

1945

- Franklin D. Roosevelt dies
- Hitler commits suicide and Germany surrenders
- Two atomic bombs are dropped on Japan in April and Japan surrenders
- First electronic computer built
- Willard and Ellen are at Century Farm
- Gould and Virginia are in Manhasset, New York
- Geraldine is in Berkeley, California
- Dorothy and Harold are in Saginaw, Michigan
- Marjorie and Ralph are in Saginaw, Michigan
- Kathleen and Hugh are in Florida
- Willard is 80, Ellen- 77, Gould- 49, Geraldine- 47, Dorothy- 44, Marjorie- 39, and Kathleen- 37.

[This letter dated Jan. 3, 1945 was written from Shelton, CT by Ellen and Willard to Geraldine. The letter was written prior to Christmas of 1944 but it was dated Jan 3, 1944. Geraldine is not able to make it to Shelton for Christmas and neither are her sisters. Willard talks about their plans for the holidays. Letter donated to Yale by family in 2006.]

Jan 3 1944 [*Should be 1945*]
Shelton

Dearest Geraldine,

Warmest Christmas Greetings to you from Mother and all of us. We are all sorry you cannot be with us over the holidays but you have lots of company in your deprivations, for Kathleen, Marjorie, and Dorothy are all feeling about as you do over their inability to be with us. Marjorie thinks at least that she cannot leave as two children are ill. She is coming up tonight to see Gould and family and stay over night returning in the morning, -if this snow that has just begun falling does not make the roads too slippery. We had a snow here Wednesday but they had none in Putnam. Emma and Elbert are coming down Saturday just for the day if weather permits.

Gould and Virginia went to New York yesterday morning and are returning tonight. We have had the pleasure of caring for the children in their absence. The six cats are having the time of their lives?! or the children are playing with them. They have my sympathy, much as I am averse to feline pets. But how the kiddies enjoy toting them around and playing with them.

I think we're having a turkey for Saturday, our Christmas dinner day, if Emma and Elbert come. If not we may have it Sunday. G's family go to the Spaces Sunday p.m.

I hope you go to the party this p.m. and have a little of the Christmas celebration with others.

I fear you have contributed more than you should to the China relief. Better keep the rest of your money for your own needs for I think this generous enough for you. There are many calls for help.

A really Happy Christmas to you

Love. - Mother.

[written on Willard's calling card by him]

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to Jerry. - Gould and family arr'd Tues. evn'g. Ginnie's father and mother drove to B-port and bro't them here about 9:30. We plan to see Monnie this evening and Aunt Emma and Uncle Elbert plan to drive down tomorrow.

We would like to feast eyes on you Christmas but your decision to lie low and safely is best. Your \$10.00 China Relief came yesterday, more than \$120.00 thus far thru me- most of it from the idea you started to give to Chi. Rather than to ourselves. Mother and I have sent \$30.00 this time. In all \$50.00 +.

Gould and Ginnie are in N.Y. returning today -the children. Aunt Mary and I got a Christmas tree this a.m. I am not yet used to seeing Hazel go everywhere without difficulty.

Much love

Father



[This letter dated **Feb. 18, 1945** was written by Ellen Kinney Beard to Kathleen. She has heard that Kathleen has had the flu and is wondering if she should come down to help. Father, Willard L. Beard, is in New Haven at Yale Divinity School to see about getting a new pastor to replace the current one who is moving to Vermont. Kathleen's sisters are talking of a reunion and at the reunion they will go through unpacked boxes to divide the contents. Ellen feels the reunion should wait until summer of 1946. Original letter is in the collection of Jill Elmer Jackson.]

Century Farm,
Shelton, Conn.
Feb. 18", 1945.

Dearest Kathleen,

Thru Dorothy's valentine to me I learned that you have been ill of flu. Are you recovered from it now? Did any one else in the family have it? Did you have a severe case of it? How many days were you confined to your bed? Did you have any one to care for you beside the family, or any one to help care for the family?

Dorothy wrote me, "Why don't you go down now and take over and give Kathleen a chance to recuperate and convalesce without taxing her strength too much."

Well,- why don't I? To answer that I must first ask, Do you really want my help? Will it be a real help to have me there; or will I make you more work than I relieve you of? Would I be crowding you too much? Do you think I could get a reservation on the ground of going to assist a daughter who is ill?

Some people say it may be difficult to get passage home in the spring when people want to come north. Do you think there is any danger of that, in my case? Are they having more R.R. accidents now, that we don't hear about, due to worn-out rolling stock? Do you think there is enough danger of that to deter one from going south where there is a good reason for such a move?

I wrote you a letter in Putnam which probably reached you while you were ill. Your answer to that, if on the way will tell me some things I want to know.

It is still quite cold here and considerable snow still remains. The road beds are clear of it for the most part, around here, but along the sides of the road and on fields, cultivated land and wood land there are several inches of snow on the level, and drifts from one to 4 feet still remain in many places.

Monday- This morning at 7:30 Phebe drove Mary to the Derby just to go to Hartford for a committee meeting, and from there she goes to Boston for another meeting of two days duration,- all in connection with her work as pres. of the Conn. Council of Country Christian Women. She expects to be home Wednesday night.

Father drove to New Haven today to see some man in Yale Divinity School about recommending a student to be our pastor for the next year beginning Mar. 1st. Our present pastor has resigned to take effect Mar. 1st. He has accepted a call to a church in Proctor, Vt. where they wish him to found a small college as well as be the pastor of the church. Both Mr. and Mrs. Frazier seem happy to go there. They will have a number of university graduates in the church who can act as members of the faculty of the college-to-be. Proctor is the city where the great Vermont Marble quarries are and many of the buildings are of marble. He said the basement of their parsonage is built of marble,- floor, walls, etc. smooth finished. The church is built of marble too. They move there a week from tomorrow, Tuesday.

Wednesday of this week our second Lecture service and supper is held and the speaker is to be the man whom Father interviewed today regarding a new pastor for our church, Mr. Woodward of New Haven. Following the supper and the service, the church will give Mr. and Mrs. Frazier a farewell reception in the same room where the supper and service have been held. They are planning a purse of money as a gift, of \$50.00 or more, not definitely decided how much the last I heard. But it was suggested that each organization in the church contribute \$10.00 viz. The Church, the church workers = (women's organization) the missionary society, the S.S., the Polorim Fellowship= (young people's organization), The Golden Guild,= (the young married women's society.) The King's Daughters, and the choir.

We have had a real winter this year, with lots of snow and cold weather. Up at Elbert's of course, I was warm for his house is so well insulated and he has coal and likes to keep warm himself. And they had plenty of hot water always. I came home last week Thursday by train. Elbert thinks they can get along very well alone till Etta comes back about Easter time.

I fear I have never thanked you for that gift of a bottle of astringent you sent me so long ago. But I do thank you very much for it. I didn't realize I should be away so long when I went to Putnam and as I could not very well get it into my suitcase (which I had to check- I did not have it to use for three months, so I still have most of it left now; but I need to get busy using it steadily for I am getting very wrinkled. Thank you again for it.

I first saw your family photo at Emma's but now have seen the one you sent us at the farm. It is fairly [*good*] of all, but could be better of you and the girls. Hugh's is very good I think. Thank you very much for it. [*See letter dated Dec. 28, 1943 – this may be the photo Ellen is referring to unless there is one more recent.*]

Today a broadcast says we may expect more snow tomorrow, perhaps turning to rain late in the day. That will mean bad traveling I fear.

I suppose Marjorie keeps you up-to-date on her family affairs,- that they are now in their own hired furnished house with garden, and trees, strawberry bed and flower garden, and that Johnny's baby hair is now cut boy style "very cute" and that it changes him in appearance definitely,- that Harold and Dorothy gave him as a birthday gift a little sailor suit with long pants. I'm waiting impatiently to see the first photo of him with shorn locks and sailor-suited.

Do you ever hear from Dorothy?!! She must be very busy. We get a good long letter once in a long while.

Marjorie told me when she came east after the three girls met at Dorothy's that they talked over plans for a family reunion next summer here at the farm and when all were here together, go thru the boxes we haven't opened and divide the Chinese things. But I am beginning to wonder if there is really much to divide; for it has been so long since they were packed that I have entirely forgotten what is in them. Some of them were packed fifteen years ago and may contain used clothing and bedding and be linen and bath-room linen and table linen and books and letters we wanted to keep and photographs and such things that you children would not care for,- as well as a few Chinese curios. Two of the boxes we have opened, have contained some used clothing which now, after all these years, and after being packed so long in the leaky school-house, not even we ourselves care anything about, nor will ever use. Some few curios too of course. And the contents of other unopened boxes may be similar; we just can't tell, after all these years, what is there.

I am writing you all this to guard against you children getting too high an estimate of what there is that came from China to be divided. Certainly there are no large or costly curios among them. And probably you children will not care to fill your houses up with such ordinary things as we shall find there.

As Harold and Dorothy and Geraldine and Marjorie and Ralph have all made the expensive trip out here so recently, only a few months ago, they will hardly want to incur that expense for the same trip so soon again. Of course, I know, the important thing in the girl's minds was the getting the whole family together to get acquainted with each other again and for all to meet new members of it. But I wondered if it would not be better to wait the reunion until the summer of '46. I know you all want to see Johnny before he outgrows his baby attractiveness; and they all want to see your girlies before they get quite grown up. Elbert regrets that he is missing seeing them during these tender years of early childhood. Well we cannot tell that Geraldine may be putting on as a feature to change the whole picture; so we will hold our decision in abeyance for future developments.

Do write me how you are and to answer my inquiries in this and my previous letter. With much love to all the family, Affectionately Mother.

[In the margin of the first page she explains a random pen marking across the page.]

These oblique marks mean nothing. My undirected pen did that while I was asleep!!

[This letter dated April 14, 1945 was written from Shelton, CT by Ellen to Marjorie. She includes excerpts from a letter written by Eunice Smith Bishop who is now living in Chungking, China. Letter in the collection of Jill Elmer Jackson.]

Shelton,
Apr. 14", [1945]

Dear Marjorie,

Just today we received a circulating letter from Eunice Smith Bishop who is now living in Chungking.

She and her husband and Helen Smith went back last year to China and had to fly part way,-from Calcutta to Chungking. They were so limited in baggage that they could hardly take what they really needed.

This letter is to circulate among 17 people so I can't send it to you, but have copied some of the most interesting parts, as I thought you would be interested in how she is living and what she is doing,- you knew her so well on Kuliang in China. Moreover I remember you wrote father some time ago for material for a talk you were to give on China. I forget the date of it and have not the letter before me; but thought if that was not already past, you might find a few ideas in this letter of Eunice's that would be of interest.

Helen's working in Chengtu perhaps 200 or 300 miles from Eunice in Chungking.

A letter from Myra yesterday said Stanley is starting Sunday Apr. 15 on that much announced (by me) trip west. He goes first to Montreal, Toronto, _____, Detroit, Chicago and perhaps, Saginaw. I don't know how long his trip is to be nor when he will arrive in Saginaw, - if he comes.

Father and I went to the Dr's for a check up this morning. He found my heart condition better and says I may hold up on my medicine for a while and see how it acts.

My blood pressure was all right, also urine.

I will let Father write the result of his check up himself.

Did you and Dorothy receive invitations to Dorothy Jewett's wedding on Apr. 21"?"

Father says we will go. We'll go down to Gould's on Friday p.m. and go with Gould and family to the wedding and spend Sunday with them and come home Monday A.M.

Hazel and Willard are attending the wedding also.

A letter from Mrs. Jewett today said she wished all the Beard girls could be present.

Yes, I am going to write a reply to Ralph's fine letter just as soon as I can find a measure of time sufficiently vacant of musts to do justice to that fine honor. You'll see when that time arrives that I did appreciate the honor enough to give it a prompt reply- if it hadn't got waylaid. I hope he'll forgive the delay.

How I would like to hear one of Johnny's long stories. We'll be out there to see him and you all as soon as we can after the wedding.

Annibel is being sold, - is sold to Dan. She is in the big barn with Dan's cows tonight. Because she is too much work for Father to milk and care for and too much work for Margaret to milk and too much work for Mary to make butter, and too much work for Phebe to make cottage cheese. So we will buy our milk of Dan and our butter at the store, and give all these people a rest.

Wasn't our President's sudden death [*Roosevelt-April 12, 1945*] a sad and terrifying surprise! But radio reports from commentators inspire confidence and faith in our new President's ability and purpose to carry on as Commanding Chief and heads of the Nations.

Oct. 18, 1944.

Notes from Eunice Smith Bishop's Letter.

Both she and husband find plenty to do. Many opportunities.

The Chinese Industrial Cooperatives; The Friends of the Wounded; the United Christian Publishers; and local industrial organizations have all been anxious to get Merlin (her husband) to join their organizations to work with them.

Poor Arthur Coole (Dr. Coole's son whom I think you knew at Kuliang) was just breaking under the weight of all his treasuries and the most immediate need seemed to be for Merlin to take over the treasurership of the United Clearing Board, which is the Board set up for the Mission and Relief organizations, to get better exchange for the U.S. Dollar. It has the approval of both the Chinese and the U.S. Government.

It has been very successful and hundreds of millions of dollars go thru his hands every month. (I think this figure must mean Chinese dollars,) after the U.S. dollars have been changed into Chinese currency)

He has an office in one of the banks in the center of town and that has given him a chance to make all kinds of interesting contacts. It is a great satisfaction to know that his long hours at this office are helping to keep schools and churches going and relief funds more adequate.

The official rate of exchange is still \$39.00 to \$1.00 U.S. and the situation was desperate for much of the church work. The Clearing Board rate at present is about \$180.00 to \$1.00 U.S.

In Eunice's work- "From Sept. 18 to 28 there was held here in Chungking the first National Conference of all those interested in Child Welfare. It was called by the Woman's Advisory Committee of the New Life Movement. (all the more interesting because started entirely by the Chinese without foreign missionary guidance) Educators, Social Workers, Medical Workers, Psychologists, sociologists, gathered from all over free China. I went to all the meetings that I could and had an excellent chance to meet many splendid leaders, and to find out what was being done.

I was greatly impressed to find that most of the conference leaders were people trained in our Christian Schools. Three were graduates of the Xua Nan College of Foochow. (Meth) The lectures covered many vital fields of work and the discussions dealt with war and post-war problems concerning the children and the home and institutional care.

After the conference adjourned, trips were planned for all those interested in seeing some of the work being done near here. One day was spent at Kilo-shan seeing Madam Chiang's No. 1 War orphanage- the "showplace"- and it was just that. Perfect to the Nth degree, as far as exquisite buildings, equipment and cleanliness is concerned, and really quite thrilling to see what can be done in war time in China. Yet we realized it was at the expense of some of the other orphanages, and that the contrast between this and others was pretty great.

We were most impressed by the work of the Ministry of Social Affairs. This ministry was just established 2 ½ yrs. ago and they have set before them a vast program of relief and social work. The leader is a very fine young man who, altho he is not a Christian himself feels and openly says he needs and wants the close cooperation of the church in his program of work. They have a very fine orphanage for foundlings and poor children. Ideal from the standpoint of nutrition health, and medical care, but quite lacking in educational methods and technique. Wonderful buildings, grounds, kitchens, clinic and location. We visited their orphanages for the nursery, Kindergarten and other children. We found them equally fine in health, and physical care, but we all felt the lack of adequate educational opportunities. One group of 9-14 year old children had a very fine leader and had had a great deal to do with the building and fixing up of their play ground. One group were making their own straw sandals but there seemed to be too little of that type of work. At another place we visited another project of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Here they had a Maternity clinic and hospital, a school for the blind, an old people's home, an industrial shop for training of the older orphans, a kindergarten and a nursery, and a shelter for beggars.

It is all very fine, and certainly makes you realize what possibilities there are. All this is just the beginning of a vast project that has just been going over 2 years. It is certainly thrilling to be here and see what New China is doing.

At the Laura Haygood Kindergarten School where I am teaching two days a week, I am teaching a class in homemaking- that is, the child care side of the home. I am working in all the specialists that I met at the conference. The medical Dr. has talked to them on Pre-natal health; now a nutritionist is speaking on the baby's food and how to fix it. She is demonstrating and making it very practical. We will have a doll next week and demonstrate bathing and dressing the baby. The girls are just Sr. High School 1st and 2nd year girls, and it is just an experiment to see how much they can get.

I am also teaching a handwork class, and supervising some in the kindergarten. Besides these, there are contacts with those working on children's work around the city. Another job I have is being chairman of the

Cooking Section of the International Women's Club. It is a lively group made up of Chinese, French, British and Russian (and herself American?). We try to make practical things out of local products. It is lots of fun and gives me a chance to meet some very lovely Chinese women and to be in their lovely homes. We will get some interesting International Recipes also.

End of direct quotation

She tells also of their joy in having a home by themselves, - that a home in Chungking is a rare and cherished joy, - that they were the most fortunate couple in Chungking when they fell heir to their little doll house on the hill. They are the only foreign couple in Chungking living in a home above by themselves. Every other couple, - and there are only a very few, - are living in boarding houses or are boarding a lot of wifeless men. Their little house was built last year and belongs to the treasurer's office and Merlin as a treasurer was entitled to it. The whole house is 24 ft. square, - has a cozy little living-dining room, a wee kitchen and servant room, a bed room and a tiny bathroom. It has some furniture, and they borrowed rugs to cover the current floor and pictures to cover white-washed walls, and they bought a few things. They thought Foochow was an expensive place but here they paid \$18.00 U.S. for a pair of flatirons. \$10.00 for 2 small bread pans. They are very happy to have their own place. There are so many lonesome people there, - men without their wives are certainly a forlorn lot, and single ladies boarding around. Eunice likes to entertain them, and some Chinese friends in her home, as she can to supper or tea.

She writes;-"Merlin is out with a group of bankers and government men this evening. He has enjoyed so much getting to know a lot of these men. So many of them are fine Christians and they are active in the church! We go to church here on the Chin Ching school campus- a church started and run entirely by official and government and wealthy people. The audience itself is an inspiration."

Then she writes of how wet it has been there at the time she writes Oct. 18th, '44, - they had not seen the sun for over 3 wks. And the conditions were mud and more mud.

She also writes of how they both are using many things left by other missionaries of our board who have recently left on furlo, - they couldn't take much as they flew, and were limited on baggage. And what they left came in very handy for Merlin and Eunice as they also were limited on baggage when they left America, knowing they too would leave to go part way by air plane. What was discarded by those who left was a God-send to those who arrived short-handed.

[This letter dated Nov. 25, 1945 was written from Century Farm, Shelton, CT by Ellen to son-in-law, Hugh Elmer. She thanks him for his letters and for his invitation for them to come to Florida to visit. She talks about her trip to Putnam and updates Hugh and Kathleen on some of the relatives. Eighteen people spent Thanksgiving at the farm. Letter in the collection of Jill Elmer Jackson.]

Century Farm,
Shelton, Conn.
Nov. 25th, '45.

Dear Hugh,

This letter is especially to you in answer to that fine letter you wrote me so long ago. It was very much appreciated, being the first I had received from any of my sons-in-law. Since then, I have received one from Ralph and another from you.

I realize how difficult I shall find it to prove to you how very much I did appreciate that thoughtful, friendly message from you, the only positive proof- a prompt reply- being entirely absent.

Sincerely apologizing for that unconscionable lapse of time, I trust you will accept my hearty thanks for your good letter and for the kind invitation it contained to visit the family in your new home.

From certain rumors floating about, you may have gathered what I am about to report; viz. that not only I but we accept with pleasure your generous invitation to make your home our retreat for a brief sojourn.

Father has looked forward for some months to visiting you all this winter, and it is needless to say that I have anticipated it with reminiscent background.

If all goes according to plan, we shall spend the week end of Dec. 9th with Gould's family and come on from there to Jacksonville early in the week. Definite data we will report later as our plans develop.

I hope this influx of people and baggage will not crowd you unbearably, and I hope it will not necessitate readjustment of your home arrangement too drastically.

Two weeks ago I made a brief visit to Putnam, considerably briefer than I intended, because of conflicting appointments. I had anticipated three or more long auto trips to visit relatives while in Putnam, but discovered Elbert had suddenly and unexpectedly sold his car, quite on the spur of the moment, for the advantage of top price and spot cash. He plans to go thru the winter without a car and buy a new one in the spring. He had used his car seven years.

Perhaps Father has written you that he sold his car before we went to Saginaw this past summer; and how we both do miss it. Elbert will miss his car too, I'm sure.

We were so glad to hear of the correction of the mistake on Cynthia's report card! What a discouraging effect the wrong marks must have had on the little girl's efforts at the school work she loves so well! Congratulations to her and her parents. It touched me deeply.

We had the usual party here at the farm on Thanksgiving day, eighteen sitting around the table. Stanley and Myra were not here as usual, but went to Nancy's instead. They will visit Ruth before they return on Wednesday next; and Stanley put into the trip two business engagements, one in Philadelphia and one in Duke Univ. Myra telephoned us from Nancy's saying all were well there and that all had gone well with their trip.

One of the appointments which hurried me home from Putnam was the weekend visit of Stanley and Myra just after their return from their long trip to the West Coast. They had seen Geraldine and I could not miss a personal interview with them. They reported that she was well and happy and very much interested in her all-absorbing subject. Myra said Geraldine had promised herself that she would decide the question by Christmas. G. and Roger were at dinner with Stanley and Myra in their hotel, and S. and M. were at G's apartment once. They had a great trip,- all by air.

Kathleen will remember Vinnie Beard [*Lavinia Beard*], Theodore's [*Willard's cousin, Zina Chatfield's son*] down at the mill. She died last week after an illness of several years. We four attended the funeral last Friday at 2 p.m. Anna, her sister, a former court stenographer, will now be all alone in her part of the house, but Paul Clapp and family, whom Kathleen will remember as farmer for the aunts at the farm 12+ yrs. ago, live in the other part of the house and will be company for her.

We will give you all the rest of the news when we see you, soon. With much love to all the family; and another enthusiastic Thank you for your two good letters. Sincerely,- Mother.

I was very sorry to hear of your mother's accident and illness. I hope she is nearly recovered now and is comfortably convalescing.



December 15, 1945 in front of an American Airlines DC-3 "Flagship Palm Springs" at La Guardia Airport, NJ
Left to Right: Willard Livingstone Beard, Ellen Kinney Beard, Virginia Space Beard, Myron Gould Beard, Hazel
Ellen Beard, Willard Frederick Beard.
[Photo from Mona Beard, family of Myron Gould Beard.]

