty,

Several weeks have passed and I'm still in Shanghai, but I finally got my assignment. I'll be going to Canton! I don't know much about Canton yet but will read some reports to catch up. I know it's tropical and as hot as the deuce in summer, so I'm trying to enjoy Shanghai's beautiful spring weather as much as possible. A cholera epidemic is under control in Canton now but I'll have another cholera shot before leaving Shanghai, to be safe. I think there's probably enough serum in me at this point to disinfect a ship!

Speaking of ships, I'll be sailing to Canton by landing ship tanker (that's LST for those of use "in the know"). These are the big ships used to carry troops, tanks and supplies, though the cargo on our ship will be food and medicine-no tanks. It will be about 1500 miles and should take only a couple of days. Please continue sending my mail to Shanghai, as I may be here a while longer.

How are you all? I think of you often and miss everyone. These last couple of months have been like a vacation with someone else planning it, almost like a learning vacation. I've attended lots of lectures and had fascinating conversations with people from all over the world who have expertise in many different areas.

The Communists are still fighting the Nationalists (KMT for short) in various areas, but mostly in the north-not Canton-so don't worry about me. I'm amazed at the amount of support the Communists have, but you begin to understand why when you see how impoverished people are, with so little to keep body & soul together. The Communist program appears good to them as it promises good to all. I'm not too familiar with political conditions as yet so I'll stay away from politics and talk about my week's activities.

I still spend several hours each day at lectures, orientation and training sessions. Afternoons usually include wandering around town and then back to our hotel. After dinner, another walk. The streets around here are fascinating-like a continuous bazaar. There are so many people here. Yesterday I saw a baby (about 1 ½ year old) who had a shaved head except for a dollar-sized spot. A braid tied with a ribbon dangled from this spot. This is interesting because I've seen only a couple of adults with this hairstyle (they call it a queue). It shows loyalty to the emperor but with all political changes recently, most men have cut their braids off.

On Thursday we walked around the International Settlement, the neighborhood where my hotel is located. It's no longer as fancy as it used to be. The streets are lined with mansions with large gardens, most of which have been ignored for years. These homes are like the ones in Shaker Heights, and were previously owned by wealthy Italian, French, German or English businessmen and diplomats.

When the Japanese started bombing Shanghai they spared this part of the city because it's where wealthy foreigners lived. But once Pearl Harbor was attacked, the remaining foreigners left Shanghai and the Japanese military took control of the area. Chinese families moved into these houses after Japan surrendered last year. Now there are many Chinese occupying these houses. There's an awful housing shortage here because so many buildings were destroyed. We see people sleeping on the street and living in the rubble of buildings destroyed years ago. Our hotel was built by the French, occupied by the Japanese, then the US Army who vacated shortly before UNRRA moved in. Who next?

I went to Mass today at a church in the French quarter. There was an American priest, a lovely church, and a choir was composed of Chinese and foreign singers who sang a High Mass. It seemed to be the most beautiful singing I've ever heard. They told me there are 50,000 Catholics in Shanghai and the altar boys were all Chinese kids. You should have seen your Aunt Mary going to church. I rode in style in a pedicab-a rickshaw pulled by a man on a bicycle. I felt quite grand riding down fancy Bubbling Well Road. Funny name, isn't it?

Of course, the pedicab driver wanted 2000 yuan but I only gave him 1500 (\$0.75). He argued with me but I argued right back. Neither of us understood a word of what the other person was saying. Then I walked away. I knew 1500 was the proper amount because I had asked someone at the hotel what the fare for a ride to the church should be.

At 2 o'clock I went on a jeep trip with UNRRA folks. We visited a Buddhist Temple outside of Shanghai. It was a rough ride, but worth it. The temple was beautiful, with a huge white

marble statue of a reclining Buddha and several seated Buddhas made of jade. We lit a 'joss' (incense stick) and waved it before the statue of Buddha, not knowing what else to do.

There were also dozens of other male and female images, some with 6 arms. The Buddhist heaven was depicted in all sorts of figures, including devils, serpents etc. Too bad we didn't know the meaning of all these things but no one there spoke a word of English and no one in our group was skilled at Mandarin. They tell me this temple is no comparison to the ones in Peking and other places in China. Hope I get to see some of those.

After our trip to the Temple we went down to the old Chinese city. What a place! Narrow lanes paved in cobblestone, tiny shops and living quarters all crammed together. All sorts of items to sell, and beggars and skinny little children everywhere. You can see all members of a family busy making sandals, others cutting ivory in shops where fans, pictures, and foods of all sorts are sold. Saw a doctor treating an ulcer on a man's leg with snake oil or magic (don't know which). He had live snakes in a long glass dish (no cobras, fortunately) and also some pickled ones. One shop had a sign with a picture of eyes with what appeared to be cataracts.

I visited the travel office and learned my ticket for the boat will be ready tomorrow. I'll go directly to Hong Kong, where I'll get an English visa, and then another Chinese one to get into Canton. At least my friend Asa will be with me for the entire trip. We've been advised to bring our own food because meals on board these ships are not always safe to eat. Four days to Hong Kong and then on to Canton. You might be interested to know I had to contact at least 15 different offices to get necessary papers, etc. to get out of here, so you see I am doing some work, though I'm eager to get down to brass tacks and feel like I'm actually contributing to help solve some of these problems. Maybe then I wouldn't feel so bad about all the poverty I see around me.

Bye-Bye  
Mary

April 24

Today's lecture was about transportation as it relates to delivering food and supplies. The transportation system here has been attacked for various and sundry reasons from all sides-the Japanese, the Communists, the KMT, even the Americans. The end result is that it's extremely difficult to distribute supplies, and in some places, almost impossible.

I also learned about a dike on the Yellow River that was blown up by the KMT to slow down the advance of the Japanese army. The dike's destruction resulted in a huge flood in which they think more than 400,000 people died and millions of people were displaced. The magnitude of a catastrophe like this boggles my mind. UNRRA's engineers are working out how to fix the dike and, from what they're saying, it's going to take at least a year to repair. I met a man in DC who told me he was going to be working on a massive dam reconstruction project. Back then I had no understanding what the word "massive" meant.

## 5th letter from Rose

February 12, 1946

Dear Mary,

How are you? In your last letter you said you were getting ready to go to DC. Are you still stateside? Should I get my tea pot ready for your visit to Hankou?

Conditions here are beginning to improve slightly since I arrived. I'm happy to report that our water supply-both quantity and quality-has vastly improved since I first arrived. I have been busy working with local folks to establish vaccination and feeding centers, and to assist them with housing the many refugees who pass through. We're doing our best to get people vaccinated for both smallpox and cholera. Hankou experienced a lot of cholera during the occupation, most often in the summer when there's flooding. So if we can get vaccinations in high gear maybe this summer won't be too bad. We're also seeing about 10 new cases of smallpox a day here, so time is of the essence.

About the only foreigners here in town are UNRRA folks and a handful of missionaries. We (UNRRA folks) try to keep ourselves occupied during our down time by playing a lot of bridge. I have to say that I'm getting pretty good. I've also been doing a lot of reading and book swapping.

Because Hankou's a hub of river transportation, we get something like 1500 new refugees arriving each week, which is better than a few months ago. There were something like 30,000 refugees in December alone. Many of these folks are here for only a short time before they make the rest of their journey. The number of people on the move is impressive. CNRRA expects warmer weather will bring even higher numbers of refugees so we've leased a cotton mill to shelter them. We think 5,000 refugees can be safely housed there for short stays.

The best way in and out of town right now is still by the river, but only a few large ships can manage docking here because the port is still clogged with debris from damaged docks. Water levels have been low too. A couple of US Navy ships loaded with food and medical supplies did manage to get through last week, so we were all happy about that.

Roads in this area are nearly impassable. When CNRRA trucks go out to deliver food and medical supplies they take road construction materials along with them. They'll use wood planks to cross damaged portions of bridges. Needless to say, they pull up those planks once they've passed over an obstacle and put them back in the truck for the next time.

Recently we had a situation where nearly 2,000 Korean soldiers were stranded just outside of Hankou. They had been forced to fight for Japan and, of course, weren't interested in going back there, but they aren't considered eligible for UNRRA support. Crazy situation. Fortunately for them, I have a great colleague who's in charge of international repatriations and I'm sure he'll have them on their way home soon. Herman's from Tennessee and he's black, so everyone in Hankou knows who he is.

I'll be going out into the countryside next week for the first time and I'm both excited and nervous about it. Fortunately I'll be traveling by boat with Yang Xiandong, my CNRRA counterpart, to a village about 80 miles southeast of here. The KMT controls the city, but there are communist units, and bandits nearly everywhere outside of Hankou-especially north of town. Our trip next week will be to an area south of Hankou where the communist presence isn't as strong. Why start with the hard stuff when there's an easier route?

We have to tread carefully at all times in order to do our work and Dr. Yang is great at explaining how to do this. He's totally committed to the principle of giving aid to all populations, regardless of their political alignment. We always wear our UNRRA uniforms and have our official documents with us at all times-even here in town. But most important are the translators! I don't know where we'd be without them.

This work has turned out to be more challenging than I had anticipated. It will be interesting to compare our notes and experiences. I'm eager to learn what the situation is for you when you arrive at your post. Do you know where you'll be?

Well, dear friend, I am starting to ramble and I'd better keep this note short. There's so much to do.

Sincerely,  
Your exhausted friend Rose

April 25

I had a wonderful surprise today-a letter from Rose! It followed me all the way here to Shanghai, having traveled over the Pacific Ocean twice! Too bad, too. She wrote it at about the same time I was leaving DC. I hadn't heard from her in so long I was starting to get concerned. I'm relieved to know she is well (at least as of early February) and the work she's been doing seems like it's moving along well. I just hope she's safe going out in the field. I'm probably lucky I was assigned to Canton rather than an inner province. I'll send her a response tomorrow to let her know I'm in China and where to send additional letters.

April 27

It's been difficult to manage my impatience these last few weeks. This bum ankle had required a lot of time sitting with my foot elevated. No wandering around town to take in the sights. I hate to sit around all day but those are "Doctor's orders". They've got me using crutches too. My ankle is feeling much better, so I guess it's working. I've been reading an endless stream of UNRRA reports in my hotel room, napping, and chatting up the constantly revolving series of roommates who stay in this room.

A group of us traveled by Jeep yesterday to a YMCA nursery for children just outside of Shanghai. Then we visited a refugee camp with over 200 men, women, and children who are waiting to be repatriated to some other part of China. We also visited a Buddhist home for 80 to 90 blind and crippled people, both young and old together.

The reason for these visits is to help us understand what kinds of conditions UNRRA wants us to report: our perception of the resident's health, general cleanliness of the facility, crowding, number/training of staff, etc. They are instructing us on what they want reported and how to compare local customs and standards to our own. I found this trip extremely helpful because standards of comfort and cleanliness are pretty different between China and the U.S. All three of these facilities were clean and the residents looked well cared for.

I went to what I thought would be a Russian ballet this evening but it turned out to be a comedy, so I couldn't understand a thing. I came home by myself on a rickshaw and had a bit of a scare. The rickshaw driver took a route through a bunch of dark alleyways, rather than the main roads I have become familiar with. He was moving pretty fast and I started getting scared. I thought I was going to be robbed. It was around 11pm and there weren't as many people around.

My heart was beating quickly and my palms were sweaty. I couldn't tell which direction we were headed because the alleyways are so close together and he kept making these quick turns. I was getting ready to yell at him, but not having enough language to express myself-what would I have said? And with my ankle in bad shape, I felt like a sitting duck. I was greatly relieved when he made that last turn and I finally saw our hotel. He turned around when we stopped and he had such a big grin on his face. I think he was proud of how fast he got me home. Needless to say, I gave him a handsome tip.

## Mary's 5th letter home

April 28

Dear Mother and All,

I am going to make this letter a family affair-to conserve time and money as well as keep you all up to date. I received your letter this morning, Fred. It was dated the 22nd, which means it took about 3 weeks to get here, but it arrived in good shape and I was very happy to get it. By this time I hope you've received my letter from my ocean hop over here. This typewriter seems to jump a space now and then- or is it me? I borrowed it from one of my roommates and thought I should write as much as I can while I have access to it. I know my handwriting is hard to read.

I'm still in Shanghai but expect to leave for Canton soon. Schedules change quickly around here and at the last minute I may learn there is no room on the ship or that the ship doesn't sail for a week. I'm trying to be patient with all of this waiting and the slow pace of life here in China, but it's already been about two months since I left Cleveland and I'm still not in my position.

About 15 new UNRRA folks arrived from New Zealand and Australia yesterday. Tomorrow we expect another plane from the States. At present there are five of us in this suite of two rooms, one bath, and one clothes closet. Nice girls all of them but much younger than I am by 20 to 30 years. They don't seem to mind my age and we get along well. There aren't many women my age on this adventure. One of my roommates is a British girl, one

Armenian, a New Zealander and two Americans. It feels like the United Nations around here. The little bit of Mandarin I learned in Washington hasn't helped much partly because there are so many different dialects here, but mostly because it takes a whole lot more than a few weeks to master Chinese of any dialect.

The weather has been warm these past few weeks and some flowering trees are in bloom. There are no gardens like yours, Mother, but the few trees that made it through the war remind me "hope springs eternal". I am trying to enjoy the weather now because I think Canton is going to be hot and steamy. Three of the people who travelled here with me from the States are going to Manchuria where it will be cooler and they are thrilled with their assignment. I've heard there are camels there too! I've acquired some more equipment to lug along-another mosquito net, two blankets, a pillow, wash basin and folding cot. I don't think I'll need warm blankets in Canton for a while.

When we go out on field assignments we'll go in teams and we'll always have an interpreter along. I've met several UNRRA interpreters here in Shanghai. They are nearly all under 25 years of age and their English is impeccable. I'm sure UNRRA gets plenty of criticism in papers back home, but I marvel that so much is being done with so many issues to address.

Interestingly, I have yet to speak with an UNRRA staff person (foreign or Chinese) who is not in support of the Communist program. Tonight I ate dinner with two women doctors and again, the same praise for the Communists. No doubt the Communists are smart in giving people promises of more food as that is the most important thing in the lives of millions right now but I feel Communism is a real threat all over the world, particularly if our governments don't make a lot of social reforms. At many UNRRA training sessions we were cautioned not to take part in such discussions. We've been told we must be mindful not to talk politics, particularly with Chinese counterparts as our mission is to help all people, regardless of political affiliation or ethnic group. They may feel we are partial if we express our political views openly. I just keep my eyes and ears open and try to keep my opinions to myself.

China is still so foreign to me but I'm gradually getting acclimated. I rode to church and back in a rickshaw again yesterday and I can bargain without too much trouble now (though I certainly pay more than if I actually spoke Mandarin). I've learned that rickshaw pullers are smart. Like everyone else, they are out for what they can get from foreigners who have money-particularly Americans. I have also seen Navy boys treat them nasty at times by throwing a bill at their feet or giving them less than the right amount. At least I am fair about what I pay them. I always ask a hotel clerk what the fare should be and then bargain from there.

I must crawl into my cot-I'm sure it isn't any softer than it was last night-ha. I'll be thinking of you all and looking for letters. Lots and lots of love to all. I am not homesick yet. It is all so interesting and there are many people around me.

Bye bye,  
Mary

April 29

These last few weeks have felt like I've been waiting and waiting and waiting some more. Waiting for letters from home, waiting for my assignment, waiting for a ship, then waiting for another ship. I've about had it. I like to move around and I hate to wait my life away. However my ankle is doing much, much better. The crutches were a great help, though I did get some stares when I went out in the street with them. I visited the doctor again yesterday and was given a clean bill of health.

Again a change in departure. The first ship I was supposed to travel on did not come into port. Changed to the "Yuensang", a British cargo ship which leaves tomorrow.

I rushed to complete packing and transported it all to the docks, then to the ship on a launch so packed with local people there were several people hanging over the sides of the boat. Asa and I had quite a job keeping track of all 13 pieces of our luggage (three of which belong to a nurse who's flying to Hong Kong). A quick trip up the gangplank and to my new home. Asa and I will be roommates on this trip. We are among 16 first class passengers on this ship, 26 people are in 2nd class, and approximately 200 in 3rd class (all Chinese).

April 30

Our ship was scheduled to leave early in the evening but was held up because a typhoon was reported near Formosa and no one will be moving until that passes. It's a bit early in typhoon season, they say. The ship set anchor in the Huangpu River and we spent a pleasant day on deck looking at the Bund. We visited with the captain and other 1st class passengers, and fought millions of pesky ants with Lindane. Glad I brought it along because I also saw some HUGE roaches in our stateroom. They were also taken care of. This ship needs serious extermination.

Sat on the deck all morning with other passengers and had a Chinese lesson with a few Chinese passengers who are traveling 1st class with us. One is a graduate of Cornell. They seemed pleased to straighten us out on the pronunciation of a few Chinese sentences.

I asked the captain about what it's like in 3rd class and he said it's pretty rough. They are in the bottom level of the ship, in an area designed to hold cargo. Few comforts are available and ventilation is bad because there are no windows. Meanwhile, we're up here on the top deck getting fresh air all day and night. I think there's a small space where they can be outside, but mostly they are in the cramped, stuffy areas below. They cook their own food, have no cabins or privacy, and sleep on their own mats.

There are many interesting sites to observe from the luxury of our deckchairs: huge US flag ships, destroyers, sampans, junks, and a large assortment of other ships all anchored and waiting for the weather to change. It was so nice to have my roommate Asa, Mr. Brunk, and Mr. Collins along on this part of the journey. Mr. Brunk and Mr. Collins are both engineers who will be traveling with us as far as Hong Kong then they'll go to Hainan Island for their assignments.

May Day

The typhoon became an actual threat today, so the crew secured the ship with more cables to keep us in place if the winds pick up. There are two US Liberty ships anchored nearby and seeing them somehow made me feel more secure. They're probably also full of UNRRA cargo, like our ship. The smaller sampans and junks pulled anchor and left. The captain told us they are probably seeking shelter in smaller harbors or upstream on one of the rivers. We watched all day as dark threatening clouds rolled along, but no real typhoon wind yet.

The captain kept us informed of weather reports, though it was hard to make out what he was saying over the garbled loudspeaker. At one point he came out to the deck to talk to us. He said their weather reports aren't as reliable as when the Spanish Jesuits had a weather station in Shanghai before the war. Ships knew every move of a typhoon back then.

#### May 2

I slept soundly, though I expected to be awakened by heavy winds at any moment. Instead, a cabin boy came by with a nice hot cup of tea. A beautiful blue sky and plenty of sunshine awaited me on the deck. The typhoon is reported to be swinging inland, south of Shanghai. The danger is not over yet, so another day of sun bathing while remaining anchored is what we'll have to do. I'm reading the book *China Cycle* and I find the descriptions of landscapes quite interesting. Asa and I are busy with our rigorous program of eating, sleeping and reading on deck. Most enjoyable. I'm beginning to feel I have lived my entire life on this ship.

#### May 3

At last, we finally pulled anchor and left Shanghai. It was a beautiful day and now we get to see some sights other than the Bund. Hard to believe we spent 3 days sitting there. Unfortunately we only made it as far as the Yangtze River where we had to set anchor-again. It was too windy to enter the Yellow Sea. There are many obstacles (islands and rocks) in this area, making navigation unsafe in high wind. So, another day keeping company with destroyers and junks. They were right about the food on these kinds of ships. It's greasy and unappetizing. My stomach has been squeamish today from both the food and the ship's movement.

#### May 4

I woke up at 7am and felt us moving. We were sailing downriver again, but here it was much, much wider and eventually we came into a huge, open harbor. We'd finally made it past the mouth of the great Yangtze River, dotted by rocky islands and fishermen's junks, to the Yellow Sea. Small fishing villages line small island coves.

Seas were rough this morning and it was very windy so we stayed in our cabin. A gin and lime cocktail before lunch (Asa's idea) was definitely not a good idea. It was enough to put me under for the entire day. I wonder how the folks in the decks below are holding up. No lunch or dinner, but when the wind finally died down a bit I was able to spend the afternoon quietly lying out on deck. The ship moved onto the open ocean in late afternoon. Waters became calm so we all found a spot on deck and stayed put. It was an evening to be remembered. Stars lit the skies, calm blue waters, and interesting conversation with fascinating people.

#### May 5

Still feeling under the weather a bit today and missing out on meals. I do well with potatoes and pork but that's about all there is. They serve a no-yeast bread on board that's made with fermented potato peels-not too appetizing if you ask me, even if I was feeling well. It's a feat of wonder how Asa delights in everything she eats. She claims it's due to living through the war in England. She's well-suited for this kind of travel. I think being 25 years younger helps too.

The ocean is calm and restful now with an occasional junk passing at a distance. The mountain range along the coast is beautiful, but offers safe harbors for pirates, so ships traveling through this area have to stay on alert. There's a crew member on deck at all times scanning the area with binoculars, looking for pirates. Our captain recently had a wire that described a hold-up where the pirates infiltrated the passengers upon embarkation, then held up the captain and officers with guns, forcing them into a bay or cove where their gang took over.

Another lovely evening, so Asa and I slept on deck. It's much cooler than our stuffy state room and I felt safe because we were near the porthole of the captain's cabin. Happily, no pirates were observed.

May 6

We expect to arrive in Hong Kong tomorrow. I finally had my seafaring legs, enjoyed my lunch, and spent the afternoon sunbathing on deck. I have developed quite a nice tan at this point. No stockings from here on-too expensive and it's much too hot. The Captain takes his afternoon tea each day with some of the passengers when weather permits. Today's guests for tea included me, Asa, Mr. Burke and Mr Collins, and Mr Douglas and his prospective "White Russian" (aristocratic) bride.

Our journey is altogether different from people in third class who can't afford to travel like we are. Knowing this makes my enjoyment of my trip feel a little tainted (for lack of a better word).

## Hong Kong, China

### May 7

Gorgeous (and somewhat eery) scenery as we are entering Hong Kong harbor. Lots of evidence of war: large sunken ships jutting out of the water, gun placements on hills that overlook the city, and demolished buildings dot the hillside. The harbor itself is truly a natural beauty. Large ships flying flags from all nations are anchored here and there are also many junks and even some sampans. The shore is lined with small villages. It has a real feeling of entering a far East port (somewhat different from cosmopolitan Shanghai). There are some large homes high up on the mountain sides, some of which seem to have been partially destroyed.

Why do I have so many observations of Hong Kong harbor? Because we arrived at 6pm and weren't able to disembark until 10:30, not sure why it took so long. The trip from Shanghai to Hong Kong took nine days, including 3 days when we were anchored in Shanghai. So much waiting.

### May 8

We're staying at the beautiful Ritz Hotel in Kowloon and I'm glad UNRRA is paying the bill. A group of 15 of us (Brits, Danes, Americans, and others) drove 20 miles through the mountains to a beach to swim. It was a hot day (temperatures in the high 80's) and a fine, sandy beach. We were told this is the only beach where we could swim because it's far from any large towns or villages so the water is clean.

Hong Kong is a city of stark contrasts. Wealthy people live in amazing mansions with plenty of servants, social clubs, etc. One mansion that we passed is a castle owned by the founder of the Tiger Balm company. There are modern buildings but there are also thousands of hungry Chinese people who also live here. Streets are lined with beggars. It seems there are even more people begging on Hong Kong streets than there are in Shanghai. It seems to be a "have" or "have not" type of society with few people in between.

### May 9

What a surprise when Asa and I woke up this morning to find that a robber had made off with our money! We went to sleep around midnight and I guess I slept a little too soundly. Having a room on the second floor didn't prevent the intruder from shimmying up a water pipe and entering through an open window. He came right up to my bed as I was sleeping and took my purse, scattering the contents all over the floor. He did the same thing with Asa's purse. Of course our money was all gone, together with Asa's two fountain pens. Luckily I had some money, pens and other valuables in another bag he didn't find. A bag and money were also stolen from a man in the room next to us. It seems unbelievable we slept through this. We made a police report and the hotel is going to begin placing bars on windows and installing bright lights. This story even made the newspaper. I don't think I'm going to be able to fall asleep as easily tonight as I did last night.

### May 10

I finally made my travel arrangements for the 100 mile jaunt up the Pearl River to Canton. When I went out to purchase the tickets, I saw so many refugees and beggars on the street. So much filth and more than one fearless rat scampering around like they had not a care in the world. I nearly stumbled on a young child (a baby, really) on the sidewalk with a tin can beside him. This baby was barely able to sit up on his own and was totally covered with sores. His little legs are stick-thin and he's got a potbelly stomach swollen from malnutrition. Seeing him broke my heart.

May 11

Asa and I packed up everything in a rush last night after midnight when we learned our boat, a Chinese river ship, would leave early in the morning. We were shown to a cabin in second class, even though our tickets clearly said first class. It had no lights, double deck beds, dirty sheets (already used), leaky pipes, many smells (and I don't mean good ones), and a window with iron bars. Looking out our grated window we saw several rats running into the hold.

Asa and I discovered better quarters but we were told our tickets did not call for first class, although they were clearly marked that way. We managed to talk the Captain into moving us to the first engineer's quarters. An Indian guard stood outside our door for some added atmosphere. There were also several guards on board with rifles in case there were problems with pirates. Piracy in the Pearl River delta is a growing problem and the shore is never far away. The Scottish captain had a table set up for us on his deck to enjoy our breakfast while viewing the gorgeous scenery. We passed hilly islands, bays dotted with sampans and junks and the occasional village. No pirates were observed. This little "joke" took on new meaning when one entered our hotel room the other night!

Today's my birthday and I had a beer to celebrate while viewing the beautiful Chinese countryside.

Miss Zeller, UNRRA's lodging officer in Canton, met us at the dock. Asa and I will be staying at the Victory Hotel on Shamian Island. They were right about Canton-it's very hot and humid here.

## Canton, China

May 12

I had breakfast and lunch in my room and got myself settled in-washing hair, unpacking clothes. Asa dropped by around 5pm and we attended a party given by the US Ambassador for UNRRA and CNRRA staff. It was an amazing experience. There were plenty of drinks, sandwiches, ice cream and cake. Dancing too! There were about 100 people there and I met so many people at once I'm afraid I won't remember any of their names. I also had the opportunity to briefly meet my CNRRA counterpart, Mr. Hoc. First red flag-his English seemed to be only a little better than my Chinese. I hope I'm wrong.

May 13

Today I went to the UNRRA office where I met with the Director and others with whom I'll be working. We will have a Jeep at our command here for field site visits and for work here in town. I met several staff members, including Louise Sekting, who arrived a couple of weeks ago. She and I will be sharing quarters later once more long-term housing is identified. Louise is a public health nurse who'll be working to establish vaccination centers. I was thrilled to find there were 3 letters from home for me. These were the first I've gotten.

Shamian Island is separated from Canton by a canal built 100 years ago and at first glance, it seems a lot like Shanghai's International Settlement, except much, much smaller. Both have streets lined by large banyan and camphor trees, and large, once-beautiful mansions were elegant but have fallen into disrepair. Canton was never an industrial or diplomatic center like Shanghai. Most foreigners here were involved in trade of some sort. I think it will be nice to live in a smaller city and hopefully it will be quieter. Our hotel is only a couple of blocks from where the party was and, if you walk only a couple more blocks, you're at the UNRRA office, so it's all highly walkable.

May 14

They were right about one other aspect of Canton-things move very slowly here. I'm anxious to get to work but there are so many preliminaries. We had a staff meeting this morning that lasted several hours. I had to work hard to keep from falling asleep. My eyelids felt so heavy and I caught my head bobbing a couple of times. I hope no one noticed.

Went to a Director's party this evening-a "get acquainted" affair. This time there were 125 American and British guests (consultants, staff, Army officers, etc).

There was a steady breeze all day, blessed relief from the stagnant humid air we've been suffocating through the last couple of days. Who knew I was able to sweat so much? The big problem for me is that it's only May.

May 19

Mass at the Chinese Church on Shamian Island with Chinese nuns in black habits. It was stuffy, even with the huge bamboo fans hanging from the ceiling that slowly moved back and forth.

Only later did I learn there were two young Chinese men who stood outside the church and pulled on a rope attached to the fan.

Met the British Consulate for tea in the afternoon. He's a Lutheran Missionary who invited me to visit their mission across the river.

May 20

This morning I attended a conference with Paul Welty, the District Welfare head. He's been in Canton a few months already, so he knows the lay of the land quite well. It was helpful to get his perspective on the work I'm expected to do. While it seems a bit mysterious, I think what they actually want are concrete numbers and clear descriptions of what I observe. I spent the afternoon reading more reports. Rain poured all evening. Evenings are short due to late meals, but I'm sure life would quickly become monotonous here without any planned activities. I have my bearings (somewhat) so I can more clearly see the small size of Shamian Island's expat community. It's very, very small.

Asa left this morning for her assignment in Guilin. I'm so sorry to see her leave. She's been a great traveling companion and roommate. I'll miss our late night chats when we reflected on what we'd seen or experienced. She's going to an area that's pretty rugged, from what I understand, but I'm certain this kid is up to the challenge. She's energetic, young, and loves a good challenge.

This afternoon Louise and I moved to a large rented room in a house previously belonging to the French Consulate. While it will be nice to have our own place, I will miss the young men who always greeted me with "ello" when I entered the lobby of the hotel. Louise is a white Russian refugee whose family lived in China for a few years after the defeat of the White Army. They left China and immigrated to England in the early 1930's. Her father's a doctor and they had relatives in London who'd left a decade before. Louise vaguely remembers living in Shanghai but she was only 4 or 5 when they moved to England. Too bad, it would be nice to have a roommate who speaks Chinese (I'm sure she feels the same way when she looks at me).

May 21

Louise, Mr. Welty, and I went for a ride to attend the grand opening of a bridge on the Canton-Hong Kong road. This is the first time I've left Shamian Island since I arrived. We had to show our ID and credentials at a couple of military checkpoints as we left town which slows things down a lot. The bridge opening included many speeches and lots and lots of firecrackers. This is the fifth bridge UNRRA has rebuilt on the 100 mile road to Hong Kong. All of the bridges along this route were destroyed during the war.

This evening, a lizard in the bathtub caused quite a commotion. I screamed when I saw it and Louise came running to find out what was going on. The lizard kept trying to scamper up the side and sliding down again. Such an awful sound-those little nails scampering all around the tub. All three of us-me, Louise, and the lizard-were panicked. We finally solved our problem with a small bucket and a piece of cardboard. Of course I had to thoroughly clean the tub before I felt

I could get in and take a bath. Then we laughed. I should say Louise and I laughed, the lizard was long gone.

We have french doors along one side of our room that lead to a long balcony which helps with the heat and ventilation, but they're not so good at keeping wildlife out of our room. Every bird, moth, mosquito, bug and rat seems to pay us a visit. Rats are a significant problem here too. They live (and prosper, apparently) in the narrow canal separating Shamian Island from Canton.

May 22

I had a conference with Father Thomas O'Melia and Dr. Khan in the morning. Father O'Melia is an "old China hand" who first came to China 20 years ago. He's a Maryknoll priest, but the most important thing about him is he's a linguist who literally wrote the book about the Canontese language! He taught Cantonese in Hong Kong for years. I am so grateful to be working with him. Dr. Khan is an Indian physician who's lived in Canton for 10 years.

May 23

I feel I'm finally starting to get into the swing of things here in Canton with regard to work. Today I visited two homes for the aged and a home for cripples here in town with one of our translators and my counterpart Mr. Hoc. There were some very young blind and crippled people in the homes for the aged. They seem to be well cared for but there's no rehabilitation available for blind or crippled patients at this facility. The elderly patients were well cared for and the facility was clean and well-organized.

Conditions were deplorable in the home for cripples. A five year old blind child, picked up off the street as an orphan, was being cared for by the residents. This unfortunate child was extremely dirty, dressed in rags, covered by sores, and had matted hair. I also observed a young boy, apparently partially paralyzed, creeping along on all fours. I need to find a more appropriate place where these blind children can be relocated.

1st Florence Ford letter

May 10, 1946

My dear Mary,

I hope your trip to Canton was a good one and that it's not too awfully hot there. Were you able to spend much time in Hong Kong? How are you faring in Canton? I am settling in here in Qingdao as best I can. I have a nice room at the Qingdao Municipal Hospital, so I'm never far from work. The building is pretty good. It's got high ceilings, tile floors, and large windows, though I'm told it's pretty cold in the winter.

There's a chronic shortage of trained nurses and those who are here are overworked (so what else is new?). I've started a crash course for them to reinforce sanitation principles. I'm thinking of breaking the subject matter into two halves. The first half being what to do under normal circumstances and the second half being what to do in the middle of an epidemic. I

would love your thoughts on this, given your experience with the Spanish flu. Do you think this structure would be helpful?

The curriculum is being developed as I assess what they already know. These are all working nurses who want to better themselves so we have a one-hour class every day after their shift. It's tough for them, especially when they miss a class because something happened and they had to work overtime. But I make myself available during the day and I'm trying to spend time in the wards to observe what's being done and how that might be improved. It's a delicate balance, for sure. I may change the format as I begin with a new batch of students, but this is where we are right now.

Thank God I have a full-time interpreter who studied in the US. His English makes this all possible, otherwise I would just be wasting everyone's time. But my students are bright and motivated and I enjoy their enthusiasm.

Qingdao is what I would call a mid-sized city. Certainly not as big as Shanghai or DC, but not a village either. It seems a little less impoverished than Shanghai, but that could just be because it's smaller. There are a lot of military here too-both Chinese and American (Navy and Marines). KMT soldiers are being shipped here by air and by sea so they can move into areas previously occupied by the Japanese. They're trying to do this quickly to move in before the Communists control it. Soldiers arrive in Qingdao and are then transported north by rail, sometimes this goes on in the middle of the night which underscores the sense of urgency involved. The US government is backing this whole operation and seems to have decided that the KMT should be the winners (you know how I feel about that). It's safe here in town but they tell me traveling more than 25 miles outside of town can be dangerous. So, here I will stay.

I hope you are well. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,  
Florence

May 24

I got a nice letter from Florence today. I'm going to think about her question of how to teach nurses about sanitation during an epidemic. I certainly have a lot of thoughts on that subject.

Today was my first ride in a sampan, across the Pearl River to Sum Ming School for the Blind. This mission school has beautiful surroundings and what appears to be a good rehabilitation program. They teach braille, carpentry, and shoe repair. Supplies are always a problem but they look healthy.. I secured a promise from them to accept 12 blind children if the government would help finance their care. The first of these will be the blind children I saw yesterday. This is the first real work that I've done here and it feels good to be able to contribute.

I enjoyed the sampan trip immensely. These boat women are a good looking, apparently healthy lot. I'm guessing paddling a sampan across the river all day is good exercise, though they make it look easy. With my translator's encouragement, I was able to use the little bit of Chinese I

know to bargain for a reasonable price and they didn't even laugh at me. Maybe when my language skills are better I can arrange to try paddling to see how hard it is. I used to love rowboats back in Pennsylvania.

At the restaurant this evening people were talking about the fighting going on in the north. We hear about ongoing skirmishes on an almost daily basis, and yesterday the KMT took Changchun. There were differing opinions about whether this was a good thing or not. There are a few UNRRA people (names will not be recorded here) who are a bit too vocal about their dislike of the KMT and a few could even be said to support the communists. But given our work and the fact we're in Canton, it's best to stay must-at least out in public. We aren't too concerned about armed conflict here in Canton yet.

May 27

An interesting visit to Trunshan, an asylum for the aged run by the Little Sisters of the Poor, a few miles outside of Canton. Pleasant dormitories with colorful handmade comforters on each bed. Mother Monica and Sister Bernadette showed me all around their beautiful garden and lovely flower bedecked walk to the chapel. There were numerous banana trees, many of which were bearing fruit.

Both of these sisters were imprisoned in northern China by the Japanese. Sister Bernadette is from Belgium. She was taken into custody first, leaving Mother Monica (who's from Australia) all alone to run things. As the war dragged on she was also imprisoned. The home fell into disrepair and some residents died in their absence. People from the surrounding area tried to help, but the residents and the nuns all suffered greatly during those years. They're still trying to get it back to the level of functioning it had before the war.

May 28

Louise and I had an interesting visit to the Huaisheng Mosque this afternoon, escorted by Dr. Khan. He gave a lecture to incoming staff on Monday and offered a tour of the mosque to anyone who was interested. There were seven of us in all who went.

The mosque is a wonderful mixture of traditional Chinese architecture with Arab influence. There are typical Chinese clay tiled roofs, curved eaves, and peaceful courtyards. The decor was simple and the walls were decorated with fancy Arabic calligraphy. He said the curved eaves at the roof edge help to keep evil spirits away (like gargoyles on cathedrals, I guess). There's also a minaret so tall that ships on the river use it for navigation. This building is very old too, perhaps over 1,000 years old. They say it's the oldest mosque in China (built during the Tang Dynasty), perhaps the oldest one in the entire world!

He told me Muslims believe in God, the Father, and in the hereafter. Not so different from Catholics that way. They also worship on kneeling mats, but don't have any statues. Dr. Khan is married to a Chinese woman, and if I have learned anything about the Muslim faith from him, apparently Muslims are kind, live simply and are interested in helping others.

As we were finishing our tour the weather closed in and we had to wait for the storm to pass. It got windy and the sky became pitch dark, like someone turned out the lights. It's so incredibly humid here, it makes me feel like I'm going to melt into a puddle. There's a special fatigue that comes with weather like this—the exact opposite of the energy I get from a cool October afternoon. The wind was refreshing, while it lasted.

May 29

I arrived at the office this morning and met Herman Holiday, Rose's friend from Hankou! He's in Canton for a few days to help with the 25 Turkish refugees who want to be repatriated.

We chatted briefly at the office and agreed to meet for dinner at Marcel's to talk in more depth. He described for me the work he's been doing in Hankou and several other areas. After he gets the Turks on their way he's headed to Hong Kong to assist a group of people get back to Czechoslovakia. He said he thinks he'll be moving around a lot with this position. He specializes in international repatriation which is complicated by language differences, and immigration law. Though once he's solved a situation for someone by getting them on their way home, it's solved. Relief work seems to be unending.

He also filled me in on the overall situation in Hankou. I think I lucked out by being assigned to Canton. We have the benefit of foreign consulates (and their many dinner parties). Hankou sounds pretty difficult, but he said Rose is in her element and has become quite a good bridge player. That doesn't surprise me one bit.

Given that he's so tall and Black he stands out more in any setting even more than I do. As we walked out of the restaurant I saw this old Chinese man who stared at him so intently I thought he was going to walk smack into a building. When I asked him how he managed that, he just laughed. He said people don't forget him easily. In Hankou everyone calls him "Mr. Herman". I enjoyed meeting Mr. Herman.

June 2

Made a trip to Whampoa today to get "out of town". Whampoa's an island not far from Canton where the first KMT military training base is located. It's still in use, but not as much as before, and there are beautiful picnic spots. There are also several farming villages on the island.

Six of us crammed into a "cheese box" with a picnic lunch. Cheese box is a funny term used by UNRRA folks for Jeeps. After spending so much time in one today, I think they're on to something. We had to cross several bridges on this outing and most were fine, but one of them was only loosely held together. I closed my eyes until we were safely on land again. Marcel packed the lunch which included beer. It's too bad we had to drink it warm.

About 25 children enjoyed our outing too. They appeared out of nowhere carrying baskets. Needless to say, most of our lunch went into those baskets. There were also a few water buffalo nearby, but they got nothing. The countryside is so green and fertile. There are beautiful vegetable gardens and rice paddies everywhere. Despite the fact that our lunch was commandeered, it did lift my spirits to get off Shaiman Island.

June 3

I visited Miss Liu at the Bureau of Social Affairs this morning. It was pouring rain and my shoes were pretty well soaked by the time I arrived. She works on repatriation of refugees and developing feeding stations and shelters for the city. It's an enormous job and they are woefully understaffed. Her agency is responsible for helping identify where the needs are, CNRRA provides the supplies, and UNRRA verifies what's been done. I wanted to meet with her to help coordinate efforts with CNRRA and see whether I can help smooth out some of the tension that has developed recently over delays in food supplies. There are so many layers of bureaucracy involved in getting help to people. There are often delays in the delivery of supplies and misunderstandings about where things are supposed to go.

After our morning meeting we made a visit to one of the city shelters in town. The conditions there were very bad. It was terribly overcrowded, dirty, and the people were, in general, not healthy. I think it was the worst I've seen since I arrived in China. I'm going to speak to Mr. Welty about my concerns to see what assistance UNRRA can provide.

Today I learned that there are black wagons that go around town to pick up dead bodies. Often, when relatives can't afford to bury someone, if the person dies on the street, the city must bury them. No one claims the body and little is known about the person.

## 1st Asa Black letter

June 15, 1946

Dear Mary,

How's life been treating you? I'm (finally) here in Guilin and I'm just now starting to feel a little bit settled. As you know, I left Canton by rail in the company of two CNRRA colleagues (Mei Ling and Lee Kai-wah). While we didn't share a lot of language (their English was as good as my Mandarin), it was good to have them by my side. We got as far as Shaoguan on the train. We obtained a Jeep and a driver for the remainder of our journey from the CNRRA provincial office. They didn't want to send the Jeep for a one-way journey, but I think it also helped that we had a box of smallpox threads and antimalarials to deliver.

We arrived two days later after 200 of the worst miles I've ever been on. Ruts and mud and wash-outs. At one point we had to get out and push the Jeep because it got stuck in the mud. Fortunately we had good weather. There were the usual KMT checkpoints to manage from time to time but what I was most concerned about, communists or bandits, didn't materialize. No pirates were observed. Thank God for that!

Guilin is spectacular (almost other-worldly) and I feel grateful that I've been assigned here. The landscape is extraordinary. There are these huge limestone "hills", though jagged peaks might be a better description. They tell me the landscape is what remains from an old cave system. The city itself is pretty small, more like a large village when compared to Canton.

Guilin has a lot of KMT soldiers. A lot. But I think I'd rather have them and their numerous checkpoints than the bandits and communists we've got in the countryside. We hear stories about villages being raided from time to time in the surrounding area. There used to be hundreds of American military stationed here during the war because Chennault's Flying Tigers flew out of Guilin. Their old airstrip is still there, a couple of miles north of town. It's eerie, a collection of abandoned buildings, an airstrip in disrepair, and faded Flying Tigers emblems everywhere. There aren't many foreigners here, other than a few missionaries, so my Mandarin skills are bound to improve.

I will have to keep busy so I don't get too lonely. We have set up a vaccination station and we're working pretty quickly through the box of supplies we brought. We're expecting a delivery of more vaccines and medical supplies any day now, but you know how slow things can be here. I think we'll also be doing some training for local health workers to bring them up to date.

Well, my friend, I think often about our wonderful cruise down the coast and our visit to Hong Kong. Happily, no pirates have yet been observed (except, of course, for the one in our hotel room!).

Please write and let me know how you're doing and whether you've been to any more of those fancy (stuffy) cocktail parties!

All the best,  
Asa

July 13

How has an entire month flown by with no entries in my journal? Maybe it's that a routine has been established. Every week includes a couple of visits to sites here in town and within 30 miles or so from Canton. There are many meals at Marcel's restaurant, conversations with other UNRRA folks and reports to be finished by week's end. There are also bridge games, cocktail parties, and shopping excursions.

I'm so happy to have gotten this letter from Asa, especially to hear that her trip went without any serious interactions on the road. The two young women she's traveling with are equally wonderful so they make a great trio. She's such an upbeat person that I'm sure she'll have a bunch of friends there in no time. And her Mandarin will be far better than mine, no doubt.

I've mostly been visiting facilities here in Canton, but hope to go out into the countryside soon. This province is huge and has over 30 million people, so to get the full picture of the needs here, I have to travel outside of town. I saw a very large refugee camp last week on the edge of town. They think there may be as many as 30,000 people staying there. Some of these folks may be from the area surrounding Canton, but others are probably from other provinces or islands nearby. It's a big job to interview them and help them get home.

Robberies have been a real problem here since the war. Many of the unorganized Chinese guerillas in the interior mountain areas have weapons given to them to fight the Japanese and

they're now using those guns for piracy and robbery. All of the convoys in our province had police protection. We saw police marching five men (suspected of robbery) down the street this afternoon right past our window. There's little in the papers about all of this for fear of scaring off the foreigners, but we hear about it at UNRRA meetings. They want us to be cautious and knowledgeable about what's going on.

July 14

Today is Bastille Day-French independence and the community here is demonstrating they know how to celebrate! I had several parties to attend. The best one was given by Marcel. The guests included several French embassy personnel who left China during the war and recently returned. Before the war, Shamian Island used to be primarily French and British. It even had its own government, police and court system. Chinese people had only limited rights on the island back then and couldn't live here, so it's a big change for returning expats who lived here under the old system. Now there are many Chinese people living on the island and the police and courts are all Chinese. One newly returned Frenchman made some comments demonstrating his disdain for these changes. It seems crazy to me. It is their country, after all.

July 16

Another trip across the Pearl River to an Institution for the Blind which was a text book version of how to run a facility. It was clean, and the 50 adult residents there were healthy and learning skills. I tried my Chinese skills out on the sampan woman but she just laughed at me. Finally a Chinese soldier saw my distress and helped me arrange passage for myself, Miss Carpenter, and Miss Shaeffer. Our interpreter was unable to go out with us and I (mistakenly) felt confident in my language skills-ha! The dialect people speak here in Canton is much more difficult for me than the Mandarin I tried to learn in Washington. The "sing-song" pattern of Mandarin has basically 4 tonal patterns and that's hard enough for me to hear and reproduce. Here in Canton they tell me there are 6 to 9 tonal patterns! I have nearly given up all hope of ever being able to have more than a "pointing and mugging" conversation. Thank God the interpreters we have are excellent. I will not travel without one again (at least not without a fight).

6th letter from Rose

June 24, 1946

Dear Mary,

I hope this letter finds you well. I'm sorry it's been so long since my last letter. The work we're doing can be exhausting as we both know. I hope you are well in Canton and that your work continues to be effective. I also hope you're staying healthy. A bout of "digestive distress" I had lingered much too long. I'm feeling better now, though.

I recently returned from a harrowing field visit to the area north of Hankou. I had been warned this could be dangerous, but all of my other trips have gone smoothly, so I wasn't overly concerned. There's not much fighting currently between the communists and the KMT around Hankou, but the KMT army surrounded communist troops in the Dabie Mountains in

January and this is right where we were headed. They think there may be up to 50,000 communist soldiers hiding in the narrow valleys there.

Our plan was to visit a town called Xuanhuadian where there's an UNRRA sub-office. This village is only about a hundred miles away from Hankou as the crow flies, but you'd think it was 1,000 miles, based on how hard it was to get there. The area's extremely rugged and we've had a hard time delivering supplies here, except when carried on the backs of people. We were supposed to deliver medical supplies, grain, and cash for farmers to buy tools. I say "supposed to" because we did not achieve our goal.

We took a train for the first part of our trip. It was slow moving and packed with KMT troops, but this was the best part of the trip. We stayed overnight at the magistrate's home in Xinyang before getting into a ragged truck the next morning. The area is considered a "liberated territory" (used to be under communist control), so we put UNRRA emblems all over the truck and had an UNRRA flag sticking out the window on the passenger side. Then we bounced around on a rutted dirt road for hours, but felt like days. The potholes were one thing, but farmers in this area will dig a ditch right across the road if it's interfering with watering their crops. You can imagine the hazard to a vehicle crossing it goes over a ditch too quickly.

We were stopped at several KMT checkpoints along the way and at each stop we had to waste time telling them who we are and what we're doing. I've mostly been annoyed by checkpoints on these trips, until this time. Something felt different about the one outside of Pengxinzen. You know how the soldiers at these checkpoints are lackluster, like they could care less about their orders? This group seemed more attentive, even lively. I should have paid closer attention.

A few more miles down the road in our ram-shackle truck we reached the foothills of the mountains where we met a couple of local men who work at the sub-office. We unloaded the supplies from the truck and packed it all onto some mules for the final stretch. Even this old gal got up on a mule. Turns out, my suspicions about the last checkpoint were well founded. A group of about 30 KMT soldiers were waiting for us about a mile down the road, around the first bend. As we turned the corner we encountered them waving guns at us, hollering at us to stop.

Our translators did their best to describe our mission, telling them that UNRRA supplies were intended for the local population, not the communists or the KMT. They even showed them all our documents signed by CKC himself. Nothing helped. The soldiers weren't having any of it. The main guy kept yelling and waving his arms around while the others kept their guns pointed at us. Several of these soldiers looked like they were no more than 16. They made us kneel, head on the ground, at gunpoint while they searched all of our belongings and kept yelling at us. They took the loaded mules and, of course, found the large sum of money in one of the bags. We had brought this to distribute to local farmers so they could buy tools. Worst of all they kidnapped two local men from our team and demanded ransom

for their return! I was terrified. Mary, you know I'm not a particularly religious person, but I was praying-seriously praying. I was shaken to my core-to put it mildly.

Once the soldiers left, we had no choice but to make the rest of our journey on foot. I was exhausted, disheartened, but mostly-I was furious! In the US we're told it's the communists who are the enemy, but that's not what I saw. Those KMT soldiers took money and food from desperately poor peasants who were not combatants, just innocents caught in the middle of a mess.

We made it to Xuanhuadian a little after sundown but I wasn't able to sleep at all, despite my exhaustion. Whenever I closed my eyes I saw those guns pointed at my head and heard men holding guns yelling in a language I don't understand. At one point I'm sure I heard footsteps outside the window of the room where I was staying. It was a long night.

We met the village leaders the next morning to give them the bad news. They weren't surprised. Disappointed, but not surprised. These people have seen this conflict first-hand and very little shocks them.

We spent two days in Xuanhuadian and then started the long journey back to Hankou. I did get a mule for the return trip, for which I am most grateful. Going through checkpoints on the way back was especially difficult for me, but I kept my big Hungarian mouth shut because I wanted to live to tell the story. And tell it I did. I wrote the most strongly worded report I could to UNRRA headquarters in Shanghai once we returned. At this point, one of our local workers has been released. The other one is still being held somewhere. I hope he's ok.

Literally days after this all happened the active fighting between the KMT and the communists began again. We believe the communists are trying to make a run for it to get to the north where they have more support. It's only by the grace of God that I'm here writing this to you today. I hope nothing like this happens to you while you're here in China, Mary. It has changed me.

Sincerely,  
Rose

July 17

The letter I got from Rose today was very disturbing. I'm so sorry this happened to her. Though she wasn't injured, it sounds like a nightmare experience to have had. Having a gun pointed at your head sounds terrifying. We don't have nearly the same situation here in Canton. From time to time we'll hear rumors of Communist activity in the countryside and there are a lot of KMT checkpoints both in the city and the surrounding area, but so far they have just been an annoyance. I've not heard about any UNRRA employees being harassed like this by either the KMT or the Communists in our province. But that doesn't mean we haven't been warned that this kind of thing is possible. From her letter, it sounds like Rose did just what we are instructed to do: follow instructions, hand over whatever goods or money you may have, and get out of there alive. I hope her other colleague has been released.

### July 22

Miss Burgess, Irving, and I got an early start today for a visit to the Sheklung Leper asylum. It was a couple of hours on the train and a quick hop on a sampan. This was the first time Irving or I had ever visited a leper colony, so having Miss Burgess with us was invaluable. She's been to this asylum several times. There are currently 4 Canadian sisters from Montreal and one French priest who care for the lepers.

We toured their facilities (dormitories, clinic, chapel) before having lunch. Everything was clean and well-organized. It was helpful to have Miss Burgess along to help me understand the kinds of care that lepers need in this setting. They inspect their hands and feet for cuts and have to change the bandages on a regular basis to keep infection from occurring. The consistency of care is impressive, particularly given the modest means of this asylum.

After lunch they told us the story of the asylum. The colony's been around since 1904 and was operating fairly well until the war. That's when a group of about 30 bandits set up an encampment on the island from which they could pirate passing ships. For about 2 years they would also regularly swoop in and steal what they could (food, blankets, medicine, mosquito nets, anything). The bandits regularly threatened them all with pistols.

But they persisted. They planted banana trees and grew fish in a pond-anything to stay alive. Eventually the bandits moved on. But they left behind one of their own who had developed leprosy. The nuns took in their former tormentor and this man is now the head of the mens division on the island. When I heard the end of that story and saw the man they were talking about, you could have knocked me over with a feather! I could not have made up that story in a million years.

I was so exhausted nodded off to sleep while we made our way back home on a slow train. I must be learning! What a day.

### July 25

Visited the Baptist Home for the Aged, or rather, planned to visit. We drove all the way there in a Jeep only to learn it had burned to the ground during the war. I was left feeling demoralized until we went about a mile further and saw an orphanage. This modern facility serves about 200 children, and has excellent standards of cleanliness and discipline. The children in their care looked healthy and bright-eyed. On our way back we stopped at a bean curd factory in a nearby village where they cook the soybeans in large iron kettles, after which it's dried and sold. Bean curd is a big business in China.

### July 26

I feel excited today because I'm going to begin going on longer trips to the field. I guess they think I'm acclimated now. Finally! Father O'Melia will accompany me and I am looking forward to a new experience. Another downpour this morning and this afternoon so I stayed in and read more area reports. Evening was calm, clear and cool.

I've asked for an increase in my monthly salary. Inflation is extremely difficult to keep up with here. The price of food here is higher than in Shanghai. We get 13,000 yuan monthly maintenance (about \$2,000). It seems like a large sum, but meals, rent, and laundry basically take it all.

Feeling a little bored and homesick, so I read some of my letters again.

July 30

Very warm and sticky again today. In preparation for this trip to the field I had a shirt made of thin cotton so I'm as cool as possible. The seamstress did a good job. Our only protection against malaria is our trusty mosquito net, but you can't stop mosquitoes from biting during the daytime. Doctors don't advocate Atabrine because it only holds the disease back and hits you hard when you stop taking it. But when we go into the field for any length of time we've been told to take one a day.

July 31

Miss Burgess and I visited the #2 Shelter on Canton's waterfront. Their supply of food is more reliable now, but the shelter is still filthy and has more occupants than the last time I visited. We were soon surrounded by dozens of men, women and children who wanted to figure out who we were and what we were doing. I don't mind this because it feels like curiosity, not hostility.

Dinner at Marcells and a cheese box joy ride about town afterward with Louise and a couple of friends. It's too hot to spend much time in our room and the fresh air felt great. We drove to the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall and took a stroll in the park around it. There was a nice, gentle breeze from the west. I was having a good time looking around at the scenery and feeling the cool air on my face. I almost forgot the misery of our visit to the shelter this morning.

However as we drove over the river I noticed two starving babies at the end of Victory Bridge. The scene was in such stark contrast with how I was feeling that it shook me to my core. There's no escape from how cheap life is at this moment in time. I don't think I'll ever be able to forget what I've seen here.

Received a letter from Mary K. That helped a bit.

## To the Field

August 5

Today was my first field trip. We went to a village called Cheung Sha and we were met by the Magistrate and Committee Heads at the harbor. Mostly we inspected what was left of a village and confirmed there was little left standing. Bombing, fires, and guerilla warfare have destroyed nearly all the structures that existed in these villages-homes, shops, schools, temples, clinics, markets. Everything's leveled. The only real signs a village existed are the piles of bricks and debris, sections of walls that still stand, caved-in roofs, charred wood, and the occasional piece of broken furniture or twisted metal. The shock of seeing this caught me off-guard. I tried not to let my reaction show, but I'm pretty sure it did.

There are a few homes still standing on the eastern edge of the village, but that's about it. Not sure where all the people went. I think we can assume many of them were killed, the rest are refugees somewhere, maybe at one of the shelters I've visited in Canton.

Had lunch at the military quarters and got drenched by a sudden downpour. A rough trip by cheese box on rutted, now muddy roads. I now have bruises on my bruises. Home at 8pm, followed by a game of bridge with several friends. It helps to talk with Louise about what I see and experience. She's a good listener and knows exactly what I'm talking about.

I've been up for the last hour trying to fall asleep but this time it's not because of the heat, the mosquitoes, or a lizard keeping me awake. I keep seeing those desolate abandoned villages we visited. I can't stop thinking about what these people experienced. It must have been traumatic. Bombing from one army or another, illness, people disappearing, guerilla fighting, families separated, and so many children left as orphans. The rebuilding of physical structures will be the easiest part. Rebuilding families, social groups, jobs, community structure, these will be much harder to construct. It was startling, to be sure. I don't have words for the way I'm feeling but I'm pretty sure sorrow and grief are mixed in there.

August 6

Left for Fah-hsien at 8am. The train was late so we took a jeep- a 27 mile ride over rutted roads. The bridge was down to the county seat so we went to a neighboring market town and returned home at 1pm. Still sore and tired so I took a nap and wrote some letters home.

August 7

On our way to Tseng-Shing: another 30 mile trip in vain. This cheese box journey was over truly impossible roads-one for the record books. An endless morning of ruts, mud, more ruts, sweat, and heat. We got as far as a gully where we needed to cross over a dilapidated covered bridge-they call them corridor bridges (langqiao). Close to the entrance of the bridge there was a heavy military truck dangling precariously over the edge on the far side, one of its front wheels completely off the bridge. This one was made of wood and part of the structure above the road was completely missing. The contents of the truck had been stacked on the far side of the bridge and there were several men attaching a rope to the truck's bumper to pull it back to

safety. Our help wasn't needed and it was clearly an impasse, so we returned to Canton. Just 30 more miles of rough riding and nothing to report. I did enjoy my lunch of coffee and sandwiches, however, and a lazy afternoon-reported to the office and wrote some letters.

#### August 8

At the office all morning and at home in the evening writing reports from visits to the field and reading letters from home. Packed up and ready for a two day trip. If it only were not so hot! I'm still not over my muscular pains from those endless miles on rutted roads-my back and left hip are in especially bad shape.

A bunch of us were at Marcel's tonight and the conversation was all about the most recent UNRRA report on military activity. There's ongoing fighting in Manchuria and UNRRA has started to put travel restrictions on some work groups. Several northern cities are now under curfew at night. No one mentions the word "truce" these days as it seems to have completely fallen apart.

I had a little trouble walking after dinner. Jack B. was kind enough to assist me to my door. Of course, his assistance came with some fantastic stories of recent burglaries in the area so I was glad to have the company. Burglary is fairly common in Canton these days-especially on Shamian Island since that's where all the foreigners (and their money) live.

#### August 9

What a night! Vomiting, diarrhea, fever, and more vomiting. Too sick to accompany Father O'Melia on the field trip-or anywhere else for that matter. I'm so disappointed. In bed most of the day except for a short trip to get some broth and even that was a task-I almost gave up. Hot as blazes today too, which didn't ease my suffering any. Believe me, the mosquito net is going to be on me tonight. Hot weather and badly prepared food appear to be my true misanthropes. October cannot come too soon! Took the Russian cure for "Shamian Gallop" this evening (gin and pepper). Louise assured me this old family recipe will work wonders. We'll see if it works. I hope it's better than Asa's "cure". Why is it these things always involve gin? So far, so good (it's staying down).

#### August 10

Another scorcher. At the office in the morning and seemed ok, but a brief shopping trip for food nearly did me in. I still feel weak from all the "bodily fluids" I lost the night before last, but I sense I'm on the mend. I sure hope so. Maybe those Russians know what they're talking about with the gin cure. Took a nap because we're leaving by junk later this afternoon-full steam ahead!

### Mary's 6th letter home

Sunday, August 11, 1946

Dear Family:

A hurried note, I'm forty miles up river visiting a county Magistrate. We left Canton last evening by junk and arrived here at 1am. We were met by a small sampan in the middle of

the river and learned that the county seat had been entirely destroyed. No one in Canton seemed to know this town had been leveled and it's only 40 miles away. There are no people left here-only wreckage. There were only shells of buildings left-so much devastation.

We slept in the sampan, all three of us and those boards aren't exactly soft, but I'm glad to have my trusty sleeping bag. This morning we moved up the river to another village where the government is now located. This village was also partially destroyed but there were still some people living there.

What we found there was an exceptionally well-run military school for boys. It was clean, well-organized and perhaps the most progressive school I've seen so far. We were met by children, from five years old on up, all dressed in military uniforms. These kids were definitely well cared for. They looked healthy, participated in military drills, and attended classes taught by teachers. This orphanage was the perfect antidote for seeing those leveled villages.

Everyone stares at us, mostly at me as many of the children have probably never seen a white woman. Japanese occupation for eight years, now the missionaries and UNRRA. We had a good dinner hosted by the Magistrate and I'm here now sitting on the balcony of his home which is built out on the river, waiting for our return boat. Heaven knows, we may have to wait until midnight.

We had a severe storm a while ago but the sun is out now and it has cooled things off. So grateful for that because the heat has been awful-like nothing I've experienced before. I'm lucky to have Fr. O'Melia as a traveling companion. I'm well looked after but not given any favors.

My love to all, will mail this in the morning then off for another 2 day trip.

Love,  
Mary

August 16

Left Canton at 9am for Shi Kiu. We travelled by launch which seemed so modern compared to a junk or sampan. Shi Kiu is truly an up and coming community-there's real progress being made in community organization. Had dinner with Mr. Chan, Superintendent of the Board of Education who represented the Magistrate. All in all, a delightful day. One of those days that leaves me feeling hopeful for China. Slept at the White Palace. I'm not sure what it used to be-maybe a vacation home for some rich Chinese merchant? Not bad, but those hard board beds are never comfortable. Looking forward to my cot.

August 17

Left Shi-Kiu at 8am for Shun-Tak. We travelled up and down narrow tributaries to the Pearl River that were lined with banyan trees, mangroves, mud huts, sugar cane fields, rice paddies, and orange and banana trees. I wish I had listened more carefully when Marie described her bird watching activities because I saw some beautiful large water birds. They were herons, I think.

The town of Shun-Tak was pretty sad, especially after seeing how well the village we visited yesterday is coming back to life. There's not much spirit in this poverty-stricken, leveled town. Most of the people in the area were killed or left and haven't come back. I was depressed after this visit.

As if Nature herself wanted to cheer me up, I saw the most beautiful sunset of my life on the way back to Canton. The river was so smooth it looked like glass and reflected the enormous, billowing clouds in a spectacular display with so many shades of yellow, red, rose and orange imaginable. A kaleidoscope of changing colors. But even more exciting-there were a couple of dolphins we saw from far off, just swimming along, their dorsal fins appearing and disappearing. They seemed to be enjoying themselves-oblivious to the problems of the world and the trouble people cause each other. Supper at Marcel's at 9:30. Again, exhausted and fell to sleep before my head hit the pillow.

Sunday, August 18

Mass at 8:30. Spent most of the day working on reports. I need to write my reports soon after returning or I'm sure to get the villages mixed up. Given that I don't have much in the way of language skills I take copious notes. It helps me keep my focus when I am still so often feeling like I don't fully understand what's going on around me.

Mary's 7th letter home

August 19, 1946

Dear Family,

Another hot night. I know I keep mentioning the heat, but it's truly a significant factor in my daily life here. I often eat at a French restaurant, but it's too hot to eat much. The restaurant is a short walk from where I'm living and I eat there quite often. The food is not as fancy as you might think, but it's good and, especially important, it's clean. I also see many co-workers and UNRRA staff there so it's a good social venue. The heat can't last much longer-I hope. They tell me it's supposed to get cooler after Sept. 15-three weeks and counting.

I've been making trips out to the countryside for a day or two at a time visiting nearby counties, and pretty soon we'll be going for a ten day trip. My taste for field trips has already been dampened my desire to go because now I have a clear idea of how difficult this kind of travel can be. Roads are in extremely bad shape and bridges are often impassable. Traveling to reach a field site is much worse than the actual UNRRA work.

There have been jeep trips, train trips, rides on junks, sampans, even pre-war buses have helped out. I'm enjoying the experience though you never know what the next day will bring. Boats and trains are never on time. I've slept on a junk (with double decker bunks) with Chinese people on either side of me, also on the floor of a sampan. I liked the sampan because it was nice and cool. Of course Father O'Melia and Irving Tongs, our interpreter, were with me so I was safe. Father O'Melia has decades of experience in China and really

knows his way around the area and understands social interactions. Irving also does much more than translate for us. He helps explain questions I ask him about the culture and why things are done the way they are done. They are both invaluable to me in this work.

We spent one night in a hotel and slept on a board bed, so I guess that's what I have to look forward to next week. We do too much traveling from one place to another to bother with bringing along an army cot. It seems like I'm already carrying a lot with my sleeping bag, mosquito net, bug spray, etc.

Last Monday we had an amusing adventure. We were in a little village and the station agent offered to flag down a special government train that was going through so we could hop on and get back to Canton. Otherwise we would have had to spend the night in the village.

I was surprised when the train pulled to a stop! The boxcars were completely filled with KMT soldiers and freight. We pulled ourselves up and fought for a spot on the platform of the caboose. We finally managed to sit down and let our feet dangle over the edge. Crowded together like this we rode for over two hours, the train going 30 miles an hour. This was an express train, mind you. Irving said "Aren't we going fast?" He's always a cheerful addition to these trips.

Ten miles out of Canton, the train pulled onto a siding (the soldiers had already gotten off at a camp before this happened). We thought we were waiting for another train to pass, but after waiting a long time, and, because it was already dark, we hailed a truck for the last leg of the journey. The truck was already filled with people and empty bamboo baskets so we rode the whole way back to the city standing up, then transferred to a rickshaw before we finally got home. "That's my day."

I suppose you've probably read something about the fighting up north between the Communists and the KMT. It looks like a bad situation and we're all hoping a full scale civil war doesn't break out. We don't see any military activity in this area except troops being moved around like the ones I saw on the train. The fighting is primarily in the north and northeast part of the country-Manchuria and other areas nearly 1,000 miles from here. The soldiers are all going north. It is a sad sight to see them trotting off on their skinny horses; neither horse nor rider have had enough to eat for a very long time. I feel so sorry for them. Down here in the south, we need not worry so much, Sun Yat-sen was born in Canton Province, so this area is considered the home of the KMT party. There's a large memorial hall dedicated to him, and several statues here in town.

Headquarters sent us a memo about safety and advised us to stay alert and use our own judgment. They encouraged us to leave any village or city where we're working if it appears we are unsafe. Rest assured, I have not felt unsafe for a moment on this trip, except from mosquitoes, bugs and varmints. I let out a blood-curdling yell when I found a lizard in the tub. My roommate Louise came running, thinking I was in real peril.

Inflation is becoming more problematic all the time. I am definitely not going to be saving money while I am here. It's enough just to pay our rent, food and laundry fees.

I finally had some of my film developed and the photos turned out fine. I'm trying to find a way to send the negatives home so you can have them enlarged. It costs CN\$800 each here. I am baked so I guess I had better go to bed. The darn mosquito net doesn't add to cooling off any. I do hope you are all well. Mary Kay-how about a letter; Fritzie, can you teach Dr. Wyan anything? Danny, be a good boy and Joanie, please look after Grandma.

Lots of love from  
Me

August 20

Slept late after a good night's sleep. To the office at 10am. Wrote a report. Not much to do but that's a good thing because I'm exhausted by the heat. Afternoon nap, usual trip to UNRRA and CRNNA for laundry, etc. A nice tea given by Louise and several other friends. In bed by 10pm.

August 22

Staff meeting at 8:30 and a few hours in the office. We went to Shelter #1 in the afternoon to help arrange for the repatriation of orphans to their home counties. It's anything but a simple process. When the children are in family groups there's often an older sibling who has some notion of the village they're from. Sometimes those older children are pretty good at identifying cousins and neighbors too. And by older, I mean 7 or 8 years old.

However, many of the youngest children were rescued all alone-either wandering around the countryside, on the street, or hiding in the corner of a bombed out building. God only knows where their families might be-if they're even still alive. When the children are too young to know where they're from it's a matter of knowing where they were rescued, and observing subtle differences in dialect or clothing. Obviously, I am not helpful with those subtle investigations. Sometimes there's no way to determine where a child is from and I'm not sure what the policy is then. I was right about thinking it would be the condition of young children that would be the most difficult for me. My heart has been broken so many times by seeing the suffering of these children.

August 23

Went out to the field this morning and we were on the best road yet but still we failed to get to our destination. The bridge had been destroyed, a local train may or may not arrive, and there wasn't a sampan anywhere in sight, so we went back home after a visit with a village chief.

Washed my hair.

August 24

Went to Shelter #1 again this afternoon to speak with some of the orphan children. Poor little waifs. One child, age 10, said he was the eldest of 10 children. We think (hope) he counted his uncle's children too. At least they will all be together in the village he said they are from. I pray

there's still an adult member of the family there to receive them. Busy in the afternoon preparing for another field trip. Louise returned this afternoon-exhausted from her trip to the field.

August 26

At the office for a short time in the morning to clear my desk. All packed and ready to go at 1pm. Duffle bag, suitcase, extra sox, sleeping mat and a box of supplies. I am packing a little less with each trip as I see how little I can get away with bringing. Sometimes the biggest luxury in the field is a hot cup of tea. Had difficulty securing travel and we missed the boat. Very disappointed. It means starting all over again. Friends in for cocktails in the evening.

1st CRB letter

August 27 (multiple days, sorry)

To my friends at the County Relief Board, County Rest Home and Wayfarers Lodge,

I must apologize for the delay in completing and mailing this letter. I have been in and out of Canton with little time to write. I want you to know how much I enjoyed the round-robin letter you sent. Thanks to those who sent me birthday greetings-it's so nice to be remembered.

There is a lot of tension over here due to the political situation and it does influence our program. It hasn't been an easy task. Many of the staff have become discouraged and some are already leaving. It's a hard assignment, that's for sure. I have found enough to do and, although I question the value of my contribution, I still hope seeds will be sown on fertile soil. This country lives in the past or rather its people seem to, and it is difficult for the masses to change their way of doing things.

I was aboard a junk for a thirty mile trip on the Pearl River to visit a county that suffered heavily during the war. I thought you might be interested in hearing about this trip. To me it is an adventure as it is my first trip on a junk (a wooden sailing ship with a flat bottom).

In usual Chinese fashion, the boat was scheduled to sail at three pm but left at five. My teammates invited me to have a cup of coffee at a hotel near the wharf at ten after three. I went along but was as nervous as a kitten-rushing through my coffee while they relaxed and enjoyed theirs. I also wasn't feeling my best because I had gotten sick the day before (probably a combination of fatigue, heat, and local food). I thought surely the schedule meant something but, after waiting two hours, I realized that my friends are always right when they relax-no rush-if we don't get there today we will tomorrow.

Well, we are moving along smoothly and quite comfortably. There's no engine on this boat to give us added noise and smells. The boat is pulled along by a motor launch and it takes its time. I'm sure my jaw dropped when we were shown our "quarters". No staterooms-just one huge room (about 20ft x 30ft) below the upper deck with double decker bunks across the sides and rear, with 93 people in there. We chose the rear of the boat. I am traveling with Fr. O'Melia and Irving.

The bunks are about six feet long; boards built like a bookshelf from side to side, partitioned with six inch boards. Not much space or width, and there you are. You either squat or lie down. The Chinese passengers were mostly lying down and had their shoes and stockings off. Shoes were all lined up on a small shelf at the foot of the bunks. We soon joined them. Any baggage you've brought occupies the bunk with you, so you can imagine how comfortable it is. Fortunately, there's a window at my head and the fresh air is "heavenly". At seven we ordered dinner. The menu was written on a wooden plaque and the food was served on a flat board used as a tray. We squatted and "dug in" with our chopsticks, everyone eating out of the same bowl. I'm still not too good with chopsticks and much of my intended meal winds up on the floor or my lap. In the midst of all this comes an individual shiny thermos filled with hot tea.

The evening begins when they light these tiny kerosene lamps-they call them Mei Foo lamps. Doesn't smell too great but Fr. O'Melia tells me that it's better than what they used to use (soybean or whale oil).

I'm on the top shelf of a double decker, next to a young boy named George who lived in Toledo. We chatted for a long time about Ohio and his experience in the US and he asked many questions about my work in China. He's working for an American company and traveling around the southern part of China. Chatting with him was a delightful surprise.

My feet were bare with the rest of them to cool off. What difficulty getting comfortable with so much baggage. When I wasn't chatting with George, I was being entertained by the medicine man.

There's plenty of chattering in here and to add to the noise, a medicine man is making a lot of racket selling his wares. He has pills of all sizes, powders and potions. He pounds his chest with his fists and with an iron bar to prove how strong he is. This is clearly evidence of the efficacy of his wares. Another Chinese man, apparently an osteopath, is massaging a man from head to foot. A small Chinese boy watching this is practicing massage on his father. There's another salesman with all kinds of dried meats who is yelling at the top of his voice. He has funny little things dangling from a string and large pieces much like sausages enticing both flies and people. To make it all more homelike, there are the colorful spittoons at the foot of each bunk. They look like rows of little sentinels watching everyone through the night.

I'm sorry this letter has taken so long to finish. Let me catch you up to date...

I traveled to a small town (Shi Kiu) recently by launch. It was a beautiful trip on the Pearl River and its tributaries where we were met by a band when we visited a large orphanage. What a reception we received! Six hundred boys from the orphanage stood at attention-band playing and much saluting. All were dressed in military style uniforms. I felt as if I was part of General MacArthur's staff or something-strutting along the street accompanied by the top-hats of the town. These kids are well cared for, but they are all so thin.

This orphanage is a particularly good one. Good health standards, clean and orderly, where education and recreational play are part of the training of these boys. They also had the children involved in work projects. I wonder if there are equivalent facilities for girls.

The Magistrate and other members of the relief committee (part of the UNRRA program) usually greet us. Each county-seat has one composed of the Magistrate, Supt. of the Board of Education, head of the political party, Supt. of the Board of Health (if there is one) and other influential people. They are responsible for the welfare, planning and distribution of UNRRA goods. CNNRA (the Chinese Relief Agency) has representatives working in these areas and helping the committees. Then along come the "specialists" (us) to give advice and encouragement to both the committee and our own workers (also to report to the "higher ups" about how the situation on the ground is going). My experience at the Bureau has been of benefit as the organization is much the same back home-county, township and villages. County seats here are usually larger and could be called cities.

We also visited two large hospitals, each with 100 beds. All are having great difficulty supporting the people in their care, so UNRRA helps by providing food and medicine. My job is to help with food demonstrations (using UNRRA-supplied canned goods), encourage more milk and nutrition food stations, and advise on methods of distribution of supplies, work relief projects, etc. It's a very broad field and the needs are so much greater than I could have ever imagined that, at times, I feel incompetent and helpless to make any headway.

We are returning to Canton by boat and undoubtedly it will be midnight before we get home. It would be so nice to see all of you. Do write to me again soon. As usual, this note is for all of CRB, the nursing home, receiving home, etc. I think of all of you many times and wish I could run in and say hello. Until then, my very best wishes to you all.

Sincerely, Mary K.

September 4

A day's trip planned to Horping, but missed connections. Sorry to leave the mission with its pleasant companionship, primitive shower and "ladie's man". I returned to Canton on a magnificent junk and I had a real stateroom! I went up the little stairs to the top deck to sit out and watch a gorgeous sun set. Thankfully, no pirates were observed.

September 5

Enjoyed a comfortable night at home. I'm glad to be home, even though this was a good trip. Dinner at Marcel's with the usual discussion of the events of the day. Military movement, inflation, student demonstrations, and guerilla attacks. Just another day.

A light breeze was blowing and my bed was hard as usual.

My trunk still hasn't arrived and I'm getting concerned, as soon I'm going to need my winter clothing.

## Mary's 8th letter home

Saturday, September 7, 1946

Dear Mother and All,

I returned from a 10-day trip yesterday. I'm glad you all got to Cedar Point and wish you could ride with me on the kind of boats I travel on. Last Wednesday I took another junk ride to Forshau at 6PM and got there the next day at noon. We sat on the top deck to see the sunset and watched as the crew made preparations in case pirates showed up at night. At one end of the top deck there were nine cannons and two Japanese machine guns all ready to fire. The cannons were ancient and of all shapes and sizes. The soldiers each took a shift on watch. There is a real fear of robbers everywhere. I slept like a trooper all night as I had a small room to myself-what luck!!

I'm getting used to life here and can truthfully say I am enjoying it more as time goes on. My trips into the countryside make it more interesting. On the last trip I rode a bicycle, which was a lot of fun though I was stiff the next day. A rickshaw driver did the pedaling while I sat astride a padded little seat on the back with a place on either side of the back wheel for my feet to rest on small pedals. Fortunately there was a little handle in front of the seat to hang on to. Skillful rider, but such narrow paths. I felt as if I had to hold my breath the whole time. In and around rice fields. My newly purchased hat fell off, and Mr. Chin (my colleague) was constantly telling me to tie it around my chin. We rode like that for 2 hours.

Father O'Melia was with me, also 2 Chinese team members and 2 extra bicycles for our baggage. Quite the convoy. The paths were so narrow, leading through the villages in and around and up and down hills. No roads anywhere. These rickshaw drivers are skillful though I held my breath many times when we passed a bicycle coming the other way with only room for one. When you come to a ditch you have to get off and walk over it.

I'm writing this letter on Saturday after shopping. I bought some pretty plates. My roommate and I have tried to furnish our room, as some loaned things had to be returned. We bought cots and a few bamboo chairs and a small table and hope to make it more livable with small colorful photos, pictures, plates, etc. We have a grand balcony and put the cots on it with mosquito netting, etc because it's cooler out there and we can sleep better. We bought some fabric for covers and a Portuguese friend sewed them up for us. Another friend left some panels for the walls, a nest of black wood tables, a table to eat on and a clothes cupboard (there are no closets here). As you can tell, we are doing fine.

Tomorrow (Sunday), seven of us are invited to dinner at the family home of one of our translators. I'll report on that in my next letter.

Love,  
Mary

September 8

I worked on a field report all morning. This afternoon Louise and I and several other UNRRA staff members went to the home of Tai-Ping for lunch. She's one of our UNRRA interpreters, and her language skills are excellent. She studied English with a private tutor when she was in secondary school and has a little bit of a British accent. Mrs. Wong, Tai-Ping's mother, is a very gracious host who has limited English so, because our Cantonese is virtually nonexistent, Tai-Ping was busy translating. Mrs. Wong was a gracious host. The lunch we had was delicious, and the papaya dessert she made had my mouth watering. So tasty!

Their home is located in the Yuexiu District section of Canton where many of the homes have bamboo gardens, but a lot of them had been looted or damaged during the war. Those that remain are encircled by elaborate iron gates and high stone walls.

Tai-Ping's home was extraordinarily beautiful. I knew I was in for a treat when I saw the front door, which was itself a work of art. It was made of teakwood, probably 8 feet tall, and had a large dragon carved into the left side and a peacock with long tail feathers sitting on the branch of a tree carved into the right side. The interior of their home was equally gorgeous, mostly teakwood furniture. There was also a beautiful lush garden in a courtyard in the middle of the home.

## 7th letter from Rose

'August 27, 1946

Dear Mary,

How are you? I hope you aren't melting too much in the summer warmth of Canton. I appreciated reading about your enthusiasm for traveling in the countryside. I share those feelings for the most part. I'm glad there isn't a lot of armed conflict where you are. It makes everything more complicated.

About a month ago I was requested to make another trip to Xuanhuadian, the town where our supplies were stolen by the KMT on the last trip. You can imagine how enthusiastic I was to make this trip again, but the need was great. The communist military who were hiding in the area have cleared out but there were reports that a small hospital was abandoned when they retreated, leaving behind some patients. I was accompanied by two of my colleagues and we found 67 patients who had been there for 6 weeks without medical or surgical care. They were a mess. Nine of them had been injured in guerilla fighting against the Japanese and had suffered amputations, another 12 had infections from improperly cared for gunshot wounds, one had a heart condition, another had TB. They were all pretty seriously ill. Medical supplies that had been provided by UNRRA were but not being used because there was no medical staff left.

We decided the best thing to do was to evacuate the patients to a nearby hospital where they could be treated. We also left enough medical supplies for the facility to act as a first aid station for the area. About 30 patients were carried out of there on litters while the rest

made their painful way out on foot over the course of a couple of days. The most critical patients were transported to Hankou.

I returned to the sub-office a couple of weeks later because a senior KMT officer had made threatening statements about the patients we moved and the employees who remained there. I've recommended that our staff be moved to another location. My hope is that I don't have to go back to that particular site again.

Recent flooding of the Yangtze has brought another round of cholera, but not quite as bad as in years past, so we're taking that as a sign of success with our vaccination program. It's also not as bad as the outbreak in Shanghai a couple of months ago. I've heard that place was a mess with quarantines. You got out of there just in time, Mary, I think you missed it by just a few weeks. You must live a charmed life!

Write again soon! I love getting your letters. It helps a lot as I'm sure you know.

Sincerely,  
Rose

September 7

It's hard to believe how different my experience here in China is turning out to be from Rose's. I'm eternally grateful for that. I'm also grateful that she seems to be staying safe despite all that's swirling around her. Rose is a tough cookie, there's no doubt about that.

We've had a string of robberies in the area lately and there was another one today. We saw police marching 5 thieves down the street past our window this afternoon. There's not many articles in the newspaper about it, though, for fear of scaring away the foreigners. But UNRRA keeps us up to date. Looting and robbery in Canton was the 1st item on the agenda at an UNRRA meeting this week.

2nd Florence Ford letter

August 19

Dear Mary,

How are you? I hope you're making it through the hot season well. It's been pretty warm here lately, but in a nice way. I think once the cool weather comes to Qingdao I may be ready to make that visit we talked about.

My work with the nurses was reaching the end of its first phase so I've branched out and have begun to give presentations to civic groups and schools as part of my work. It was also necessary for me to leave the hospital once in a while. It was getting a little claustrophobic to live and work all in the same building. Qingdao feels even smaller to me now than when I arrived, almost as if we're living in a bubble or something. The situation is too unstable to make any visits to other towns or see the countryside, so about the only

entertainment we have are long walks on the waterfront in the evening. That's where I bump into most of the people I know, all doing the same thing.

I happened to mention this to one of my Chinese colleagues at the hospital and he arranged for a much-needed field trip. Dr. Wong is from Weifang and moved here to become the hospital's Chief Surgeon, so he has some clout. We have been working together to bring the surgical teams up to date on sanitation procedures. Anyway, Dr. Wong pulled some strings and arranged for a field trip for me, my interpreter, and several UNRRA friends who work in the port. We had a whole caravan of vehicles with KMT soldiers and vehicles. All this for a picnic at a site about 25 miles west of the city in a field with, now get this, larger than life stone statues. There was an entire field of them. I couldn't believe it. They were like eerie sentinels who had stories to share.

There were ancient statues of soldiers, dignitaries, and animals. All of them were at least 8 feet tall, though some were broken in half. They stood in straight rows, with about 20' between each row and the same distance between each statue. Dr. Wong said these statues are ancient burial ruins of some kind. No one's certain. There was probably a wooden shrine or structure here at one time but the wood decayed long ago and all that's left are these statues. The farmers just plant their crops around them. Local people call them "stone people". I snapped a bunch of photos and have included a couple in the envelope with this letter.

How is the general "mood" in Canton? Does it seem more tense to you? It's definitely becoming more tense here. Maybe because we're limited in travel outside of town, but it also sometimes feels there's actual surveillance now. There was a soldier standing outside my classroom all last week which I found unnerving. I spoke to my friend Dr. Wong about it and this week there haven't been any soldiers, but how controversial can it be to teach someone to clean a floor with bleach? Maybe this is just me feeling the need for a little more of a break.

Well, my friend, I have rattled on long enough and must finish a few things before heading off to bed. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,  
Florence

September 9

I received another letter from Florence. This one included a couple of photos from a trip she took outside the town where she's working. How odd, these enormous stone carvings. They are a reminder of how old Chinese culture is. It boggles my mind to think about how long it must take for a shrine to decompose to the point where it's forgotten and becomes a farmer's field. It would be nice if she were able to make a visit to Canton, though I don't think UNRRA likes to support (or allow) travel that's not work-related.

Monsoon rains today and how it rains! The energy of so much water falling is quite remarkable, and loud! We finally got someone (with Irving's help) who can cook and clean for us. Her name

is Saam and she has nine years of experience working for a Portuguese family, but not a word in English. We sent her shopping with Irving to translate.

I also received some sad news today about Father Conley, one of the priests I met on the trip last month. He passed away quite suddenly. At this time I don't know whether it was an accident or an illness. He will be missed by those boys, that's for certain. They were quite devoted to him.

September 10

We had hoped to eat at home today but there was no food in sight. Saam did clean up, and did the washing, but no food. Irving is ill and unable to interpret for us. Our Chinese skills really are terrible. When Louise asked her to prepare dinner, the mosquito nets went up. With another donation from Nick (fine screens and pictures), our room's beginning to look like something liveable.

The Harvest Moon celebration was tonight in town. It was a big celebration with banners, fire, and lots of fireworks. When times are good, people travel to their home town to visit family for the Harvest Moon festival. They share mooncakes, give thanks for the full moon (which symbolizes prosperity), and make wishes for a good harvest. The war has made all of this more difficult and most people are in no position to travel for pleasure, but at least we had a wonderful fireworks display. Firecrackers too, lots of firecrackers.

September 11

Another day and still no sign of food at home. We were looking forward to meals at home. Miss Wohn came over this evening and spoke with Saam who hadn't understood that we wanted to eat at home. Worked on a special report on supplies that took all afternoon and was completed at 11pm with Jack Bush's help. It's still raining, but at least it's gotten a little cooler.

September 12

Busy working on my report all day. Had a marvelous lunch-potatoes, steak with onions, cucumbers and fruit. Saam is a good cook! Supper was pork, potato patties. I am afraid we will get fat if she keeps this up. Louise and I are enjoying our home immensely now that we have no work to do (Saam does all the cleaning, cooking and laundry).

A few observations about customs and rites that still exist. Girl babies are still a liability, particularly in poor families. The importance of boys is one reason for it, another is the importance of ancestor worship which can only be carried on by the male. Another is that the boy is responsible for the support of his entire family, while a girl marries and becomes a member of her husband's family. Chinese still adhere to the old marriage rites and ceremonies. Although in some families the girl is allowed to choose her own husband, usually the parents mark the choice.

September 13

Rain, rain, rain and it's still raining. I'm all dressed up in galoshes, rain coat and scarf. Mr. Ray is here from Shanghai so I listened to his presentation. He's from headquarters and was here to tell us it looks like the staff will be going home after March 31, perhaps earlier. Of the 2000 or so

UNRRA folks who came to China, there are now only 1,400 who are still here. I don't blame anyone for leaving early. It's a tough assignment and I have it pretty good.

## Mary's 9th letter home

Monday, September 16, 1946

Dear Mother and All,

Well, I have a chance to use a typewriter and I know how much you all enjoy a letter from me that you can actually read! The weather is cooler! This has been the hardest summer I've ever experienced-with heat and humidity of 95-100, it's pretty bad and sleep comes with great difficulty some nights.

We have a cook now and I'm getting some real good food though our cook doesn't speak English and our Chinese is still pretty bad. She smothers all the food in onions and uses lots of garlic on meat. Good thing I like it like that. No endive or greens however and I miss them. I've been back in Canton now for over a week and will probably leave for the countryside any day. I'm better off than some of the workers who go away for a month or two at a time while I can get back in at least 2 weeks and from nearby counties in 2 to 3 days.

It's a tough life as living conditions are bad. I won't be able to stay at the mission this time as I will be alone. Father O'Melia is being sent to a different territory and we girls will only have an interpreter with us. It is a wonderful way to learn to know the Chinese people and many tell us that unless you go into the country you have missed a lot.

My trunk still hasn't arrived yet and I'm getting worried, as there are many things in it that I need now or soon-winter clothing, etc. My sox are starting to wear out and I can't get any more as Chinese people have very small feet (compared to my clodhoppers) and I can't find any big enough.

I wish you were here to help me celebrate my 8th anniversary in UNRRA! Eight months since I started training in DC-pretty soon I'll be on my homeward lap. Had a quiet morning today but will be off soon visiting institutions and a few trips into nearby counties. The weather is still quite warm but the rains have stopped. The trees are green and hibiscus is blooming all over.

As I sit here I see a soldier leaning against a tree. They have plenty of guards here on the Island. The bridges are guarded day and night, each consulate has its own quota and with a police station right here we are well protected. I wish they could protect us from the rats too. Rats swarm around the place and we have "visitors" every night. I have some poison and we're starting our own little campaign of extermination.

Love,  
Mary

September 17

Had some friends over for dinner. Long evening discussing world affairs. The fragile peace I had once thought would be China's future has all but fallen apart. The people I know are now just calling it "the civil war" rather than skirmishes or other euphemisms. Someone mentioned that the area around Qingdao was especially tense right now. I think Florence was lucky to get her field trip when she did and without incident. But there are so many military forces (both KMT and US) in town that she should be ok, at least for now. Worrisome, though.

September 27

I visited the mental hospital this afternoon with Miss Hart. It's a clean, pleasant building with 170 patients getting good care. No treatment, however, due to the lack of staff and equipment. An evening at home.

It's still plenty hot. Ralph is going to Ku Kong. We will all miss him.

The rat poison is starting to do the trick, but there are some smart rats too, so the battle continues. No rain this week and everyone is hopeful that Fall is here. It's still hot enough that I lay on top of my bedding, rather than under a sheet or blanket. The scale says I weigh 135 pounds.

September 30

I have no "pep" although it is not too hot today. Not sure if I'm coming down with something or not. I hope the iron, vitamins and calcium do the trick. Little to do at the office, so I went home at 11am. A bridge game in the afternoon. No excitement on Shamian except a robbery. Rutton's money was stolen this time. Many new faces on the island these days. Folks are returning.

October 2

Found enough to do at the office this morning. Fr. O'M is back from his vacation and we had a nice visit. Irving dropped by to say goodbye before going off to Shanghai. I'm going to miss that kid.

Dr. Stransky accompanied me to the Home for the Cripples where there were 6 blind children, 5 of whom were extremely sick with smallpox. Ralph and I visited Barry at the hospital, much to the disgust of the Superintendent, Barry has malaria.

October 8

My work is a disappointment because it seems impossible to constructively push to get things done. I find myself being frustrated a lot when things don't move forward as they ought to. There's another new director of CNRRA (Dr. Lee) and no doubt he is permanently entrenched. The UNRRA National office people are all traveling around the country right now to learn more about how things are going. Miss Mary Polosky from the China Office is here all week to interview personnel and report on our activities. Mr. Sloman and several others also plan to come. I'm going to give them my full report while they're here and I'm not going to hold back. I hope they will be able to implement some of the changes I've suggested.

October 9

Louise and I are not feeling too well. Did the "pancakes" we had for breakfast cause this? Poor woman! I went to bed at 9:30 to avoid a huge moth or "whatever it is" that was flying around the room. I hope it's not there in the morning.

October 10

Today was one to be remembered. Double Tenth Day (10/10) celebrates the 36th anniversary of the Republic. There were gay and colorful parades and decorations all over town. I took some colored photos.

A military reception and garden party for UNRRA and CNNRA employees was held this afternoon. It was very nice. They served wine, cakes, and other finger food. Afterward, a large group photo was taken with Governor Morgan, the Mayor of Canton, top ranking military officials, UNNRA, CNRRA, and yours truly. There are several hundred people in this photo, mostly men.

This was followed by a buffet supper at R. Lin's. I'm tired after this eventful day and my bed was marvelous. I'm sorry to say that Louise is not feeling well yet, so she stayed at home. I brought home some treats for her but that can't compensate for missing such a great day.

October 12

A trip to Fat sham to visit the Lotus Temple. Sampan, train, bus and on foot. Beautiful weather and interesting village life. The locals use the lotus roots for food, stems for fire wood, leaves for wrapping and the seeds for sweets. Also ponds with water hyacinths along the way.

## 8th letter from Rose

October 1, 1946

Dear Mary,

How are you? The weather here in Hankou has been beautiful lately. Warm afternoons and cool evenings that are perfect for sleeping. It changes pretty quickly though and I can tell I would need a winter coat before long-if I was staying. I'm scheduled to leave Hankou next week and will probably be in Shanghai for a little bit while my travel home is confirmed. I have mixed emotions about leaving, as I'm sure you will when your time comes. China is complicated, beautiful, strange, charming, infuriating, and dangerous all at once. It's hard to put into words. I will miss being here, yet I know it's time for me to go. As much as I've become accustomed to China, I don't belong here. But I will definitely miss my colleagues and friends in Hankou. We've been through a lot together and I know I'm going to worry about those I'm leaving behind.

We haven't done any field visits for the last couple of weeks and I won't be making any more before I leave. It's just too dangerous. There are attacks on the rail lines pretty regularly and some of the villages in the area have seen active fighting. Just when you think things are on the cusp of improving, it all falls down again.

Hankou has become very tense. It feels like there's an undercurrent of suspicion. Posters sometimes appear overnight bearing ambiguous statements on them like: "Down with corruption" or "Peace and Reconstruction". These posters will spread all over town and will then be gone in a matter of hours. One can only guess who put them up, who's taking them down, and who they are referring to when they point fingers about corruption.

We've been cautioned not to attend certain meetings because we don't want the KMT to think UNRRA employees back the communists or labor organizers. Should I mention that my dad became a member of the Teamsters Union just before he died? He was proud of that too. Sometimes I feel like I'm sitting on a big pile of matches that have been soaked in gasoline. It won't take much to ignite the pile.

I'm sorry you weren't able to visit Hankou for that cup of coffee (nor I to Canton). I guess neither of us had a clue of how difficult travel in China is at this point in time. There's a lot I didn't know before, for sure. We learn so many things, don't we? I am considering taking my weekly reports with me when I leave, to keep things neat and tidy. The changes in government can mean a lot of things to a lot of people and I don't want what I've written to get anyone in any trouble.

It looks like we'll be meeting up in Cleveland or DC or somewhere else for that cup of coffee. Let's make it a full pot and have a long conversation. I'm looking forward to the next time our paths cross.

Your friend,  
Rose

October 14

Looks like Rose is pulling up stakes. Given the news we're getting at headquarters it sounds like a good time for her to leave. I'm glad she made it through her year without being hurt because she was really out there on the front-especially on those trips to the mountains. Only Rose could have persevered in such a setting. I'm not sure I would have made it through an entire year if I were in her shoes.

No one is using the word "skirmish" anymore when they talk about the armed conflict between the KMT and the communists. The heaviest fighting is still far away from us, in the north. Manchuria is the worst of it and that's a long way from here, but even here in Canton there's more tension. We still have our cocktail parties and our bridge games, but our conversation revolves around the political situation and UNRRA reports about fighting. No one wants to be caught unaware and get caught up in the middle of a shoot-out.

Not that I need all the bridge games and dinner parties of Shamian Island, but if I had to choose between the two, knowing what I now know, I'm pretty sure I'd choose Canton.

Mary's 11th letter home

Monday, October 15, 1946

Dear Family,

Another lovely Sunday and I'm enjoying Canton now that the weather has cooled off. Just think of it-I'm an old China hand So much to do in the time left due to the slow moving organization I'm a member of. I've been stuck here in Canton for a month now. Folks in the counties are clamoring for our help but there is always someone who is planning a change in the program and we get caught in the middle. There is less direct relief now and some milk stations and rice lines have even shut down. Shelters are being cleared and we are giving more assistance to institutions and other established agencies so they get stabilized and can carry on, but what a job!

Mail from home is very slow-maybe it's stuck on the West Coast (strikes, etc). I learned that my trunk was located in Hong Kong and I hope to get the captain of a group of landing ship tanks working for UNRRA to bring it back on his return trip. Hope moths haven't eaten all my woolens.

Social affairs come in bunches. Last week there was a Lutheran party for the heads of station, then the China Transport Service gave a cocktail party, and a Portuguese staff worker gave a buffet supper party for a large group at his home. Recently I was invited to a private military ceremony for the top ranking military, along with the mayor, and Catholic Bishop of Canton. Pictures were taken and I hope I get one. Then, in the afternoon, a cocktail party at the Governor's guest house, a modern, spacious home in a wooded setting. The driveway, paths and rooms were decorated with many colored flags and lanterns. There were many fine-looking Chinese men and women in attendance-and good eats too. The wealthy Chinese certainly don't miss a trick-too bad so many people are poor. In the evening the UNRRA director hosted a dinner at his home but it was too much for me and I left early.

Recreation is essential as looking at the same faces at work and on the island gets a bit monotonous and people are quite different when they're at social programs. Canton is slower and less cosmopolitan than Shanghai. We're not going to get any touring Russian ballets (or comedies) here. For recreation we have bridge games, cocktail parties and charades.

I'm doing little with my Chinese language training-I'm lazy, I guess. I know enough words to get what I need to eat and together with sign language we get along.

It's hard to write to everyone though I'd like to. I enjoy all of your letters and re-read them on difficult days. I have to be in the mood to write and with the mosquitoes, bats, rats, etc. that come into our room, I sometimes just give up and crawl under my net. When it's cool enough to keep our doors and windows closed these nuisances may stop.

There's regular air travel from Hong Kong to the States now and planes land here in Canton 2x/week from Hong Kong. I'd like a boat trip home, though. I want my baggage to arrive with me.

Love to all, Mary

## Mary's 12th letter home

Sunday, October 27, 1946

Dear Mother, Kitty, Fred, and Al,

I'm using the only paper I can get my hands on. As you can see I'm in Hong Kong for a weekend outing-my first outing since I came to China. I had an opportunity to come on a truck with 6 others and really enjoyed it. The road is nothing to brag about-all dirt and many miles of ruts. In some places it looked like a wide cow patch. It's the road that opened up between Canton and Hong Kong last August with big celebrations on both ends. It's a 130 mile drive and we made it in 10 and ½ hours, which is considered quite good. The five ferries we needed to take to cross over several channels of the Pearl River took up a lot of that time. One mile wide channel with a ferry was pushed by a tug but we had to wait more than an hour for the tide to rise. Ferries number 2-3-4-5 were across smaller branches and those "ferries" consisted of a wooden platform on 8 small buoys that was not much larger than the truck itself. Laborers pulled it across by means of a rope-hand over hand-they're skilled at it, but it's primitive. I was grateful when each of those rides was over.

The scenery all along this ride was lovely, particularly as we were nearing Hong Kong. Mountains with rivers winding around and around green valleys.

Today a party of us drove on bikes through the mountains and found a beautiful cove along the sea and went swimming. We are gone from eleven until 4PM. Yesterday I did the town, mostly window shopping and eating in nice restaurants. Hong Kong seems to be getting back on its feet. Law and order seem to prevail and I'm seeing far fewer beggars in the streets.

I'm hoping to take another leave and be able to travel further into the Province-to Kwangsi, if possible.

I sat on the beach today looking across the bay with the usual army of junks and sampans passing by. I felt so far from reality and thought it was almost a dream. We'll have much to talk about when I get back home. I'll be spoiled for the office as I am a freelancer here and pretty much plan my own time and program-and meet so many interesting people here.

Bye-bye,  
Mary

## Hainan Island

December 1

Goodness, what happened to the month of November? I guess I'm getting tired of writing in my journal again. I hope Fred has saved a few of my letters so I'll know what I did here in Canton. The newness of living here is now familiar, so I don't get so excited when I see, hear, smell or taste something that was unknown to me a year ago. Also, the pace of life and the fact that I often feel unwell helps to kind of blend together long stretches of time. Monotony? Not exactly the word I would choose because I am never 100% certain about what is happening around me, but familiarity can bring with it a certain sleepiness.

A number of folks have left the Canton office but Louise and I are holding down the fort. Having Saam help us with the chores of daily life has been a godsend. We have friends over, they have us over, and we all go to Marcells for long conversations into the night. There's a rhythm.

That rhythm will be broken this week, however, as I've been requested to make a trip to Hainan Island.

December 2

Well, here I am in Hoi-Kow, a city of about 60,000 and I'm settled in at the Presbyterian Mission. It was a chilly morning when I left and I'm glad I brought my trench coat with me. The plane was hours late and I tried to settle my nerves by drinking a cup of tea. But being the only foreigner in the group, I ordered tea but it was too strong. So I asked for hot water but got cold water instead, then a glass of boiling tea-at which point I gave up. You can see there is still a lot for me to learn.

It was a fantastic trip. I really like to fly! We flew over mountains and plains dotted everywhere with villages and towns where people struggle for existence. Rice crops look good in areas where there are canals, but not so good where water is more scarce. A short flight over the China Sea and on to Hainan Island. I wore my UNRRA uniform which made the KMT soldiers here a little suspicious and we had a little session with the military. Everyone is scared of the Communists. I didn't think I looked like one (ha!), but I won't wear my uniform again while I'm here.

There are 3 of our welfare teams here on Hainan. I paid one of my official calls this afternoon and have booked the others for tomorrow. The Captain has invited me for dinner this evening as guest of honor. It does seem important when on these field trips, but I feel quite humble as I feel I am of so little help.

I shared a room with Dr. Morse, a female missionary doctor, walked around town before my first appointment. Up and down side streets, alleyways, and, as usual, everyone stared. I am amazed at the cleanliness of Hoi-Kow. Even the alleys were clean and the homes orderly. Ducks, chickens, pigs all over the place, but they too had a certain "air" to them, unlike in

Canton. Rope-making, shoe-making, and carpentry seem to be the chief occupations. Not much in the curio shops except some coconut tea pots and tea cups, some lined with silver.

Had a meeting about refugees who are still on the island. I was disturbed to learn that the last group who left here a month ago for Formosa ran out of food. They lost 26 people and others were nearly dead when the ship landed. I must talk to the General about this to keep it from happening again. The government provides the transportation but CNRRA provides the food.

I spent the afternoon visiting 3 large grammar schools to talk about the feeding program for children. At 7pm there was a dinner party in my honor. Such a dinner and you feel obligated to eat what is put in front of you! It was delicious, but quite spicy. We had: some huge white fish, duck, crab, large fried shrimp, roast duckling, pig, shark skin (delicious), macaroni and cheese, fried noodles, hearts of cabbage, turnips-all served in separate courses. Between courses we had 3 different kinds of soup! The grand finale was an 8 fruit dessert made of rice, fruit and goodness knows what else. Can you believe there is starvation in China? There is food and a lot of it for those who can buy it.

December 4

I'm lucky that a teacher at the mission has allowed me to use her typewriter or I would never have kept this daily diary. I had an appointment this morning to visit the army barracks which the General is turning over for use as an orphanage and I was accompanied by members of the Committee who are planning the transfer.

Bandits are a real problem here on the island. They say there are around 3,000 of them in the interior. No one ventures more than 12-15 miles from the city. When the Director from our Canton office was here, the General furnished him with about 60 guards. I could have a trip arranged that way to see the interior because the relief situation is thought to be awful, but I think it's foolish to take the risk. Soldiers sometimes attract the bandits rather than repel them and I'm told they really don't like Americans. And that would be particularly bad if I look like a Communist-ha!

I visited another leper colony this afternoon with a doctor, minister and nurses from the Presbyterian mission. I sat through services and was asked to speak to the lepers. I told them why I was in China, why I was in Hei-kow and why I was interested in visiting the colony.

I said something like: I am amazed and inspired that contrary to my belief that a leper colony is a sad place, I find it quite different. Patients are smiling and active and are facing their illness and the future with fortitude and courage. I could see a real expression of brotherly love in the interest you take in each other and the help you give each other.

How's that for a sermon? Truthfully, the lepers impress me a lot. They are so terribly disfigured, suffer so much and are so isolated from others, yet they persevere.

December 5

A busy morning. I spent all morning working on the budget for the orphanage. This orphanage has about 75 girls and tiny foundling babies. They were happy to have a visit from someone from the outside. They have an isolated life and not an easy time of it.

The sisters make some good lychee nut wine which is a source of income for them and goodness knows they need it. The buildings are in need of repair and if it were not for their gardens, they would not have enough to eat. They were begging for mosquito nets and nipples for the baby bottles, which I hope I can get to them from Canton.

I had walked to the mission (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile outside of the city) and felt a little uncomfortable on the road by myself with Chinese people passing by and staring at me. Remember, there are no foreigners anywhere here but the few missionaries who are busy at their work. I felt alone in a strange land. Then I had a scare. A bull came walking toward me and I decided he would walk by without paying any attention to me so I stepped aside like the other men and women did.

Well, it would have been ok if a platoon of soldiers hadn't come marching down the narrow alley at that moment and the poor bull had no room to pass. He whirled around, tail in the air and came leaping toward me. Everyone scampered and believe me, I joined them. I fairly jumped into a little hut and behind a barrel, much to the surprise of the owners. After a while the bull found his way into the open and went scampering into the fields. I have always been deathly afraid of those animals and this incident didn't calm my nerves. However, it did give me a good laugh-once I had calmed down. I can only imagine the version of this story that the homeowners told and how much they laughed!

#### December 6

I hear the General is held up in the interior and won't be back for several days. I'm not going to wait for him but will do what I can when I return to Canton by LST on Tuesday. It will be an interesting trip. I've already met the captain and First Mate so I won't be with a strange group. The trip will take about 2 days and we may spend a little time in Hong Kong. I met with the General Secretary this morning and visited the warehouse. I had to find out what supplies were still on hand. Later we made another visit to the proposed orphanage for closer inspection of the building. We brought along a manon, a carpenter, and Dr. Morse who was a big help in planning space for isolation, sick bay, etc.

I saw a movie this evening for the first time since coming to China: The Mark of Zorro! I had almost forgotten about movies.

#### December 7

This morning I had my hands on the wheel of a vehicle for the first time in almost a year! I drove Dr. Reisinger's Jeep through town and boy, did I ever get the glances when I drove down the main street scattering kids, chickens, rickshaws, anyone in my way. I didn't use the horn, though many Chinese drivers like to lean on the horn.

Dr. Reisinger is a vet from Florida, a swell fellow with a tough assignment. He's on Hainan Island to stamp out the rinderpest disease in cattle that killed nearly 200,000 animals in the past few years. They're using a new vaccine developed in secret during the war. This is a much better idea than developing bombs in secret. He had some trouble getting the people and officials to cooperate at first, but it sounds like it's going better now.

December 8

I learned something interesting the other day that I'm going to have to share with the boys when I get home. When people in the interior want to catch a python, they build a square bamboo enclosure with the poles set far enough apart that a python can get in. Then a calf or goat is placed in the enclosure. When the snake gobbles the calf, its belly will be too big to slither out of the enclosure. Genius!

3rd Florence Ford letter

November 15, 1946

Dear Mary,

How are you? I hope you are well and that you're staying healthy. I've not heard from you in a while but I'm going to assume that's because you're very busy with your work. It's been a tough couple of months up here in Qingdao.

I think I mentioned in my last letter that I felt like we lived in a bubble. Now I would have to say that it feels more like a fortress than a bubble. There are military guards everywhere within the city and there's no way for civilians to leave on land for almost any reason. I think the only people who leave the city are the military and they only leave in large groups. The Marines guard the port and the KMT guards everything else. The railroads are mostly still used for the transportation of KMT troops to the north and they are under almost constant attack by communist forces. We hear about these attacks on a fairly regular basis.

There are a few UNRRA relief workers whose work took them into the countryside (like yours), but they are no longer making those trips because it's considered unsafe. More refugees arrive in Qingdao from the countryside every day. You see them huddled in the doorways of shrines and on street corners near the docks. It's quite chilly now most days and shortages of coal and fuel are feared. I worry what will happen once the cold weather really comes.

The hospital is still functioning well. We have been able to maintain our level of supplies, though the number of patients is definitely up. My students are, of course, overworked, but are implementing some of the measures they learned about and that is gratifying. Our wards are busy with patients with respiratory illnesses and the TB ward is full. This list goes on and on.

Because of all of these changes the mood here in town has become quite tense. People are fond of saying "Qingdao is still safe" which implies it may not be too soon in the future. The

price of food goes up from one week to the next. Thankfully, we've had no real food shortages because we can get supplies through the port. I guess that's one benefit of the military presence. But because we have more refugees from the countryside, the food lines are beginning to lengthen.

I'm honestly not sure how much longer I can stay here, Mary. It's a lot harder and mentally taxing than I thought it would be. Unless things take a turn for the better, I may submit my resignation in December. I hope the situation is better in Canton and that you feel your contribution matters. I am beginning to wonder about my own.

I'll keep you posted as to my whereabouts.

Sincerely,  
Florence

December 8

I received a letter from Florence today that saddened me. She sounded very exhausted and stressed. Given all that she wrote, I hope she's either on her way home now or will be soon. I'll send off a quick note to her tonight, but I'll address it to the Shanghai office just in case she's already left Qingdao. There are so many things going on here now that affect the work we came here to do. So many capable people have come here to try to help people in desperate need, but the forces at work are keeping that from happening.

2nd Asa Black letter

December 1, 1946

Dear Mary,

How are you? Are you still in Canton? I sure hope so, because I'm heading that way! The security situation here in Guilin has gotten a lot more serious and it's been decided that I need to leave. We did vaccinate a lot of people, so I guess my time here wasn't a complete waste.

I'm not exactly sure how I'm leaving, but it's supposed to happen soon after the first of the year. The roads in this whole area are unsafe for the kind of travel that brought me here (a Jeep, a wing, and a prayer) and I may need to be a "special guest" of a KMT military convoy. Me and 150 of my own soldiers. I'm supposed to send a telegram to the Canton office when we leave here. Keep your eyes open!

See you soon!  
Sincerely,  
Asa

December 20

I received an early Christmas gift this year-news that my friend Asa was coming for a visit! I can't wait to see her again and hear all about what she's been doing.



## Shamian Island

December 26

Smallpox has been on the rise lately. A newspaper article reported there were 217 cases in Canton during the week ended November 11. No fewer than 114 dead bodies of smallpox victims were dumped in the streets. Total deaths during the week were 137. Six cases of diphtheria with 6 deaths and 6 cases of chicken pox. Of typhoid, only 3 non-fatal cases were reported. I think we may be fighting a losing battle.

January 2, 1947 !!

I've had a real disappointment in being assigned to the Canton work team for the rest of my stay. I was all set to go into the province and was looking forward to it. I like the small towns and villages and learning about the more primitive ways of travel and living. I was put out about it and told them but they tried to console me by saying that this is the most important spot and needs someone like me-blah, blah, blah. It'll be a hard assignment as the Canton team has been under fire and recently.

A new Director has been put in. He's a nice fellow who has had to take on an entirely new staff. I'll be the only foreigner in the office and on an equal status with him. There are about 200 employees and the team is responsible for all relief efforts in Canton-individuals, agencies, institutions and refugees (and there are a lot of them). It's the largest relief setup in the province. But I guess orders are orders and there's little I can do about it. I'd hoped to see more of China before I left, but it won't happen now.

There have been more student demonstrations lately in Peiping and in Shanghai. It looks as though the Communists are busy everywhere. We were told there was to be an anti-foreign demonstration on the island a week or so ago. It didn't happen, but I see more police and soldiers about and a big Navy boat standing by in the harbor. We have all sorts of protection here in Canton. The Americans are despised by the communists as they claim all our help goes to the KMT, but UNRRA relief makes no distinction and I see that everyone wants it.

I wonder what would have happened if our country hadn't stepped in with supply and help. Some say the revolution would have come sooner and the masses would be better off now, others say that China would have been devastated, still others claim that the help the Allies give is just ruining the economic structure of China. I can't comment on any of this as I know so little about economics and I still don't understand why the dollar fluctuates from one day to the next. We dash around trying to convert any extra CNC we have into Hong Kong bills when the buying price is a little low. If we put it off at all we find we pay more the following day. We must pay our rent in Hong Kong dollars and although the Chinese are opposed to this, most of the foreign property owners insist on H.K.

On New Years Eve the President of the Hong Kong-Shanghai bank gave a blow out party for about 150 people. He has a huge apartment in the bank building that was decorated with colored paper garlands, balloons and flowers. I ate quite well. The New Year was passed at a

cocktail party given by Governor Lowe. There were about 200 men and just a few "official" women as we are called. No wives-only UNRRA women and a few Chinese women in agency positions. It was in a gorgeous guest house, lanterns strung all along the drive, soft music playing (the band played better this time, not so out of tune). One of our doctors who was feeling silly introduced me as his wife and had fun doing it. The Chinese bowed of course, as they do to everyone, telling the doctor that he had a charming wife. The Governor even kissed my hand! Any wonder why I like it here?

The past few months have seen many changes on Shamian Island as new foreigners come pouring in. When I first arrived there were just a handful of foreigners but gradually the banks opened, and Standard Oil and Pan American Airlines opened their offices. Just a couple of weeks ago Atlantic Petroleum brought in a dozen people and the consulates have also increased their staff numbers. All that means more teas, parties, etc. as that seems to be all anyone can think about. They tell me it was like this before the war and things are now only just getting back to normal.

January 7

A telegram arrived from Asa today at UNRRA headquarters. She'll be here soon.

DEPARTING GUILIN TODAY BY AUTHORIZED CONVOY DESTINATION CANTON VIA WUZHOU STOP EXPECT ARRIVAL APPROX FIVE DAYS STOP WILL REPORT UPON ARRIVAL STOP

January 12

The canal (where all the rats reside) is being dug out and widened. Men, women, and children work all day for 2 pounds of rice. Today I stood by and watched for a while-women with tiny babies on their backs, digging and hauling stones and soil in shovels and dumping it in their sampans. Later on, when the tide rises, they row out and dump it into the river. Little children, some naked, work like Trojans digging and hauling. You'll see 3-4 year old youngsters carrying babies (mostly boys) on their backs.

Louise and I have been busy tidying up the apartment in anticipation of Asa's arrival.

January 13

Asa arrived at our apartment this evening at around 5pm. It was a long journey to get here and she was exhausted so we ate dinner at home. Asa's Chinese is extremely good now. She was able to converse with Saam very easily. At one point I'm sure she made a joke at my expense because both she and Saam looked at me and laughed.

Asa travelled here most of the way with an Australian nurse named Sara. They left Guilin together 6 days ago in a military convoy of 5 KMT military trucks and 3 lorries. It was slow going over terrible roads, but they had no trouble from communist fighters or bandits. They camped that first night in a school in a small town.

The next day they were back in the trucks until they arrived in a town on the river where she and her colleague obtained passage on a junk to Wuzhou. Once they arrived in Wuzhou they check

in at the local UNRRA office, ate and spent the night. Her friend is still in Wuzhou for a few more days, but Asa wanted to keep moving, so she hopped on another junk which brought her to Canton. She'll be here for a couple of days so we'll have plenty of time to catch up. I'm very interested to learn what she's been up to at her post. She was exhausted and nearly fell asleep as she was telling us her tale.

January 15

It's been great having Asa here again. We've had some great experiences together (flying over the ocean, the cruise to Shanghai, getting robbed in Hong Kong). She's had a lot of interesting ones on her own too! Guilin sounds like it was a good fit. Because there were so few foreigners there she became very close with her counterparts and her language skills blossomed. She said she was even "adopted" by the family of the CNRRA office manager. She spent a lot of time with her children. There wasn't a lot of entertainment from a western perspective, but Asa may have had the most Chinese experience of any UNRRA person I've met. I've told her she needs to write a book about it. Who knows, maybe she will.

January 17

Asa has been enjoying all of the "cosmopolitan" activities here in Canton. We have been shopping several times and getting together with friends for cocktails. Basically I haven't been doing any work this week. She leaves early tomorrow morning, so of course we had to take her to Marcel's one last time. It was a great evening with beer, singing and story-telling with good friends. The usual conversations about the civil war notwithstanding, it was a wonderful evening.

January 18

Unfortunately Asa left today. I had hoped she might be able to stay for the new year, but orders are orders. She took the early train to Hong Kong where she'll have a couple of days to rest before leaving China for good. It was difficult to say goodbye again. I think it will be a long time before our paths cross, but I know we'll write, so that's something I can look forward to.

January 19

This week is Chinese New Year and there are all sorts of preparations going on. Much more excitement than on our New Year's Day. The stores, restaurants, shows and nearly everything will be closed for 3 days and celebrating goes on for about 10 days. I hope to work through it as time gets heavy on my hands unless I'm busy. I'm tired of walking around looking at the shops, especially in this wet weather, as the streets are so dirty. We didn't have any rain for 3 months until this last week so the dust was terrible and now it's turned into mud. No street cleaning here.

General Chennault (of Flying Tigers fame) was on Shaiman Island today and I was invited to attend a dinner in his honor at the Victory Hotel. It was a wonderful meal. They pulled out all the stops. I shook his hand and made small talk with him for a minute or two. But what I really wanted to ask was how did they determine where to bomb from so high up in the air? I've seen so many villages completely obliterated where houses, schools, hospitals, and orphanages have been reduced to rubble. How could you be certain you were only destroying bridges and

Japanese infrastructure and not the homes and livelihoods of innocents? But, of course, I said none of this to the General. I smiled and walked away.

## 2nd CRB letter

January 14, 1947

Canton, China

To my friends at the County Relief Board, County Rest Home and Wayfarers Lodge,

It is undoubtedly time for another letter to you and it will probably be the last one. I expect to leave Canton about March 1, though I haven't received definite word yet from Shanghai (it's where all these decisions get made). It will take a month or more to get out of Shanghai and cross the Pacific, hopefully by ship this time. It's hard to believe the months have passed so quickly and there is still much left to see and do. China grows on you and I can truthfully say that as much as I miss family and friends, I shall regret leaving. The widespread poverty, the dirty streets, the many epidemics that bother you to death when you first arrive become commonplace and you sort of take these things for granted.

Such changeable weather with 2 weeks of sunshine and temperatures up to 72 degrees – then cold again and I'm sitting at my desk bundled in a woolen dress, trench coat with woolen interlining, woolen stockings and my head wrapped in a woolen scarf. A pretty picture, I assure you! Lucky to have a fireplace in my room and I'm now practically sitting inside of it. This is luxury to what comforts the staff have here or in the Interior Provinces – or in the North where it is very cold.

My Christmas mail is just arriving and is most welcome. Planes have been grounded for a week or more and ships are only beginning to reach these shores in any number at all. Two arrived from Shanghai yesterday and many of us are walking around with a happier look on our faces. It is amazing what a letter from home can do for your spirits.

I'm discouraged by the amount of poverty still here. In October and November it seemed conditions had improved considerably. There were not as many beggars on the streets and in general people appeared to be in better condition. In our program we talked of stopping direct relief, such as rice lines, milk lines and centering our attention on all types of work relief projects; also cutting down the assistance given to institutions and agencies in the city and throughout the province.

Then along came what is called "winter relief" – the Municipal Government is taking over the feeding of the poor and again there are five stations where rice is distributed. CNRRA assists in this work by giving clothing and meeting other needs. But there are still about 800 children living on the streets of Canton alone without food or shelter. Some may be in the rice lines I mentioned but they sleep on side walks or in any corner they can find, their only cover being a burlap sack. Where they come from only heaven knows. You think the streets

are cleared of these unfortunates after you place hundreds in shelters and orphanages when-behold!-there are now hundreds more to take their place.

I walked to the YMCA yesterday to attend a meeting and was appalled at the number of children begging and at the miserable, starving adult beggars sitting in doorways and on curbs. They were too ill and weak to even notice me passing by (usually a foreigner is easy prey). One beggar was hard to get out of my mind – a leper with several toes missing, sores all over his body and he had scratched his arms until they drew blood. My stomach has turned so many summersaults that I fear when I get home, I'll find I left it in China.

All is not gruesome however. I visited a school today and found over a thousand clean, healthy children getting a good education –and this is just one of the many schools in Canton. It's run by the Municipal govt and partly financed by it, 33% of the children pay no tuition and the rest pay full charge. The principal told me their new classrooms had been built last year with money from wealthy Chinese. It seems that most of the govt. institutions could not exist without this private outside help.

I saw 2 nurseries in Canton last week – one private, the other public and it was gratifying to see standards equal to our good nurseries in the US. Except there are no heating systems in any buildings and many of the youngsters have colds, no matter how bundled up they are. Again this care is part pay and part free – the pay coming from the govt workers, teachers, etc. who must work during the day as they could not exist in the small salary of only the family head.

I had an assignment on Hainan Island in December and have been assigned to a Canton work team for the rest of my stay. It's more comfortable in town, but I like the adventure and work in smaller communities better. I am now assigned to the Canton City Work Team and it is quite a task! To begin with, the physical setup is the worst ever. The building is actually a dump, although the Director is doing what he can to find us a better building. Eighteen of us share one room about 18' X 20'. This includes the interviewers, Welfare Head and "Me". The present Director of the team has been here 2 months, a fine person with a good background for the position.

The majority of staff and all department heads are new and have little training for the work. The Welfare head is a military man (brother of the Director), department heads are mostly college grads willing and anxious to learn. It's not possible to get trained and experienced workers for these positions as there just aren't any available. It's also the custom to give jobs to your relatives and friends as they will carry out your orders. I'm giving interviewers and investigators practical instructions. It is really a challenging job as we have been given the authority to operate as well as advise. That makes it all the more interesting. Again if I only knew the Chinese language and understood their psychology better, I could be much more helpful..

Preventive medicine is something unknown here and the herb doctor is certainly a popular man. I visited a clinic in Canton where there were at least 100 different kinds of herbs used for all sorts of complaints. Some looked pretty good too.

Did you have a nice Christmas? Aside from missing family and friends, the day was a pleasant one for me. Almost all the foreigners in Canton live on Shamian Island so there's a lot of competition in giving parties. The day before Christmas there were 2 cocktail parties. My roommate and I invited 13 people for Christmas dinner with food prepared by a French restaurant here. We had a tree brought down from the country. I had a case of litchi nuts given to me by a Magistrate in a county nearby and we covered them with tinsel paper and used them as balls on the tree. I had more fun improvising than having things come so easily. Christmas is not a Chinese holiday but as UNRRA staff had the day off, CNRRA decided to give us the day off too. Chinese people also celebrate many holidays, birthdays of all their great men, the moon festival, dragon day, etc. Many more parties than I would ever be going to at home, but remember, the island is only a mile wide so you meet the same people coming and going.

Anyway, I'll be coming back chuck full of talk and I hope, enthused to be taking over my old job. See you soon!

Sincerely,  
Mary K.F.

### Mary's 13th letter home

January 31, 1947

Dear Mother and All,

Well, it will not be long now. I had a letter from the Shanghai office stating I will be declared surplus in February, but this can mean any time between the 1st and the last of the month. I'm making my plans and hope to have the packing under way when I get the final word. Shanghai doesn't want us in Shanghai too long and I'm afraid they will not give us much advance time before we leave here to be on our way. I'm hoping it will be by ship but I have to wait to see.

The country is still in a mess. I am sure it cannot be half as bad at home although we constantly hear about strikes, high prices, Has the meat and bread situation gotten any better at home? I also hear there is a shortage of toilet paper. Maybe I should bring some home with me? Ha!

We had a tragedy here yesterday. The small son (age 7) of one of the Portuguese families on the Island fell off a wall about 5' high and fractured his skull. He lived only a few hours and we are all very sad about it. His father works in the UNRRA office and is very kind. The family is broken up as they loved the little fellow so much-he was the baby of the family. They also lost a 16-year old daughter during the war at Christmas time. She was on a ship

coming from Macao to Hong Kong that was bombed by the Japanese. The mother has never gotten over that loss-and now this!

Later I spent an hour with my Portuguese friends. Little Horatio was buried this afternoon. No undertakers or funeral parlors-here the Chinese build a casket of wood, all sides rounded. Family and friends lift the body from the bed into the casket while everyone looks on. A long trek to the cemetery while I stayed with Mrs. Gomes, the mother. After a while. I was nearly knocked off my chair with a loud explosion of firecrackers. People were using firecrackers to chase away the devils who brought death to the family.

I'd love to go by train to Hankow and down the Yangtze River to Shanghai, but my friends say it's unsafe. The Communists do not love us and with the civil war going on it is never safe unless you have protection. Although there is no trouble traveling in this part of the country now, traveling in the Interior is a different story. Makes me sad that I can't do these things as I'll probably never get to visit China again.

Love,  
Mary

February 9

I'm waiting for the train to take me to KuKong in the northern part of the province, near the border of Hunan Province. I was told I need to inspect the work of #6 work team and since Louise is going further north, here we are riding on a China Express train. We're going at least 35 miles/hour but it's true comfort considering my other trips.

The train was an hour late starting. Hundreds of people boarding and hundreds of others see them off. It takes time to load all the baggage, pigs, etc, all done by men (no baggage trucks or carriers) just long poles and the poor workmen bending over with the weight. Pigs are shoved and crowded into round bamboo cages with their feet sticking out. Such squeals I'd never heard, though it's common in the streets of Canton.

We have a "state room" and the luxury of 4 bunks. Two Chinese men occupy the upper bunks and Louise and I have the lower bunks. They cannot speak English but with the door closed, it is nice and cozy. Four pairs of shoes on the floor and I am curled up with my feet under me. It is more comfortable lying down so we have practically been in bed since 9AM and it's now 4PM.

The proverbial spittoon was in the middle of the room when we arrived and I shoved it away in a corner. I'll be darned if I'll have them spitting down over me. Nice chaps, though. One is dressed like a government employee. Louise and I are the only white people on the train and it is jammed.

There are a lot of soldiers on this train and at every stop. As we've travelled further inland, it seems there's more and more military presence. I've noticed small military encampments close to the tracks and the train slows down to a stop whenever we approach a bridge. I guess to make sure it's still there. At the last bridge I noticed some soldiers hunkered down in fox holes near the base of the bridge.

Despite the tension of seeing so many soldiers, this countryside is beautiful. The North River is peaceful and picturesque with mountains jogging up from the water's edge. All shapes and sizes and all rock covered with stubby looking grass or brush. Today it is rainy and foggy so we can't see far ahead. I am always interested in the small villages, most of them with mud huts and grass roofs.

We arrived in Ku Kong at midnight.

February 10

I visited a mission run by the Silesian Fathers, an Italian order. They have a home for orphans, old people, and the blind. Their work is hard because they have so little money to work with. An infant was brought to the door while I was there. She had been wrapped in raggedy old clothes but looked as though the mother hoped it would keep her warm. The child was found along the side of the road, soaking wet, as it had rained steadily for the past 24 hours. She was just a little skeleton and I watched a Chinese sister feed her rice gruel. No doubt the child will die as so many do. Father Vech told me that in the last 20 years they have taken in about 30,000 infants and about that same number have died. Occasionally one lives to grow up in the orphanage.

February 15

The Chinese dollar is worth nothing now. Rice has gone up from 140,000 this morning to 200,000 this evening. The price has tripled and more in the past two weeks and people are frantic. All buying and selling is at a standstill. How are people supposed to live? It's a serious situation and something must happen, as people will soon be starving again. Our milk lines and cheap meal lines in Canton are now doubling week to week.

February 18

I am a busy person these days with packing and saying goodbye to people. This room looks as bad as when I left home. It's very cold today (37 degrees) and without heated houses it is difficult to keep warm. Our fireplace is not much help. You move a few feet away from it and you're freezing again. I hear Shanghai is much worse so I'm planning to bundle up so the ship won't be too uncomfortable. There may be a furnace in the hotel in Shanghai, but with the prices being so high, I may not be able to afford to burn coal or wood.

It's hard to believe the time has gone by so fast. I will leave Canton by myself and travel by train to Hong Kong. From there I'm sure I'll have company. There are always staff waiting to be transported to Shanghai. I hope to take a short trip to Macau. I hear there is a wonderful Lenten procession by candle light. Everyone says it's beautiful. I don't know when I'll leave Hong Kong, but step by step I'll get home. Louise will leave Canton next week. I am going to miss her and we're already planning when and where we'll see each other again. We've shared so many experiences of all kinds here in Canton.

February 19

The staff of the Canton team gave a nice luncheon in my honor today. The good was grand and the Director gave a little farewell talk. Then it was my turn. I'm not exactly a public speaker, but I think I did pretty well.

February 20

We had a final "send off" dinner at Marcel's this evening. It was fun and there was a lot of laughter. A lot of tears too, because I have grown to love this rag-tag group of people and will probably not see most of them again in this lifetime. Having a drink or two certainly helped. It helped me tell dear friends how I truly felt and it lightened up what could have turned somber. But will it help my head in the morning when I have to get up for that early train?

February 23

Here I am in Hong Kong. I arrived on Friday but will not get on a ship until March 1. This is a lovely place so I don't mind the extra time here rather than in the cold North. It snowed the day after I left Canton and is reportedly the coldest winter in years. Hong Kong was sunny and warm today and I hope it continues.

A nice girl from Wyoming will be traveling with me. Yesterday we got our passports in order to get back into China and registered with the police, a never-ending occurrence here. We took a trip up to the peak on a cable car and found it the most beautiful sight. We were looking over the harbor, blue water and ships of all descriptions peacefully anchored. It's hard to realize that such a short time ago a war was actually going on here, though there are still many homes that have not yet been repaired.

I must get yet another cholera shot tomorrow. In another month or 6 weeks I'll be back in the US.

March 6

Now I'm in Shanghai after 10 days in Hong Kong and finally getting passage on the General Gordon, an American liner. It was like day and night, even though the food was good in Hong Kong, there's nothing quite like American food (at least for me). True to form, I got sea sick again on the cruise here.

I will leave for home on the 16th. If I leave by ship I should reach the states by April 1. It has been an interesting time here in China, to say the least.

## APPENDIX

The Plain Dealer:

By Todd Simon

To do relief work in China, one must shift American methods into low gear, said Miss Mary K. Fisher, just back at work yesterday after a year as UNRRA specialist in humid Kwantung Province. Miss Fisher is the chief case work supervisor of the county relief bureau.

Finding hard board beds and two bowls of rice a day for tens of thousands of Chinese homeless was the central problem she faced in cholera-ridden Canton.

Her efforts branched out from there toward all forms of welfare work-medical, child placement, sheltering the aged, the crippled and blind. But she found almost anything above mere feeding, clothes and housing was a frill in the midst of poverty.

One day 150 homeless children from the provincial refugee shelter were suddenly left on the doorstep of her agency's office. The shelter was unaccountably closed. Miss Fisher and others on the staff had to requisition rice, begging the authorities to let the children stay at the shelter two more days, and in that time place all of them in already crowded orphanages.

"When we left there were still 700 children on the streets of Canton with no one to take care of them," she said.

She was shocked to find inmates of homes for the aged sleeping on hard board beds. But when she toured the province on field trips she found that all the peasants live that way. Indeed, when she was put up at little hotels in the countryside, her own bed was a board with only a straw mat to soften it.

"We always took along our own blankets, mosquito net and DDT," she recalled.

Miss Fisher toured the province's institutions and tried to set up standards for them. Cooks had to be taught how to cook soup powder, hash and pork, and beans-which were UNRRA supplies unknown to them. Work programs for idle inmates had to be planned.

But the whole effort was against terrible odds. Miss Fisher found a group of blind children sandwiched among crippled and aged in one place. She got them transferred to a missing school for the blind.

There are no foster homes for children, and no education for the very poor. And poverty is the winner in almost every fight for health and welfare.

"It was a wonderful opportunity, though, to work with them and to hope that some of the officials and progressive citizens would carry on some of what we started there," she concluded. "And

working with other United Nations people, I found that there was no friction, no discrimination. Diverse peoples can work together."

### UNRRA Report: Submitted 8/6/1946

To: Chief Welfare Officer, CNRRA

From: Miss Mary K. Fisher, Dependent Group Specialist

Subject: Field Report from Operation Area

Fah-hsien

We were unable to reach Fah-hsien, the county seat, due to a bridge washout so we visited Ping-shan, a nearby market town in the same hsien with a population of approximately 8,000 persons. This is a farming region.

According to the District head, Mr. Heung-Cheung, there are 400 persons in the area receiving assistance with CNRRA goods, 11 of whom live in the town of Ping-shan. Each village official selects the needy of his village and food is distributed to them in their homes. Those receiving help are mostly the aged, sick and beggars. The visit to this particular town was not satisfactory because the official was not prepared for our visit and he evaded questions put to him. Another visit will be planned.

### UNRRA Report: Submitted 8/12/1946

To: Chief Welfare Officer, CNRRA

From: Miss Mary K. Fisher, Dependent Group Specialist

Subject: Field Report from Operation Area

Sia Nam

Due to the destruction of Tung Kun the county government was transferred to Sai Nam, which is, itself, half destroyed. We met with the Magistrate and several members of the Committee. Only about 60% of this county is cultivated and even before the war there was often a need for grain to be imported. There are 24 districts and about 240,000 people in the county, approximately 50-60,000 of whom are on relief.

Both the 1st and 2nd allotments of goods from CNRRA have been distributed. The 3rd allotment is ready for pick-up but recent flooding delayed distribution. People are in Canton now to pick up goods which will be distributed: 50% for work relief; 40% for direct relief; and 10% to be kept in reserve. Temples and other community buildings are used as distribution centers. All who come are given food and when questioned on their method of distribution we were told, "no person but one who needed help would go to a relief station".

There are five congee stations in the most densely populated areas where each person receives two bowls of rice a day. Nutritive food stations will be set up in these areas as soon as more supplies are received. The local priest and other lay people have taken responsibility for setting these up. The congee station in the village was not in operation the day of our visit because supplies had run out.

The Magistrate said there is no free medical clinic and no hospital, but there are two private doctors who administer to the needs of the people. They have been given one allotment of medical supplies. The UNRRA supplies were used to treat the people who can't afford to pay for medical care.

The Committee was very interested in work relief. Three dike repair projects have been completed and over 20,000 men worked on these projects. They were paid an average of CN\$550, about 1 cattie of rice per day and given other canned goods.

Sai Nam was a weaving center for native cloth before the war. Women spun the cloth in their homes and he estimated that before the war there were 40-50,000 people weaving in their homes throughout the district. There were also a number of small factories in the town of Sai Nam, employing about 500 persons. The Magistrate is interested in re-establishing weaving factories for employment and self support. He estimates they'll need 400 weaving machines to replace the ones demolished during the war-200 for cloth and 200 for towels. The cost of a machine made of local wood is CN\$20,000 (including labor=CN\$30,000). Local craftsmen could make these machines.

He also requested help to rebuild a seriously damaged match factory. The machines at the factory were not damaged. The plan presented by the Committee was to have the previous owners and the government collaborate in running the factory. Each to receive half of the profits. The government would use its share of the profits for welfare purposes. Their estimate to rebuild the factory is CN\$30 million.

We suggested the committee consider a work relief project for rebuilding. We stressed the policy that goods could not be sold and that work relief persons should be those who are in need and that payment is made with goods. The committee did not appear too interested in this as they considered the weaving project more necessary. The plan to reestablish the weaving and match industry seems sound, however the method should be given further consideration.

The use of relief foods for the needy should be stressed and plans made for distribution of milk and nutritive foods to the children, sick and aged. Help with the refugee and homeless problem may be acceptable. The Magistrate stated he had hoped to put some of these people to work if the factories were opened.

UNRRA Report: Submitted 8/16/1946

To: Chief Welfare Officer, CNRRA

From: Miss Mary K. Fisher, Dependent Group Specialist

Subject: Field Report from Operation Area

Shi-Kiu

The government, previously located in Pun-ya which was destroyed during the war, is now located in Shi-Kiu, a city of 60-70,000 people. Fr. O'Melia and I were accompanied to Shi-Kiu by Mr. Chankowk Jung, assistant deputy captain of Operation Team #1 and by Mr. Woo, head of the Team's Welfare Division.

Shi-Kiu is a market town and it appears to be a progressive community with new and modern buildings built both before the war and during the occupation. The County Government is well organized and seems to take a keen interest in the welfare of the people. As the Magistrate Mr. Chan Yu Chin was out of the city at the time of our visit, he appointed Mr. Chan Hung Tseung, Supt. of the Board of Education as his representative. We met with Mr. Chan and several other members of the Relief Committee.

Several committees have been organized for the purpose of general welfare of the county and distribution of CNRRA goods. A Central Committee at Shi-Kiu with representatives from the local police, political council, school board, Board of Health, etc. Two other committees, one for the northern area of the county is located in Kong-Tsen and one for the eastern area is in Tung-po. The southern area is covered by the Central Committee at Ski-ku. A committee for the western area has not yet been organized. There are 15 to 19 townships or districts which have representations on the area committees. Again each township and village has its own committee. All committees have the same type of representation as the Central Committee and these committees are responsible for the methods of distribution throughout the hsien.

Relief goods have been distributed according to population and the amount of damage from the war. Mr. Chan stated this seemed to be the only feasible way to give each community its share. The Heun-Cheung (local village head, elected by the people) decides who is to have relief as he is familiar with their problems.

There are 547 people on relief in the city of Shi-Kiu. Specific figures for each of the other areas were not available. The first shipment of goods has been given out in four distributions of 35 oz of rice, half a can of condensed milk and 1 can of evaporated milk per person at each distribution. People are registered and receive their allowance at a distribution center, usually a temple. In Ski-ku they have organized a county relief bureau and have a well set up, orderly office in an old temple. Charts and maps show work relief projects that have been inaugurated such as dike repairs, sewage projects, etc. Reports showed names of persons receiving help and the amounts of food distributed to each. This Bureau could well be the beginning of a permanent County Welfare setup.

The second allotment of goods was received in Shi-Kiu on 15 August and distribution will take place immediately. We visited the warehouse and found it filled with rice, flour and canned goods and advised rapid release of these goods to the people.

A milk station will be opened in Shi-Kiu on 17 August. This will be the eighth one opened in the hsien and it is their plan to open 15 more. Milk distribution will take place at the Evangelical Church under the direction of the pastor who is a member of the Welfare committee. The tentative plan of the committee was to have its members certify the names of the children eligible for milk. We told them the milk was to be given to all children regardless of need and if there was not enough for all it would be good to begin with infants and nursing mothers, and later bring in older groups of children. Mr. Woo, head of the Welfare Division of Team #1 remained in Shi-kiu to supervise the opening of this center.

We were shown a temple where homeless people are being sheltered. Mr. Chan said about 75 refugees sleep there but no food was given to them. They begged or found a little work to earn money to buy food. Mr. Chan thought giving shelter relieved them of any obligation because many were from outside the county. We explained that CNRRA supplies were for the needy and this group fits the definition of a totally dependent group. We advised that outside persons should be repatriated, but they should all be given food until that occurs. He agreed to follow these suggestions and Team #1 has been asked to follow through and assist in a repatriation plan.

We visited two hospitals. The county Public Health Hospital has a free clinic and serves an average of 100 persons a day. They have no bed patients due to lack of equipment and they have asked CNRRA to furnish 100 beds together with other equipment. There is no x-ray machine or microscope and only a small supply of medicine. The staff consists of 3 doctors, 6 nurses and 2 midwives. The modern, 3-story building appears well adapted to hospital purposes and undoubtedly there is a need for more hospital beds in a hsien of this size. There are 2 other county hospitals already established in the east and south. Fong Pin Hospital admits bed patients, has a free clinic and buries the dead. The administration requested clothing for bed patients, pajamas, sheets, towels, etc. They expressed appreciation for the medical supplies already furnished by CNRRA. This 100-bed hospital also has no x-ray machine or microscope.

Our last visit was to an orphanage run by the hsien government. It was most encouraging. There are 600 boys in the orphanage which is located at the edge of the city, overlooking fields and mountains. The superintendent, Mr. Au Kwok Ying, appears to be a capable person with a clear understanding of children's needs. The standards are excellent. The children have clean and pleasant dormitories with double deck berths, fairly well equipped classrooms, recreational activities and work training projects such as gardening, making brushes, shoes, clay objects, etc. A nurse looks after the health of the children and teaches them personal hygiene.

This institution is having serious financial difficulties according to the superintendent. Food is the major problem. The hsien operated the place for one year (it was previously a private institution and was well-endowed). Rice fields that used to furnish adequate income were taken over by the government after the war and are now under dispute. The orphanage had enough rice stored to manage up until two months ago. At that time they were allotted 10,000 lbs of rice and milk from CNRRA supplies. They urgently requested that allotments of rice and milk be continued. Their other expenses amount to CN\$2million a month for vegetables, meats and

salaries. We told them that CNRRA policy was to help institutions so that needs were more adequately met and they could more readily become self-supporting. We recommend that their request would be properly referred to the CNRRA office.

Educational standards in Shi Kiu are to be commended, over 5,000 children are going to school in both private and public schools in this district. Mr. Chan, who is also the Superintendent of the Board of Education is genuinely interested in furthering educational opportunities.

It is my impression that this hsien is making a sincere effort to cooperate in a relief program and is interested in helping its people through good governmental administration. It is handicapped in meeting the needs of its people due to lack of resources caused by years of war and destruction. Mr. Chan and other committee members were commended for their efforts and they requested continued interest and help from Canton.

### UNRRA Report Submitted: 8/17/1946

To: Chief Welfare Officer, CNRRA

From: Miss Mary K. Fisher, Dependent Group Specialist

Subject: Field Report from Operation Area

Shun-Tak

This hsien has a population of 550,400 and 198,612 persons are reported as receiving relief. At least two thirds of the population were killed or left the area due to illness, guerilla activity, and/or bombing. We met with Mr. Chin Mak, the Magistrate, and two members of the Relief Committee including Mr. Ho, the head of the hsien political committee. They have received two allotments of goods, including flour, rice and canned goods. All have been distributed to the districts according to the Magistrate and representatives who are now in Canton to pick up the third allotment.

Committees have been formed in each district and they establish the relief policies. Due to the large number of people on relief some areas have had only half a pound of rice per person. Other places have more but no definite figures available. Reports are not coming in from the smaller districts. In Shun-Tak, persons on relief call at a central station for their goods. Each is given their rice and one each of canned goods.

Work relief projects include restoration of the hospital, sewers, roads and street cleaning. A road repair project was already in progress. Work relief persons are given 2 pounds of rice per day. Milk stations are functioning at Shun-Tak, Yung Kai and Lak Lau. All children get milk but nursing mothers, the sick and undernourished adults must have a recommendation for it from the Board of Health doctor, Dr. So Luk Chiu. Stations serve once a day at 9am. Mr. Chan, of Team #1 hopes to open more stations.

Mr. Ho seemed more familiar with relief problems than the Magistrate. When asked if there were any destitute homeless, the Magistrate was not sure. Mr. Ho reported said there were very few. The children joined the milk line and the adults were given food occasionally. We again advised the immediate use of CNRRA goods to assist these homeless persons.

There is little actual information from the smaller areas of the number of persons on relief or the amount of food distributed. The Magistrate says these reports are slow in coming in. We stressed the importance of securing this information. The Magistrate and Mr. Ho both indicated there were no serious problems not being met. The town was so badly affected by the war that many people have left. There are few incentives for other people to move here, therefore there is no refugee problem. The hospital is being repaired and they have requested medicine and supplies.

The need here is profound, evidenced both by the destruction seen all around and the malnourished appearance of the people who are still here. The methods of relief distribution are not clear and further observation and advice should be considered in reference to feeding of the homeless, as well as methods used in distribution to the 198,000 on relief. More milk stations and special nutritive food stations were recommended.

### **Conclusions:**

In all contacts made I found the method of distribution the same. Goods were allotted to the villages according to population and the amount of destruction they had sustained. The actual number of needy was not considered and therefore the amounts given individuals were based on supply. This seems to be the only way distribution can take place with unequal and irregular allotments.

The Magistrates all said the use of canned goods was not a problem. They have received recipes and literature which they find helpful. How they used it I was not able to determine. Two officials said the people prefer rice to canned goods and one acknowledged that the goods had been sold to purchase rice.

Mr. Chan, assistant deputy of Team #1 and I discussed the matter of the use of canned goods. We agreed that the team representatives in the hsiens could do more in the way of interpreting the value and use of these goods than those of us who are not Chinese and cannot speak the language. We have planned a demonstration for the Team as soon as the nutritionist returns.

My visits have also impressed me with the need for mobile medical units to reach those persons living in villages who cannot readily get to a city where there is a free clinic. Many large places also have no free medical service and there is much need for development in this field.

I also advocate the expansion of milk stations (preferably in schools) and nutritive food depots as in this way many would be helped through regular and supervised feeding. The expansion of cheap meal restaurants would seem to meet the needs of many who now get supplementary foods.

UNRRA Report Submitted: 8/21/1946

To: Chief Welfare Officer, CNRRA

From: Miss Mary K. Fisher, Dependent Group Specialist

Subject: Field Report from Operation Area

Tsung-Fa is a hsien situated about 30 miles from Canton. We were met by the Magistrate Mr. Cheung Koon Chow and several other officials at the market town of Taiping at the hsien border. The Magistrate was interested in showing us a refugee group, and two destroyed villages nearby.

The refugee group is composed of 200 river people who have been living on shore during the war, in shelters made of the framework of sampans. We visited with the women and children and were told the men were out begging or trying to find manual labor jobs. The Magistrate informed us that the only relief given this group was 3 oz. of flour per person. The women confirmed this. There was no evidence of actual starvation, but "pot bellies", skin diseases and eye diseases indicate severe malnutrition.

The Magistrate requested financial assistance from CNRRA to build an adequate shelter for this group. We advised that getting them back to their regular employment by replacing their sampans might be a good plan. Though this is a small number of people, there is no possibility of them becoming self-supporting on a decent level while living in this county because it's a farming community. The men are not farmers, they have no land and the towns are too small for them to earn a livelihood from manual labor.

#### Wat-fung village

We were shown the remains of this village which was bombed three times-1,400 people here were killed and the remaining 600 are scattered throughout the countryside. Some have built small huts for themselves so they can work in their rice fields, but yields are low due to lack of cultivation and fertilizer. The only remaining building in the village is the temple which is also used as a school. Houses were mostly made of brick, so there are thousands of bricks lying about. Another destroyed village nearby presented similar problems.

#### Tsung-Fa

We arrived in Tsung-fa, the county seat, on a market day. Villagers from around the countryside were bustling back and forth with their produce. The streets were crowded with people buying and selling garden produce, clothing and other wares. This community seems to be fairly prosperous. There were no beggars or persons lying in the street.

We met with the Relief Committee and 15 rural district heads. We were told that supplies had all been distributed except the last shipment. Relief stations were established in the 15 districts serving 4500 persons. Each district head was responsible for deciding the eligibility of those given help. Lists of persons on relief are available. Congee was served once daily and canned goods were distributed. There were no reported problems in the use of these canned goods.

According to the Magistrate there are 33,298 families in the hsien and 70,089 men. There are 2,000 individual farmers. 20% of the rice fields are not planted due to drought, and of those planted there has been only a 40% yield. There is a need for agricultural assistance to these farmers.

The Magistrate is interested in building an orphanage for abandoned babies. He said during the war and shortly after there were about 100 infants abandoned each month. Most of them died and a few were taken to the hsien hospital. Due to lack of resources and limited facilities, they could not assume responsibility for most of these infants. We agreed it would be good for the hsien to have facilities to care for its own orphans, though this was probably not an acute problem at this time.

The Magistrate also requested expansion of hospital facilities. We visited the present building and found a dilapidated frame with inadequate space and little equipment to care for the sick of the community. There are 12 maternity beds, 4 beds for the military and several beds for infants. There is one doctor and 4 nurses and a clinic that gives free service to anyone in need of medical attention, but the supply of medicine is inadequate. It seems a reasonable expenditure to give some assistance in rebuilding or remodeling a hospital and to provide medicine for the clinic.