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Compassion in the Face of Internment: The Story of the Cunningham Family

By

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“Just one week ago today we arrived in one of the most ancient and picturesque cities of the world – Peking, North China,” wrote Brethren missionary Ellen Cunningham to her “dear American friends” in 1938. “And just a month ago today we bid farewell to dear old USA which no doubt will change in a good many ways before we set foot on her soil again.”¹ Cunningham was right in thinking about the changes that would transform the United States before she and her husband, Lloyd, would return. What she did not anticipate was how sweeping the changes across China would be in the coming years, how those changes would upend her life, and how long it would be before she could go back to the United States.

Anticipated or not, the experience of Ellen O. Edmister Cunningham (1907-2009) and E. Lloyd Cunningham, M.D. (1906-1976) would intersect with some of the most consequential events of the twentieth century: Sino-Japanese War, the attack on Pearl Harbor that transformed that conflict into a theater of World War II, and the Chinese Civil War and the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. Most dramatic for the Cunninghams would be their internment for more than three years as enemy aliens in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. The story of the Cunninghams and their internment, told through the primary sources they left behind, fills a gap in the scholarship of World War II in Asia. The experience of the Cunninghams and of other interned Americans reflects Sino-Japanese relations, the prisoner of war experience at this time, and the Church of the Brethren’s global involvement. Their correspondence outlines the rumors of war among Chinese citizens, the rules and regulations put in place by the Japanese military officials, the Cunningham’s efforts to carry out their mission work in a foreign country, and countless details that often can be lost in the traditional telling of history. Firsthand accounts and

¹ Letter, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham, March 19, 1938, box 1, folder 3, digital item no. 179, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers, 1936-2000, Hess Archives, Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA.

experiences can expand existing scholarship on this period and deepen our general understanding of Church of the Brethren mission work. This research demonstrates how the Cunninghams and other missionaries experienced internment and provides a unique perspective to the period of rising tensions between China and Japan, World War II, and postwar Chinese politics.

The Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers, spanning the years 1936 to 2000, includes letters, magazine articles, newspaper clippings, photographs, government correspondence, Ellen's journal, and other papers. The collection tells the story of Church of the Brethren missionaries interned under the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II, and specifically the experience of Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham. The research for this thesis situated the story of the Cunninghams with background on Church of the Brethren missions and Chinese history leading up to the Second Sino-Japanese War, and supplemented by stories of other missionaries. It concludes by describing the techniques of processing, inventorying, rehousing, and digitizing the Cunningham Papers. Through these practices, their story can further an understanding of the American civilian role during this period.

In order to write history through the use of focused, individual stories—an approach often termed microhistory—the care and preservation of primary source documents is crucial. Of course, care for primary sources is always important, but the papers of ordinary people, in contrast to institutional records and materials pertaining to well-known figures, are too often lost or inaccessible. In order to preserve and make available the Cunninghams' story, their collection had to be entirely rehoused and the most significant portions made digitally accessible. The Elizabethtown College Hess Archives makes digital collections available via POWER Library

PA Photos and Documents, currently housed on the Islandora platform.² Through this website, the digitized Cunningham papers will be available to more researchers. Rehousing these documents will preserve the physical objects, while digitization and publication will allow greater use of the collection, making the story of the Cunninghams broadly accessible beyond individual works of scholarship.

The story of the Cunninghams can be told through a microhistorical lens, analyzing the story of two individuals with detail and depth against a backdrop of major world event.³ These small-scale events and stories allow us to zoom in on specific moments and people in history and allow the reader to glean a more nuanced narrative than that provided by elections, wars, or economic downturns. This scholarship itself not only focuses on the story of these individuals, and therefore a practice in microhistory, but in fact paves the way for further research and scholarship in this vein by making documents accessible to the general population.

Although the research in this paper centers on the Cunningham's internment experience itself, the Cunningham Papers have a lot more to offer. In the letters, Lloyd and Ellen describe Chinese society and their experience leading up to imprisonment and their experiences in China after internment, including interactions with the Chinese Communist Party. After their expulsion from China by the Chinese Communist Party, the Cunninghams lived in India for eight years (1949-1957), continuing their mission work. The Cunninghams sent approximately 200 letters during their India years alone, providing insight into daily life in the years following Indian

² <https://powerlibrary.org/collections/>. For more on Islandora, see <https://islandora.ca/>.

³ See Francesca Trivellato, "Microstoria/Microhistoire/Microhistory," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 33, no. 1 (2015): 122-34. Accessed December 1, 2020. <https://www-jstor-org.proxy-etown.klnpa.org/stable/26378220>. Two classic examples of microhistory are Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), Italian original published in 1976; and Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

independence from British rule and the partition of India and Pakistan. The publication and greater accessibility of these documents will allow for scholarship grounded in primary sources on a wide range of topics, from world history to Brethren missions.

This study unpacks the story of the Cunninghams and contextualize their experience with the world around them. Exploring the background of Church of the Brethren missions helps to explain their initial decision to leave California in 1938. Investigating early twentieth century Chinese society provides context for their daily lives living in China. Understanding Sino-Japanese relations allows one to situate their capture and internment into the history of the Second Sino-Japanese war. The story of the Cunninghams and of other Church of the Brethren missionaries is a lens through which to read a history of the early 20th century, from West to East and back again.

Existing scholarship on this topic primarily covers other stories of interned missionaries, using other primary sources, including letters and diaries. Many of these works focus on the case of one prisoner in particular. For example, Heleny F. Angeny's memoir, *Behind Barbed Wire and High Fences*, published in 2012, tells the story of her internment under the Japanese Imperial Army during the Second World War. Her reflections detail her daily life and treatment. She was also a missionary with the Church of the Brethren and had travelled to China with the Cunninghams. Likewise, Natalie Crouter's memoir, *Forbidden Diary: A Record of Wartime Internment, 1941-1945*, published in 1980, reproduces the diary she managed to keep while interned. Crouter went into great detail about disease, food service, the organization of committees in the camps, and includes sketches of maps and hospital rooms. These sources provide additional context for the internment narrative presented by the Cunninghams. By synthesizing the Cunningham papers along with the works of other prisoners, this scholarship

presents a holistic view of the internment experience at the respective prisons and contextualizes their experience into the surrounding political and military events.

Church of the Brethren History and Missions

The missionaries sent by the Church of the Brethren in 1938 would go on to face immense and, before their departure, unimaginable challenges, including internment, starvation, and illness. In the face of danger, these missionaries continued their work and devotion to the Church. Dating to 1708 in the German Rhineland, the Church of the Brethren is a small denomination of Anabaptist and Pietist heritage and, along with Quakers and Mennonites, one of the so-called historic peace churches. There are several branches of Brethren, but the largest, known after 1908 as the Church of the Brethren, was, by the time the Cunninghams went to China, still somewhat ethnically sectarian but quickly adapting to American society and broader patterns of American Protestantism. This adaptation was evident in the Cunninghams' embrace of higher education and in the global mission work to which the Cunninghams gave their lives.⁴

The Church of the Brethren promotes peacemaking and service as among its core tenets. Mission work has also been a central part of its teachings, as members seek to spread the message of Christ as they understand it and promoting peace through Christ's teachings and through active service, including education, relief, and medical work.

The Church of the Brethren began its mission in China in 1908, with missionaries Frank and Anna Crumpacker, Emma Horning, and George and Blanche Hilton. They arrived in Shanghai on 25 September 1908.⁵ By May of 1910, the Brethren had established mission

⁴ Donald F. Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708-1995* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1997), 317-412.

⁵ *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, s.v. "China."

headquarters in Ping Ting Chou, Shansi (today, Pingding County, Shanxi) Province and had baptized their first converts. The mission's field encompassed nine districts in the northern Shanxi. In the first 40 years of its existence, the mission involved a total of about one hundred Brethren missionaries. Within a few years, the Church began sending missionaries to work in medicine and education alongside its evangelistic missionaries.⁶

The Japanese invasion of China in 1937 slowed the evangelistic thrust of the mission work, as the Brethren directed their work toward war relief.⁷ Between 1937 and 1939, the Japanese armies obtained possession of most ports, railways, and major eastern cities. The city of Nanjing, the Nationalist capital since 1927, fell in December of 1937, causing the Nationalist government to flee to the southwestern city of Chongqing. In the aftermath, the Japanese occupiers raped and massacred thousands of civilians. The Japanese army continued bombing Chinese cities, which only increased anti-Japanese sentiment and nationalist fervor. The bombings increased resistance, and many young Chinese men were inspired to take up arms against the Japanese.⁸ In 1938, remarkably in light of the Sino-Japanese war then raging, a new group of Brethren missionaries arrived in China, including Wendell and Marie Flory, Edward and Helen Angeny, Bessie Crim, Susie Thomas, and the Cunninghams. The deepening of the war failed to derail the mission. In fact, as late as 1941 missionaries Ernest Wampler and O.C. Sollenberger would return to China to serve the American Advisory Committee for China Relief.⁹

⁶ Ibid. For an overview of Protestant missions in China at this time, see Daniel H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 92-120.

⁷ *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, s.v. "China".

⁸ Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 79-144 For a Brethren missionary perspective on these events, see Ernest M. Wampler, *China Suffers* (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Publishing House, 1945), 44.

⁹ Ernest M. Wampler, *China Suffers* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1945).

The Cunninghams' Mission Work

Ellen Edmister was born on 22 January 1907 to parents J. Frank and Sarah Johnson Edmister in Jackson Township, Iowa.¹⁰ Her mother died in January of 1930. Ellen taught elementary school for a year after she graduated from high school. She then attended La Verne College, a Brethren-affiliated college in La Verne, California, from 1926 until 1930, and then taught school for two years in Laton, California. On 20 December 1931, she married E. Lloyd Cunningham. She gave up teaching to assist and support him, though she did take the opportunity to take courses at the Church of the Brethren's Bethany Biblical Seminary in Chicago while Lloyd completed a medical residency in that city.¹¹

Ernest Lloyd Cunningham was born on 30 July 1906 to parents J. Ernest and Hazel Dabis Cunningham in Smeltzer, California.¹² He was raised in a Southern Methodist family but joined the Church of the Brethren in 1917. He attended La Verne College from 1924 until 1929, where he met Ellen. He went on to attend the University of California, Fresno State College, and the College of Medical Evangelists in Loma Linda, California. On 13 June 1937, he graduated with his M.D. from the College of Medical Evangelists after completing his intern work at Garfield Park Community Hospital in Chicago. With his medical degree in hand, Lloyd hoped to participate in a medical mission. The couple planned to sail to England, and from there to Nigeria, to perform medical work.¹³ However, the Brethren missions in Africa were still in their earlier stages and were not as well established as the Brethren missions in China.¹⁴ Due to an

¹⁰ *Prayer for Missions*, (Elgin, Illinois: General Brotherhood Board, 1949), 61.

¹¹ Dortha Thomas, "Mrs. E. Lloyd Cunningham," *Gospel Messenger*, April 1938, 12-13.

¹² *Prayer for Missions*, 60.

¹³ Letter, Cunninghams, December 1936, no. 033, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

¹⁴ Dr. Jeffrey Bach, personal communication to author, October 2020.

urgent need for doctors in China, in part because of the increased violence following the Japanese invasion in 1937, the General Mission Board sent the pair to China instead.

In a letter to Ellen's father and stepmother dated 11 April 1937, Lloyd describes their change of plans, coming from an update from the Church of the Brethren mission in Shanxi.

“Dear Dad and Verna,

Just a note at this time to let you know that the Lord has finally led us to a definite decision in regards to our future work.

A very urgent call has come from China for a doctor to help Dr. Parker in the medical work in the mission in Shansi [sic]. The General Mission Board has asked us to consider that call. So we will sail, if the Lord continues to will it so, to China this fall. We are really quite thrilled about it.”¹⁵

Less than a year later, on 19 February 1938, the Cunninghams set sail from Vancouver, British Columbia. On 3 March 1938, they arrived in Kobe, Japan. On 11 March 1938, they sailed from Kobe to Peiping [Beijing], where they arrived on 12 March.¹⁶ Lloyd and Ellen briefly housed Clara, a 23-year-old Chinese student from Yenching University, the country's leading center of higher education, and she became a close friend to the Cunninghams, evidenced by frequent mentions of her and her boyfriend, Kenneth, joining them for dinner.¹⁷

During their time in China, Lloyd and Ellen took language courses and Lloyd spent countless hours working in hospitals. Ellen found a few connections teaching English to Chinese people, and often found that that “added contact with the Chinese” improved her own Chinese fluency. Ellen taught English to Presbyterian nurses, as they often had to understand medical

¹⁵ Letter, Cunninghams, April 11, 1937, no. 036, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

¹⁶ Letter, Cunninghams, March 11, 1938, no. 281, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

¹⁷ Letter, Cunninghams, May 8, 1938, no. 289, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

jargon in English.¹⁸ Ellen's letters home include many moments of reflection in which Ellen expresses gratitude and respect for Chinese culture. In June of 1938, she wrote:

“Both Kenneth and Clara, our Chinese friends here, are leaders and they certainly can put us to shame in some respects. I felt all along that we had come here to China to give the people something but I am beginning to see that there are some folks here that have something for me and that our service will be mutual rather than one-sided. I wish that we could send some of these ambitious young Chinese Christians to America. I feel that they would present a real challenge to the young folks there.”¹⁹

In this case, Ellen was optimistic about the possibility of learning from the Chinese. In other letters, she described cultural practices with intrigue and fascination. However, Lloyd was far less kind in his descriptions of Buddhist traditions, writing that there is “such a lack of love, so little concern for the living present...such a large parasitic priesthood that must oppose enlightenment to save its own neck, etc.” He continued, “The longer I live in China and the more I see and learn of the Chinese the greater is my faith in Christ and his teaching but the less use I have for ‘Christian traditions’ and the larger becomes my list of entries under the head of ‘tradition.’”²⁰

Throughout their time in China, the Cunninghams became increasingly aware of the growing Japanese power throughout China. In March of 1938, they noted in a letter home that “There are soldiers everywhere but as long as we pay attention to our own business they do nothing about it and pay no attention to us – in fact, we as foreigners are respected in a number

¹⁸ Letter, Cunninghams, April 23, 1938, no. 287, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

¹⁹ Letter, Cunninghams, June 5, 1938, no. 192, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

²⁰ Letter, Cunninghams, May 6, 1939, no. 494, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

of ways.”²¹ Ellen also described the Japanese control over news, explaining to their family that they “can get no reliable news of the war at all.”²² By July of 1938, tensions had risen considerably, evidenced by one particular letter home. Lloyd wrote about the “sound of heavy artillery” coming from the city, but avoiding writing in detail, explaining that “to tell about the horrible atrocities continually committed by the Japanese militarists would take too much space and be useless. Imagine the very worst you can then multiply it by two and you will have the conditions that exist in some places.” He continued: “There are areas where nearly every building has been bombed or burned by the soldiers and most of the women who could not escape were raped.” This letter, dated July 9, 1938, seems to signal a turning point in their minds surrounding their work and a new awareness of the impact of current events on their own mission work:

“What the future of our work here is to be depends a great deal on military and political developments. There is now and will be more relief work to be done but that creates many problems that you folks at home can’t quite understand without some of the background we get here. Even medical work at present has a good many difficulties presenting themselves because of the hostilities.”²³

The violence surrounding them forced them to become much more attuned to political and military events, and there is a noticeable shift in their letters because of this. Their early correspondence had outlined new recipes, social events, and gardening efforts. But now those details took up far less of the page, as Lloyd and Ellen hoped to update their families on the local events and to reassure their families that they were safe. Ellen summed up the tension of living

²¹ Letter, Cunninghams, March 30, 1938, no. 180, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

²² Letter, Cunninghams, March 31, 1938, no. 181, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

²³ Letter, Cunninghams, July 9, 1938, no. 199, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

among this degree of violence, writing “at times we feel like we are sitting on top of a volcano and we hardly know just when it is going to explode and we are passing through one of those times now.”²⁴

Amid these growing tensions and threats of violence, another event changed their lives in different but equally momentous way. On 17 April 1939, Ernest Lloyd II was born at the German Hospital in Beijing.²⁵ In some of the letters sent home to announce his birth, Lloyd and Ellen included a small lock of his hair wrapped up in a scrap of paper, labeled “Larry sends a lock of hair to grandpa and grandma.” In early May of 1939, the Cunningham family, now three in number, moved to Pingding County, Shanxi Province, China. There, Lloyd continued his medical work, and Ellen raised their son and spent less time taking language courses.

In March 1941, after two years in China, the Cunninghams and many other Brethren missionaries, including the Florys and Angenys, moved to Baguio, Philippines, on the northern island of Luzon, to attend Chinese language school.²⁶ The Brethren missionaries moved because they believed the Philippines would be safer. The Japanese army was gaining control over more and more of China, and had been since the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese war in 1937. These developments precipitated the move since the Philippines—still a U.S. territory at the time—was deemed a safer environment.²⁷ In Baguio, the Cunninghams lived in one of two framed houses with some of the other Brethren missionaries. They shared a home with Ed and Helen Angeny, while the other house was occupied by Bessie Crim, Susie Thomas, and the Florys. Soon the missionaries moved into individual homes and apartments.²⁸

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Letter, Cunninghams, April 17, 1939, no. 030, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

²⁶ Carl Eschbach, “Lloyd Cunningham: a ‘good camper’,” *Gospel Messenger*, February 1977, 34.

²⁷ Steven Rood, *The Philippines: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford, 2019), 67.

²⁸ Helen Frances Buehl Angeny, *Behind Barbed Wire and High Fences* (Camp Hill, PA: Sunbury Press, 2012), 20.

The Cunninghams viewed their stay in the Philippines as a temporary interlude, as they wrote in April of 1941: “With things going so badly for the [A]xis we hope that Japan will be more cautious and we certainly hope that war between the USA and Japan can be avoided for that probably means that we can get back to China sooner.”²⁹ Because they saw this work as temporary, Lloyd did not practice medicine while in the Philippines, as he would have been required to pass an examination requiring three months of study. In September of 1941, Lloyd explained that his inability to practice medicine in the Philippines reflected their determination to return to China.³⁰ In July, Lloyd wrote of his concerns about staying in the Philippines, noting that “[the Brethren missionaries] feel that their place is in China” and detailing the rising “international turmoil,” from blackout practices to decreases in shipping and mail.³¹ He also described his thoughts on the probability of international war, that it was “inevitable sooner or later unless the Japanese change their fundamental policy.” Lloyd continued to rationalize the inevitability of the war; he could not support it as a pacifist, but he understood the logic driving international conflict. He wrote of his hopes that a great outbreak of war, if it must come, would lead to the average American having a better understanding of the importance of productive and effective peace policy abroad.³² Later in September, Lloyd wrote critically of the Church mission program, arguing that there had been too much focus placed on relief work and not enough on mission work:

“Someday I trust that this world, including the church, will wake up and look at inevitable problems before they arise. I can’t get nearly as enthusiastic in relief programs in the church as some people think I should. But it seems to me that so many people are

²⁹ Letter, Cunninghams, April 1941, no. 369, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

³⁰ Letter, Cunninghams, September 16, 1941, no. 385, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

³¹ Letter, Cunninghams, July 13, 1941 no. 379, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

³² Ibid.

getting excited about relief that they are neglecting their enthusiasms for missions. If the church would take sufficient lead in a sustained enthusiasm for the work of Christian missions there would be no need for war relief. I believe that the old accepted idea of theological emphasis is partly responsible for the mess we are in. Why we haven't put as much emphasis on Matt 16:24 as on John 3:16 I don't know. Well, yes I do too – John 3:16 is much easier. The Gospels as I read them are about as full of such words as: go, do, feed, work, give, bare, etc. as they are of believe, pray and preach. And they don't say to wait until war or death are inevitable before we begin.”³³

This passage reflects a crucial moment: fundamental values were in conflict. Nonviolence is a cornerstone of the Brethren church, but this Brethren man is questioning the work he is doing and the world around him. He understands why war is about to begin, approaching a “get it over with” sentiment earlier on in the letter. However, he can clearly see some of the ways this might have been avoided.

Following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, and the declaration of war between the United States and Japan, the Cunninghams and other Americans were no longer safe in the Philippines. At this point, the Japanese army began to take over the Philippines and the American army left Baguio undefended. Although the Japanese army had essentially gained control of the city, the lack of an American military presence in Baguio did shield the city from Japanese bombings.³⁴ After the Japanese invasion of the Philippines in December, General Douglas MacArthur ordered his troops to retreat to the Bataan peninsula. Manila was declared an open city on December 24.³⁵ Many of the American civilians, including

³³ Letter, Cunninghams, September 16, 1941, no. 385, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

³⁴ Rolland C. Flory, “General Survey of Events,” *Gospel Messenger*, September 1945, 20.

³⁵ Steven Rood, *The Philippines: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford, 2019), 67.

the Cunninghams and the rest of the Brethren missionaries, assembled in the Brent School, an American school in Baguio.³⁶ They believed they would be safer all together. On 27 December 1941, late at night, officials of the Japanese army took the American citizens to the former U.S. military center, Camp John Hay, thus beginning their internment.³⁷

Internment

In Camp John Hay, all men, women, and children were originally housed in the same barracks. Men, women, and children slept elbow to elbow. However, men and women were separated after a time. Girls and boys under age 12 would live with their mothers, while men and boys over age 12 lived in the men's barracks.³⁸ In general, housing in the camps was irregular and erratic. The internees spent their time in three different camps or prisons and rules changed constantly. However, none of these spaces provided much privacy for internees, as a common camp saying was "If you want privacy, shut your eyes."³⁹

In April of 1942, the internees were moved from Camp John Hay to Camp Holmes, located about 10 miles from Baguio.⁴⁰ There were three barracks for housing: one for men, one for women with children, and "unattached" women in another. Over time, other buildings were set up. The internees built a shop, a school, and other smaller living shacks.⁴¹ There was a house at the bottom of the hill used as a hospital, and two officer bungalows.⁴² Although this area was apparently nicer than the other two camps, the conditions were far from ideal. The area was

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Other accounts of American missionaries imprisoned in the Philippines can be found in Frances B. Cogan, *Captured: The Japanese Internment of American Civilians in the Philippines, 1941-1945* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2019).

³⁸ E.T. Angeny, "Housing in Prison Camp," *Gospel Messenger*, August 1945, 11.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Flory, "General Survey of Events," 20.

⁴¹ Angeny, "Housing in Prison Camp," 11.

⁴² Angeny, *Behind Barbed Wire*, 77.

crowded and there were food and water shortages.⁴³ For a toilet, there was a long, wooden trough set into the ground at an angle, with a bucket of water above it at one end. The water bucket would tip, flushing the contents of the trough into a sewer in the ground. The internees added mats for privacy and mosquito nets to prevent dysentery.⁴⁴ The map below shows a drawing of the arrangement of Camp Holmes found in Natalie Crouter's published diary, drawn by Daphne Bird. Bird labeled "our house," likely marking the barracks. The Baby House, Hospital, Mess Hall, and other significant buildings are labeled. Public spaces like the school, "open air church site," and library are also marked.

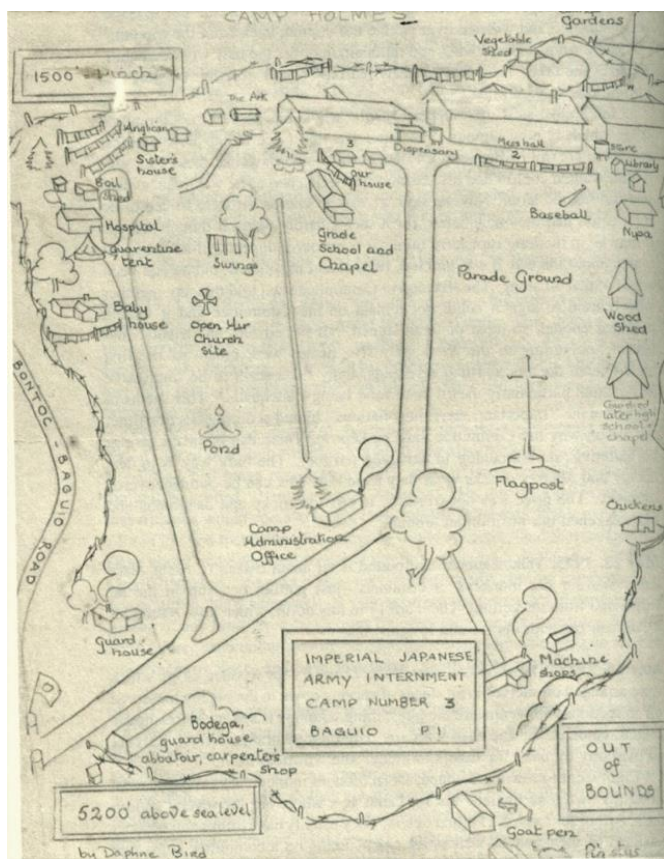


Figure 1: Map of Camp Holmes, Baguio

⁴³ Ibid., 43.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 126.

Image source: Natalie Crouter, *Forbidden Diary: A Record of Wartime Internment, 1941-1945* (New York: Burt Franklin & Co., 1980), 174.

On 28 December 1944, the internees were moved to Bilibid Prison in Manila. Diseases and sanitary conditions were much worse in Manila, as all five hundred internees “lived as one family,” sharing one small living space.⁴⁵ The space resembled a crowded tenement, with children sleeping around their parents and lines strung across the room drying towels, clothes, and tobacco leaves.⁴⁶ In Bilibid, the internees found chilling writings from former U.S. soldiers on the walls, describing the terribly cruel treatment they endured. Natalie Crouter described that “words cannot fully express, nor can the mind conceive the trials, hardships and tortures we have endured at the hands of the Japanese as prisoners of war...”⁴⁷ The internees regularly looked out to the prison yard to see a double row of crosses marking 113 American graves.⁴⁸

For many of the internees, the best way to survive was to try to continue living as normal a life as possible. Students and adults regularly put on musical performances, and children went to school. The adults all had jobs to do to keep everything running. They continued to celebrate birthdays, holidays, and hold religious services. There was even a temporary Christmas Committee formed to make the camps feel more like home around the holiday season. The committee worked to coordinate various Christmas programs and the making of gifts for the children in camp.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Angeny, “Housing in Prison Camp,” 11.

⁴⁶ Natalie Crouter, *Forbidden Diary: A Record of Wartime Internment, 1941-1945* (New York: Burt Franklin & Co., 1980), 446.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 245.

In many accounts of internment, the former internees describe the small government that formed within camp, another element to this sense of normality. Multiple committees posted announcements, organized work, and discussed problems with Japanese officials. This organization of people helped the camp maintain a sort of normal life. There was a general camp committee, a men's committee and a women's committee. Within the camp committee, there were departments or sub-committees.⁵⁰

One of the great controversies handled by the camp committees revolved around the treatment of couples and families. There were many married couples and families in camp and women who entered the camp with babies or pregnancies. At Camp Holmes, some families lived together in the so-called Baby House, but many other families with slightly older children were not permitted to live as one. Natalie Crouter was a proponent for the "Family Units" and argued it would help to normalize their living conditions and allow families to be together in case of an emergency or attack. However, the opposition to the Family Units argued that couples only wanted to live together to have physical relations and they worried that the Family Units would lead to new, unwanted pregnancies when resources were already limited. Despite opposition, Camp Holmes gradually added family units.⁵¹

Similarly, men and women were limited in the time they could spend together. At Camp John Hay, men and women were allowed to walk together on the tennis court for half an hour every Sunday night. It became an occasion to dress up, although they were not allowed to sit or "cohabit" the entire time.⁵² Couples were often caught sneaking off to be together, and the Japanese camp supervisors had punishments in place for these situations. If someone was caught

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Crouter, *Forbidden Diary*, 297.

⁵² Crouter, *Forbidden Diary*, 21.

in the quarters of the opposite gender without a valid reason or special permission, they could face a punishment from three hours of hard labor to five days in jail.⁵³

The Committees also dealt with the controversial topic of having separate Men's and Women's Committees. Many women felt that it would be more efficient for women to represent themselves on the Men's Committee. The Men's Committee also decided that only men could vote in the camp. They believed that women didn't know anything about war, so they should not be voting in camp.⁵⁴ Many announcements of the men and women's committee were general housekeeping notices to keep the camp running smoothly. Food was a common topic of committee notes and notices, as the internees tried to make sure food was distributed equally. For example, Natalie Crouter reported at one point that:

Cafeteria style will be introduced at the morning meal of the 22nd. Please ask only for the quantity to be consumed as seconds may be obtained. Food supply is based on daily money value and saving in any one article will enable a larger quantity of another or purchase of additional to improve the Mess and add to the health, contentment, of all. There will be a change of serving order – the women first, then the children, the men last... High school opening is discussed.⁵⁵

Similarly, the internees hoped to make the scarce bits of food they had taste as good as possible. The Women's Committee often worked with these sorts of issues, as they urged people to aid the camp efforts to buy different and more flavorful food.

⁵³ Crouter, *Forbidden Diary*, 170

⁵⁴ Angeny, *Behind Barbed Wire*, 81.

⁵⁵ Crouter, *Forbidden Diary*, 61.

If ... we can have enough hand-picked rice for the grinding room to produce an extra 30 or 40 lbs. of rice flour daily, this can be placed in the store and sold to camp for personal baking. *But* the proceeds from sale of that flour go into kitchen and the kitchen gets onion, tomatoes, Purico, sugar, eggs, garlic, pepper, fruit for the children, spices, etc. in exchange...Let's pick that little extra rice every day – put in all the time you have promised and more!⁵⁶

Committee responsibilities also revolved around organizing labor within the camps. Work was divided up among internees to keep the camp safe and clean. Natalie Crouter described work as “the great healer, the strong motive power which keeps us normal.” Men’s jobs often included working in the shop, kitchen, or on the hill. Men often found themselves moving lumber for the kitchen stove, which allowed them to leave camp every day. Women took jobs cleaning, doing laundry, cooking, and serving food. Some internees were able to carry over their professions from life before internment, including teachers, dentists, and doctors.⁵⁷

Dr. Lloyd Cunningham was chairman of the health department for a portion of the internment. As chairman, he reported recommendations of the medical committee, informed others of medical problems, and oversaw the hospital, dispensary, pharmacy, sanitation, nursery, and the allocation of food and management of special dietary needs.⁵⁸ Similarly, he was put in charge of the hospital and directed the setting up of the hospital in Bilibid Prison at Manila. The hospital took up several cells, and the prison cell once used for religious services became an operating room.⁵⁹ In the spring of 1941 he had decided not to practice medicine in the

⁵⁶ Crouter, *Forbidden Diary*, 144-145.

⁵⁷ Crouter, *Forbidden Diary*, 54.

⁵⁸ Carl Eschbach, “Lloyd Cunningham: a ‘good camper’,” *Gospel Messenger*, February 1977, 34.

⁵⁹ Bessie Crim, “Nursing Under Difficulties,” *Gospel Messenger*, September 1945, 18.

Philippines since as he expected to return soon to China. Now, in the Manila prison camp, medicine consumed much of his time.

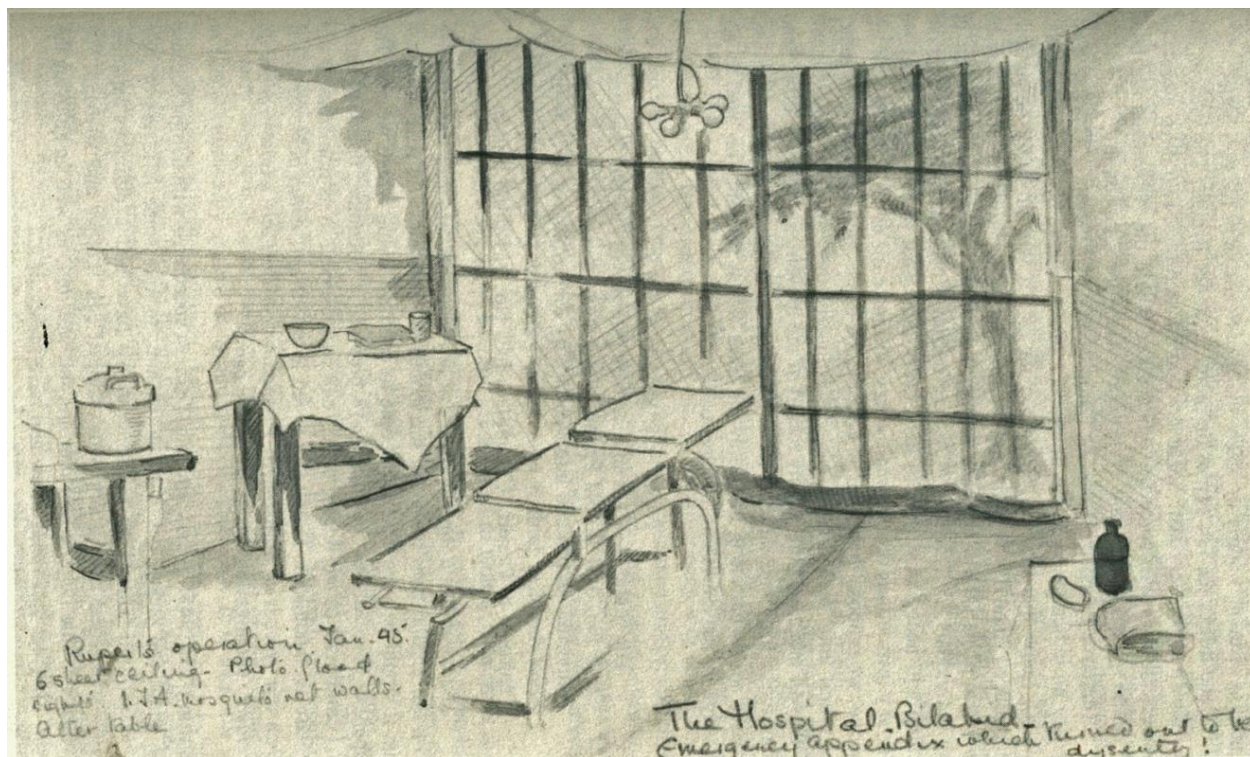


Figure 2: Sketch of a hospital room at Bilibid Prison, Manila

Image source: Natalie Crouter, *Forbidden Diary: A Record of Wartime Internment, 1941-1945* (New York: Burt Franklin & Co., 1980), 461.

This makeshift hospital proved necessary, as disease was rampant in the internment camps. A lab report from 11 January 1943 listed counts of various illnesses and tests in camp. Crouter summarized:

During 1942 there were 65 primary cases of bacillary dysentery and 2 of amoebic, 28 of the former type relapsed. Gastrointestinal disturbances including food poisoning amounted to almost two apiece for each member, with 982 recorded cases during the

year. Of the total, 2,554 were stool examinations; 330 urinalyses; 162 blood studies; 41 miscellaneous; and 26 were various exams in the Chinese camp.⁶⁰

Dysentery was the most common ailment, with new cases nearly every day.⁶¹ Many of the illnesses were diet-based, likely caused by malnutrition. Similarly, vitamin deficiencies were also common, as the camp diet regularly consisted of rice and the same few fruits and vegetables, with little variety. Vitamin B deficiency was particularly common, according to Natalie Crouter's diary. Symptoms included pain in the hands and numbness of hands and arms. Doctors gave "tiki-tiki," a vitamin B extract made from rice hulls to attempt to combat the vitamin deficiency.⁶² Similarly, the poor diet in camp led to a great sensitivity to any change in food. A serving of fried camotes one night led to most of the camp feeling ill, even the healthier internees. Crouter described that they simply couldn't take fat in any quantity after years of a camp diet.⁶³

At one point during internment, Lloyd fell ill with dysentery, marked by a fever of 104 degrees. Lloyd, not expecting to survive, asked Ed Angeny to look after Ellen and Larry after he was gone. Lloyd was in desperate need of a dysentery injection, which the hospital did not have since the Japanese Imperial Army had taken all of the available vials. However, a member of the hospital staff risked his life and stole a vial from the army supply. The vial was shared between Lloyd and a three-year-old child, and both recovered.⁶⁴ Medicine was often in such shortage that doses would be shared.

⁶⁰ Crouter, *Forbidden Diary*, 123.

⁶¹ Angeny, *Behind Barbed Wire*, 43.

⁶² Crouter, *Forbidden Diary*, 99.

⁶³ Crouter, *Forbidden Diary*, 402.

⁶⁴ Letter, Cunninghams, 1978, no. 810, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

Evidently, the camp medical resources were limited. Bessie Crim, one of the Brethren missionaries who was a nurse, wrote about the severe lack of resources. All tools and resources had to be reused and carefully rationed. Applicators and tongue depressors were boiled after each use, and dressings and bandages were washed, boiled and sterilized to be reused many times. Surgical supplies were limited, and the surgeon had to sharpen his knife before each operation. Although the shortages were alleviated by the arrival of Red Cross medical supplies in December 1943, the hospital staff faced many challenges they wouldn't face in any other hospital setting. Lack of soap, diapers, and bed linens caused a lot of problems. Crim explained "it takes twice as long to do everything in a concentration camp as it does in an American hospital."⁶⁵

After more than three years of internment, prospects for freedom suddenly appeared. On 3 February 1945 American troops arrived in Manila and began a month-long battle to take the city and its surrounding region and, in the process, liberated Camp Bilibid. In gratitude for their arrival, Helen Angeny wrote that just "a few more months of that meager diet would have sealed the fate of many."⁶⁶ General Douglas MacArthur had sent the troops to free the internees at Santo Tomas, unaware of the American prisoners of war at Bilibid. When American troops called on the Japanese soldiers at Bilibid to surrender, the Japanese released a statement to the American internees, officially released all prisoners of war and internees and leaving behind food and medicine. Japanese troops also left a sign at the front gate, reading "Lawfully released prisoners of war and internees are quartered here. Please do not molest them unless they make a positive resistance."⁶⁷ Following their official release, the former internees were checked by army doctors and given GI clothing and Red Cross kits. Then the Americans were sent back to

⁶⁵ Crim, "Nursing Under Difficulties," 18.

⁶⁶ Angeny, *Behind Barbed Wire*, 140.

⁶⁷ Angeny, *Behind Barbed Wire*, 129.

the United States in three groups on ships. On 15 March 1945, the Cunninghams left Manila on the *Pearl of the Orient* and returned to the port of San Francisco.⁶⁸

Post-Internment

Because the Cunninghams were back in the United States, there is a gap in their correspondence from 1945 until their decision to leave again for China. During this time, a daughter, Joycelyn, was born to the Cunninghams. In April of 1947, the family left the United States for China, settling this time in Shanghai.

In 1946, not many months after the end of World War II, civil war erupted in China, pitting the ruling Nationalists against insurgent Communists. By 1947, when the Cunninghams arrived in Shanghai, the civil war had grown more intense. Throughout their letters, Ellen and Lloyd described the increased unrest in China due to the civil war, writing that “The communists have perhaps made slight gains in the war but none of great significance”⁶⁹ on May 25 of 1947, followed just a month later by “It seems quite likely that Manchuria and about all of China north of the Yellow River will fall to the communists within the next few months” on June 26.⁷⁰ Beginning in October of 1947, Lloyd took over as the superintendent of a sixty-bed Methodist hospital in Tzechung.⁷¹

Shanghai was one of the last areas of the country in which the Nationalists held on to power, but by 1949 it was clear that the Communists were winning the war. In September of 1949, Mao Zedong convened the People’s Political Consultative Conference, which published the Common Program for China. The Common Program outlined the constitutional structure of

⁶⁸ Ibid., 153.

⁶⁹ Letter, Cunninghams, May 25, 1947, no. 402, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

⁷⁰ Letter, Cunninghams, June 26, 1947, no. 126, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

⁷¹ Letter, Cunninghams, October 5, 1947, no. 410, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

the China to come and described the methods of revolution; Article 5 ostensibly guaranteed rights and freedom to all, and the framework of the system was based upon rural land reform, development of industry, and urged universal education to allow these ambitious goals to be met.⁷² Local leaders of the Communist party encouraged “violent confrontations between landlords and their tenants, the poorer peasants, and landless laborers,” while discouraging violence in cities, such as Shanghai.⁷³ This violence in northern China was demonstrated in the aforementioned correspondence the Cunninghams had sent back to the United States. On 1 October 1949, Mao Zedong declared victory over the Nationalists, who fled to Taiwan. By that time, the Cunninghams had also departed.

In December of 1948, the Cunninghams had received a telegram from the U.S. Consulate asking them to evacuate.⁷⁴ In May of 1949, Lloyd and Ellen began planning their move to India, as they found it was “apparent that China will go completely communist and we do not want to remain.”⁷⁵ As they were in Hong Kong en route to India in June, they wrote:

We are pretty pessimistic these days about the future of mission work or anything else in China. I am afraid China’s political troubles are just beginning. She is in the process just now of having the only kind of ‘general election’ China knows how to have. While the people are ousting one party because they are dissatisfied with it, they have only one choice as an alternative. but I am quite certain this new one will not be satisfactory for long. So another ‘election’ will be necessary, which will mean more civil war.⁷⁶

⁷² Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013), 460-65.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 463.

⁷⁴ Letter, Cunninghams, December 4, 1948, no. 440, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

⁷⁵ Letter, Cunninghams, May 1, 1949, no. 046, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

⁷⁶ Letter, Cunninghams, June 9, 1949, no. 452, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

Upon receiving their visas, the Cunninghams left for India in June of 1949 and arrived in early September. Their time in India was far less eventful than their time spent in China. Their letters home generally detailed Lloyd's work and noteworthy patients, daily life, and the growth of their children. Lloyd studied Gujarati, the local dialect.⁷⁷ Although not addressed directly in their correspondence, comparisons with China were sometimes implicit as the Cunninghams presented Indian culture as strange and exotic. In one letter home, Ellen writes about a Jain priest who came into the hospital:

He is very wealthy and the hospital yard has been full of friends who have called to see him today in lovely cars. He However, could not ride to the hospital in a car for he might have killed an insect [sic.]. Instead he came carried on a litter by four men who walked very slowly so that they could see where they were going and would not kill even an insect. This kind of a person will never ride the train, even a bullock cart. They always walk and they always walk in the day time so that they will be able to see where they are stepping for it is a great sin to kill even an ant.⁷⁸

Ellen's clumsy description of this Jain priest, and her attempt to summarize Jainism to friends and family back home, demonstrate a lack of understanding of South Asian traditions and contrasts sharply with her enthusiasm for and interest in Chinese traditions and cultures.

A few of their letters include their reflections on Indian cultural practices, including the Indian Independence Day parade. In October of 1955, Lloyd was chosen as the President of the Bulsar Branch of the Indian Medical Association.⁷⁹ In the late 1950's, the family moved back to

⁷⁷ Letter, Cunninghams, September 4, 1949, no. 521, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

⁷⁸ Letter, Cunninghams, October 10, 1955, no. 736, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Fresno, California, where Lloyd began a medical practice and Ellen taught elementary school.⁸⁰ Lloyd passed away in 1976, and Ellen spent the rest of her years in retirement. When asked by Marlin Heckman, her nephew, about her most lasting impression of internment, she replied, “Oh, the many friendships we made. Many names on my Christmas card list are from internment camp days.”⁸¹

The experience of the Cunninghams in China, the Philippines, and India, including all the seemingly minute details of their daily lives, from Christmas card lists to descriptions of Indian Independence Day parades, can provide a window through which to view larger trends in history and gain a new perspective on the past, a perspective known as microhistory. Francesca Trivellato, Frederick W. Hilles Professor of History at Yale University, describes the impact of microhistory, “that a variation of scales and analysis breeds radically new interpretations of commonly accepted grand narratives.”⁸² By telling history through different lenses, scales, and perspectives, historians as a whole can contribute to a more nuanced and holistic narrative. In this case, the story of the Cunninghams provides specific insight into the events of the Second World War in Asia and the role of American missionaries abroad. Their unique and detailed story allows for understanding at the individual level. Despite the research and scholarship documented in this thesis, their story has room to grow and develop with every new, close reading of the documents. Therefore, the next step in this process is to make this collection available to more students and scholars who can further add to the subtleties and minutiae of the story.

⁸⁰ Marlin Heckman, e-mail message to author, August 3, 2018.

⁸¹ Essay, Marlin Heckman, no. 848, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

⁸² Francesca Trivellato, “Microstoria/Microhistoire/Microhistory,” *French Politics, Culture & Society* 33, no. 1 (2015): 122-34.

Processing the Collection

Preservation of the Cunninghams' story began with Marlin Heckman, a nephew of Ellen Cunningham, who was only eight years old when the Cunninghams first returned to San Francisco from internment in 1945. He remembers his mother leaving to pick them up from the boat and recalled that "they were just skin and bones because of mal-nourishment during the prison years."⁸³ He received the correspondence from Ellen between the Cunninghams and friends and family, telling the story of their mission work, as well as the journal Ellen wrote 30 years after the internment experience. Ellen's children did not want to keep the letters and papers, so Ellen passed them along to Marlin.

Heckman worked as an academic librarian for forty-two years, a decade at Bethany Theological Seminary in Illinois, followed by thirty-two years at the University of La Verne as a professor and librarian. During his time at the University of La Verne, Heckman introduced technology into the library and played a key role in expanding the archives' collections. George Keeler, professor of journalism at the university, explained that "a large majority of the archives are here because of him," as he was a trusted member of the community. Many people felt comfortable giving him old and unwanted artifacts, allowing him to build the university's collections. His other colleagues described his close relationships with students and passion for history and storytelling.⁸⁴ He retired in 2003 and then served as a volunteer librarian there until his death in 2018.⁸⁵

Heckman intended to publish the letters to shed light on a period of Chinese history that is often ignored. He organized the letters in chronological order and transcribed those on onion

⁸³ Essay, Marlin Heckman, no. 848, Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers.

⁸⁴ Erica Sanchez, "Librarian leaves concrete impact," *Campus Times*, October 5, 2018, <https://lvcampustimes.org/>.

⁸⁵ Marlin Heckman, e-mail message to author, August 3, 2018.

skin paper that could not easily be scanned.⁸⁶ In 2006 he published Ellen's journal in *Brethren Life and Thought*, a Church of the Brethren periodical.⁸⁷ In 2017 he donated the collection of letters and other relevant sources to Elizabethtown College's Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies. The collection is now housed in the College's Hess Archives and Special Collections. His sources, including his notes, research, and various references to other related sources, are housed in Box 3, folders 3 and 4. His research and notes take up folder 3; his scholarship and essays, presumably for a college course, are in folder 4 (see Appendix 1).

When I began working with the collection, Marlin's work was evident, as the majority of the handwritten pieces of the collection had been transcribed and many of the letters were grouped together by year. There are also other related sources within the collection, like articles from the Church of the Brethren magazine, the *Gospel Messenger*, relating to internment or missionaries.

I began processing the donation by creating an inventory of each item in the collection. To create the first inventory, I took relevant information from each source, including the item type, date, a location or return address, author, addressee, and any other significant qualities of the item. Each item was also scanned and made into either a pdf or a jpeg file. After the first inventory was completed, I copied the file and reorganized the inventory chronologically. Before rearranging the items, I took note of the order of the first inventory. Each item was given the number of its order in the original inventory as an identification number. For example, the first item in the inventory was listed as #001, regardless of where it fell in the chronological

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ellen Edmister Cunningham, "Old Bilibid Prison Internment Remembrance," *Brethren Life and Thought* 51:4 (Fall 2006): 221-31.

inventory. The scanned files were named with these numbers so the items could be quickly found and organized.

Once the chronological inventory was complete, I made a spreadsheet of the collection data. The columns across the top organized the data into categories: type, source, title, number, date, to, from/author, location, and notes. This allows the items to be reordered by item type, number, or date and makes it much easier for one to see patterns in the sources and data, especially when arranged chronologically. For example, if letters were regularly sent from one place, one can assume that the Cunninghams were living there at the time. A change in return address allows me to identify a range of dates when the family moved. The spreadsheet will also aid in future use of the collection, as the information is organized. From the spreadsheet, one can identify an item of interest based upon date, names involved, location, etc., and quickly find the scanned item by number.

Table 1

First Twenty Lines of Spreadsheet Organized Chronologically

1	Type	Source	Title	Numl	Date	To	From/Author	Location	Notes
2	Photocopies		small painting	#168	1905-04-24				
3	Booklet	General Brotherhood	Prayer for Missions	#812	1905-05-02				
4	Letter			#031	1936-11-22		Lloyd and Ellen		
5	Letter			#035	1937-02-14	"folks"	Lloyd and Ellen		
6	Letter			#036	1937-04-11	Dad and Verna	Lloyd and Ellen		On Garfield park Community Hospital stationery
7	Letter			#034	1937-11-17	folks	Lloyd and Ellen		
8	Article	Gospel Messenger	The Tragedy in Our China Mission	#236	1937-12-25				copy
9	Article	Gospel Messenger	Our Mission Work	#233	1938-01-22				
10	Letter			#173	1938-03-03	"folks"		At Sea	transcribed
11	Letter			#279	1938-03-05	"folks"	Unsigned	At Sea	
12	Letter			#280	1938-03-05	"folks"	Lloyd and Ellen	At Sea	
13	Letter			#281	1938-03-11	"folks"	Unsigned		
14	Published Letter	Gospel Messenger	Beginning to be a Missionary Letter 1	#174	1938-03-11	Glen and Agnes	Dr. Lloyd and Mrs. Ellen E. Cunningham		published 1939-07-22
15	Published Letter	Gospel Messenger	Beginning to be a Missionary Letter 2	#175	1938-03-11	Glen and Agnes	Dr. Lloyd and Mrs. Ellen E. Cunningham		published 1939-07-29
16	Published Letter	Gospel Messenger	Beginning to be a Missionary Letter 3	#176	1938-03-11	Glen and Agnes	Dr. Lloyd and Mrs. Ellen E. Cunningham		published 1939-08-05
17	Letter			#178	1938-03-17	"folks"	Ellen		transcribed
18	Letter			#282	1938-03-17	"folks"	Ellen		
19	Letter			#179	1938-03-19	"our dear Ameri	Lloyd and Ellen	College of Chinese Stud	transcribed
20	Letter			#283	1938-03-19	"dear American	Lloyd and Ellen	College of Chinese studies in Peiping [Peking] North China	

The date within the chronological inventory, file names, and spreadsheet was formatted as YYYY-MM-DD. This format allows the computer to automatically and accurately list the items in chronological order. If an item was completely missing a date, it would be listed as

undated, marked by UNDT. An item with only a year would have the year listed, with zeros in place of the month and day spaces. An item missing a year would be listed with UNDT filling in for the year, with the given month/day listed.⁸⁸

This thorough inventory allowed for a simpler rehousing process. I reordered the items chronologically on Excel, and then used the item numbers to locate them in the original box. From there, I reordered objects, removed paperclips, and unfolded delicate pages to avoid increased pressure along creases, which could lead to tears in the paper. Folders were labelled “Cunningham Papers – [Category] [Year] (Month-Month) – Box # Folder #.” I divided the collection into three categories: Correspondence, Publication, Miscellaneous. The collection is now safely housed in three archival boxes, each with no more than ten acid-free folders. Box 1 holds Correspondence from 1936 through 1940. Box 2 holds the remaining correspondence, through 1998, with folder 8 holding any undated correspondence. Box 3 holds publications in the first two folders, and the remaining four hold miscellaneous objects, including Marlin Heckman’s scholarship and notes, Ellen’s journal, and other objects.

⁸⁸ Dublin Core Metadata Initiatives recommends using only the year when the full date is unavailable. This could easily be fixed in the future by another student working with the collection; Using Dublin Core™ - The Elements, Dublin Core Metadata Initiatives, last modified November 7, 2005, <https://www.dublincore.org/>.



Figure 3: Rehoused collection in Boxes 1-3

When writing a finding aid for this collection, I followed the second edition of *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS), which was adopted by the Council of the Society of American Archivists in 2013.⁸⁹ I began with the Scope and Contents of the collection, in which I gave an overview of the collection. This includes the years covered by the collection and the types of materials within, as well as major topics covered. I also briefly described my organization of the collection and gave an overview of the Miscellaneous file (see Appendix A).

Under the Subject Terms section, I followed the Library of Congress subject headings⁹⁰ to outline key search terms and topics relating to the collection, from location keywords to general keywords surrounding the Cunninghams, their work, and their experiences. The list includes terms ranging from “Missionaries, Medical” and “John Hay Internment Camp (Baguio,

⁸⁹ *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*, Society of American Archivists, last modified January 2013, <https://www2.archivists.org/>.

⁹⁰ Library of Congress Authorities, Library of Congress. <https://authorities.loc.gov/>.

Philippines)” to the names of cities and countries mentioned in the collection. Afterward, the Administrative/Biographical History gives a brief biography of Lloyd and Ellen and gives a quick overview of their travels and lives. I also included a brief biography of Marlin Heckman with a short description of how the collection came to the Young Center. Finally, an outline of the boxes and folders gives the information listed at the top of each folder. For example, under Box 1, Folders 1-10 are outlined with the type of material and dates of the materials within. The Finding Aid is included in Appendix 1.

Once the collection was fully and safely rehoused, the next step was to select objects for digitization. Following the guidelines from the Northeast Document Conservation Center, I began sifting through the collection and looking for significant pieces to digitize:

At base, selection for digitization and preservation derives from the mission of the institution, and every institution should have a selection process in place to evaluate materials within that context and determine when digital conversion is most appropriate. Clearly stated goals for digitization and careful plans to achieve them are the starting point.⁹¹

The Northeast Document Conservation Center guidelines, under section 6.6: Preservation and Selection for Digitization remind the individual working with the collection to question the value and necessity of digitization for the specific collection. I believe that this collection will be used, if made available online, by supporters of the Young Center, Elizabethtown College students, and others associated with the Church of the Brethren. The collection fits into the institutional mission of both Elizabethtown College and the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies,

⁹¹ Northeast Document Conservation Center, “Preservation and Selection for Digitization,” Northeast Document Conservation Center, www.nedcc.org.

as Elizabethtown College was founded by the Church of the Brethren, and the Young Center serves as a research and heritage center for Anabaptist and Pietist groups. The Hess Archives at Elizabethtown College had the necessary materials and means to digitize these items, as the archives publishes digital materials through Islandora, an open-source software framework that allows shared access of documents between many institutions. The process of digitization makes the collection available to more students and researchers, helps preserve the collection as it should generally be handled less often by visitors to the archives, and furthers the institutional mission of the college, the Young Center, and the Hess Archives.

In this case, I was looking to digitize for access rather than preservation, as the collection is in relatively good shape. Digitization for access involves digitizing objects to allow more people to use and access the collection online. Digitization for preservation is done in hopes of reducing handling of a collection for in-person research by making copies of the collection available online, most often in cases of fragile or damaged documents.

The digitization process involved scanning, editing, and transcribing each document, and then uploading to the digital archive with metadata. The Hess Archives has an Epson Expression 11000XL scanner, which allowed for high quality scans. Within the Epson Scan software, I adapted the settings for a reflective, 24-bit color document at 400dpi. I saved the files as TIFF, as it is a lossless preservation file format. Following a scan, I used Adobe Photoshop to straighten and crop the images.

I selected items for digitization based upon a variety of factors. First and foremost, I prioritized correspondence over publications, as issues of the Gospel Messenger and other publications that are included in the collection could be found elsewhere. I sifted through the collection and selected letters that I felt were significant, or representative of the Cunninghams

and their experience. Some of these letters detailed moving from one place to another, the work that they were doing, or the political events that they witnessed around them. In a few cases, specifically from their time in India, I selected letters that featured their reflections on cultural practices they witnessed. I believe that every letter in the collection holds some degree of significance and could be essential to research; I also recognized that it would not be feasible to digitize every piece of correspondence.

Due to campus restrictions related to COVID-19, I was unable to complete the process of digitization as I had originally intended. However, I scanned and edited key pieces of the collection. From there, the next student worker or student conducting senior thesis research could complete the process by transcribing the documents, writing metadata, and uploading files.

I plan to deposit all of my materials and scholarship in the Hess Archives for future reference. This collection will include the most recent inventories, any new research collected for this work, and references to sources and materials used here. I will also include descriptions of my approaches to digitizing and organizing the materials, as that may prove beneficial to another student attempting to further digitize parts of this collection. Ideally, another student will explore this collection again soon and could potentially benefit from this research and effort that has been put in.

Through this collection, one can experience major points in world history through the eyes of Anabaptists, which provides a unique perspective. Their devotion and beliefs construct the unique lens through which they witness and describe the world around them. With an understanding of Brethren values, this collection provides a unique historiographical stance, as members of a historic peace church are forced to grapple with the inevitability of another war and are thrown into internment because of it. The story of the Cunninghams is demonstrative of

Brethren values surrounding peace and service and serves as an example of the positive impact of microhistory. Applying the firsthand account of the Cunninghams, Angenys, and Crouters to complex issues and events throughout world history can lead to a more nuanced and holistic understanding of these events.

Appendix 1: Finding Aid

Scope and Contents:

The Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham Papers, spanning the years 1936 to 2000, includes letters, magazine articles, newspaper clippings, photographs, government correspondence, and other papers. The majority of the collection is centered around 1938 to 1957. The collection contains many letters between Lloyd and Ellen Cunningham and their friends and family back home. The letters cover a wide range of topics including everyday life, missionary work, internment, raising their children, liberation from internment, conditions in China leading up to the Second Sino-Japanese War, and conditions in China around the time of the Communist Revolution. The articles, published in the Gospel Messenger, cover topics including Church of the Brethren mission work and internment. Materials in this collection are divided into the following categories: Correspondence, Publications, Marlin Heckman's Research and Notes, and Miscellaneous.

The Miscellaneous file includes Ellen's journal, which she wrote years after internment. The Miscellaneous file also includes scrapbook pages of relevant currency notes, stamps, and envelopes, as well as undated newspaper clippings, a hand-drawn map of Claremont, CA, and a photograph. In an envelope, dated April 7, 1941, is a photograph of Lloyd, Ellen, and Larry.

Subject Terms

Church of the Brethren

La Verne College

Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945

World War, 1939-1945

Zhongguo gong chan dang

Communist revolution in China

World War, 1939-1945--Prisoners and prisons

Prisoner of war

Baguio (Philippines)

Church of the Brethren. General Mission Board

Missionaries.

Missionaries, Medical

India

Zhongguo wen hua xue yuan

Beijing (China)

Shanxi Sheng (China)

Tianjin (China)

Holmes Internment Camp (Baguio, Philippines)

Bilibid Prison (Manila, Philippines)

John Hay Internment Camp (Baguio, Philippines)

Valsād (India)

Valsād (India : District)

Administrative/Biographical History

Ellen Edmister was born on 22 January 1907 to parents J. Frank and Sarah Johnson Edmister. Ellen taught elementary school for a year after she graduated high school. She attended La Verne College from 1926 until 1930 and taught school for two years in Laton, California. On 20 December 1931, she married E. Lloyd Cunningham. She gave up teaching to assist and support him, attending courses at Bethany Biblical Seminary while he finished his graduate work.

Ernest Lloyd Cunningham was born on 30 July 1906 to parents J. Ernest and Hazel Dabis Cunningham. He was raised in a Southern Methodist family but joined the Church of the Brethren in 1917. He attended La Verne College from 1924 until 1929, where he met Ellen. He went on to attend the University of California, Fresno State College, and the College of Medical Evangelists. On 13 June 1937, he graduated with his M.D. from the College of Medical Evangelists after completing his intern work at Garfield Park Community hospital in Chicago. He knew he wanted to do religious service with his medical degree, although he originally wanted to go to Africa for mission work. Instead, the General Mission Board decided they would send them to China, along with other Brethren missionaries.

Together, the Cunninghams travelled to China in 1938, and remained there until 1941. Their son Larry was born in 1939. They moved to the Philippines, where they were captured and taken prisoner by the Imperial Japanese Army. They spent 4 years imprisoned and returned to California once they were freed. In 1947, their daughter Joycelyn was born. They returned to mission work in China but were forced out by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949. They spent eight years doing mission work in India until returning home to California in 1957. In 1978, Ellen wrote about the family's imprisonment experience in a journal. Lloyd died in 1976; Ellen died in 2009. They are survived by their two children: Larry and Joycelyn.

Marlin Heckman, nephew of Ellen Edmister Cunningham, acquired the collection after Ellen's death. Heckman worked as an academic librarian for forty-two years, a decade at Bethany Theological Seminary in Illinois, followed by 32 years at the University of La Verne as a Professor and University Librarian. During his time at the University of La Verne, Heckman introduced

technology into the library and played a key role in expanding the archives' collections.⁹² He retired in 2003 and then served as a volunteer librarian there until his death in 2018.⁹³ Heckman intended to publish the letters to shed light on a period of Chinese history that is often ignored. He organized and transcribed parts of the collection and published Ellen's journal in *Brethren Life and Thought*, a Church of the Brethren periodical.⁹⁴ He passed away in 2018 after giving the collection to the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College.

Box 1

Folder 1: Correspondence 1936

Folder 2: Correspondence 1937

Folder 3: Correspondence 1938 January- March

Folder 4: Correspondence 1938 April – May

Folder 5: Correspondence 1938 June – August

Folder 6: Correspondence 1938 September – December

Folder 7: Correspondence 1939 January – April

Folder 8: Correspondence 1939 May – December

Folder 9: Correspondence 1940 January – June

Folder 10: Correspondence 1940 July – December

Box 2

Folder 1: Correspondence 1941

Folder 2: Correspondence 1943-1944

Folder 3: Correspondence 1945-1947

Folder 4: Correspondence 1948-1949

Folder 5: Correspondence 1950-1952

Folder 6: Correspondence 1953-1957

Folder 7: Correspondence 1958-1998

Folder 8: Correspondence – Undated

⁹² Erica Sanchez. "Librarian leaves concrete impact." *Campus Times*, October 5, 2018, <https://lvcampustimes.org/>.

⁹³ Marlin Heckman, e-mail message to author, August 3, 2018.

⁹⁴ Ellen Edmister Cunningham, "Old Bilibid Prison Internment Remembrance," *Brethren Life and Thought* 51:4 (Fall 2006): 221-31.

Box 3

Folder 1: Publication 1937-1948

Folder 2: Publication 1949-2000

Folder 3: Marlin Heckman's Research and Notes

Folder 4: Marlin Heckman's Scholarship

Folder 5: Miscellaneous – Ellen's Journal

Folder 6: Miscellaneous

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