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## 1927-07-27, Letter from Frank Keller to Fellow Workers

Frank A. Keller

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[Written on Hunan Bible Institute Letterhead]

July 27, 1927

Dear Fellow Workers:

It is a great joy to be starting a letter here in Changsha on one of our regular letter-heads. I have to return to Shanghai for a short time, but I hope that it will be possible for me to add a note at the bottom of this letter giving my permanent address for the future as Changsha. Messrs. Dunlap, Talbott and I came from Shanghai to Hankow on the "Loongwo". We had a very slow but pleasant trip and reached Hankow at 5 P.M. on Tuesday, July 12<sup>th</sup>. Messrs. Dunlap and Talbott got off the same night on a Japanese steamer, they were berthed on the sofas of the saloon and Doctor Theodore E.C. Hsiao, the New Commissioner of Foreign Affairs at Changsha, and his suite had most of the cabins. Miss Anna Louise Strong, the well known traveler and correspondent was on the same ship. Business matters made it necessary for me to wait for the next ship which left Saturday night, July 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. H left with me that night and we had a delightful trip to Changsha. There were six German business men on board who were very cordial and pleasant. We reached Changsha on Monday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, and received a most cordial welcome. The first familiar face we saw on the hulk was that of HMS, then CY, very soon Mr. T, TPC and YT An. Our rickshaw coolie Chu Shih Fu was also on the spot with a rickshaw. Mr. T, PC and I walked back to the compound together, on our way we stopped at the Evangelical compound and looked through the chapel and houses, the platform remains in the chapel and about one half of the seats, the pulpit and the other seats have disappeared. Doctor Dubs had come up on a previous steamer and he, Mr. Dunlap and Mr. Talbott had already gone on to Liling and points beyond. Mr. Dunlap and Mr. Talbott after visiting Liling, Yuhsien and Chaling got back to Changsha last Saturday, July 23rd. They were greatly comforted, encouraged and cheered by all they saw on this trip. Their property was in good condition, hospitals, dispensaries and operating rooms had not been interfered with and the Christians in each of the places were full of enthusiasm and hope. They travelled very rapidly so that Doctor Dubs felt it necessary to travel more slowly, I have not yet heard of his return. Practically every thing [*sic*] has been cleaned out of the three residences on their Changsha compound, but the buildings themselves have suffered very little. The looters

[Page 2]

-2-

July 27, 1927

carried Mr. Talbott's safe way out near to the front gate. They broke off the hinges but could not get the door open, then they chiseled out the bottom of the safe only to find it empty. The soldiers who occupied Mr. Talbott's house removed the top part of his heating stove and used the fire pot as a Chinese stove for cooking their food. Doctor Strong stopped with the Swedish sisters, and Miss Nathorst accompanied her to Siangtan, Siangsiang and Yungfeng, they had a most satisfactory trip. After looking though the Evangelical premises we came on to our own compound, Doctor Witt was waiting here to welcome me and came on towards the gate as he saw me coming. As he had never visited the Theological and the Y.M.C.A. premises I suggested our going over at once and he was glad to go with me. Only parts of the

walls of Mr. Allen's house are standing, every bit of wood work has been burned or carried away. The school building, also the Preston and Roberts houses are in fair condition considering the fact of their having been occupied by soldiers. Paul Keller's house is in the worst condition, all doors, windows, door and window casings, mantels and every thing [*sic*] moveable have been carried away, but the floors remain intact in these three houses also in the Y.M.C.A. houses in spite of the reports to the contrary which reached us at Shanghai. The doors of the Y.M.C.A. houses were locked and were so strongly made that the looters could not force them open, so they simply knocked out the panels, the doors themselves and the door casings are still standing. Some of the windows have been removed, also part of the stair rails and wainscotings. The bath room [*sic*] equipments have been either removed or smashed and the walls have been seriously injured by the attempt to pull out the water pipes and the electric conduits. Mr. And Mrs. Heinrichsohn had succeeded in moving the piano and most of Mr. Veryard's books and important papers also some of their furniture. Only one quarter of the old school suffered to the extent of the reports that came to us, in the other three fourths the floors, partitions and staircases still remain and some fourteen families, comprising various classes of people, military and others, are now living there, they have been ordered out by the officials. To my great joy I found Chester's house practically uninjured. I had feared that one of the doors might have been smashed to gain an entrance. The officers did threaten to do this, so CLP wisely unlocked the door for them, the house was only occupied by officers for a few nights. As soon as WTT left Mr. H's house the officers moved over there preferring to be inside the compound wall, and then too Mr. H's house was well furnished and much more convenient. Most of Mr. H's furniture has been carried away, but he has some hints as to where it is and hopes to get it back. By the way, most of Mr. Dunlap's effects were removed and stored by loyal Christians under the leadership of Mr. O-Y and Mrs. C who did wonderful work for a couple of days. So Mr. Dunlop expects to get nearly everything back.

[Page 3]

-3-

July 27, 1927

Our servants acted promptly and wisely in connection with Chester's house and brought all the bath room equipment over to our house and stored it here so that nothing is broken. All the entrances to the houses under construction have been filled in with brick so that looters have not been able to get in and carry away material. The auditorium organ and the largest Estey organ have been moved over to our living room and are in good condition. Helen's piano received rather harsh treatment until finally it was gotten away from the soldiers and stored in the Whipple apartments which have been kept free from soldiers with the exception of the north-west room adjoining the social hall. The Whipple piano has not been molested. Soldiers got out on the northern roof garden, climbed up on and across the auditorium roof and so got down to the south roof garden and effected an entrance into the Whipple apartments. Fortunately they were discovered very promptly, were gotten out before they did any damage and all doors and windows facing that roof garden were bricked up so that those rooms have been kept free. Mr. Whipple's room on the second floor, my personal office, the two business offices and the book room have been sealed and unoccupied. All of Charlie's books and papers and the books from the school library are stored in my office. The fourth floor of The Milton Stewart Hall has not been entered. Brick walls have been erected at the top of the staircases on the fourth floor of the two men's dormitories so that it is not

possible for me to get in and give a satisfactory report of conditions, but so far as I can learn practically all of the movable property of the Foucars, Roberts and students stored in the first dormitory next to the dining hall has been taken away by the looters. Charlie's big box was broken open by soldiers, but this was discovered before many articles had been removed, what remained, consisting of rugs, pictures, cushions, etc., was brought to our house and stored in one of the closets. Regarding the fourth floor of dormitory No. 2, next to Mr. H's house where Walter's and Chester's things are stored the report is that the breaking open of the door was discovered early and that comparatively little had been taken away. One article missing is the sewing machine. The official who occupied Charlie's office insisted on keeping the piano there, he seems to be able to play a little and I do not think that he has damaged the instrument internally. I imagine that the case is scratched more or less because he has papers, books and all sorts of things piled on top of it. The officials have promised that all soldiers shall be out of our compound and the Theological compound by Thursday evening and Mr. Dunlap, Mr. Talbott, Mr. H and I expect to start on our return trip Saturday night. Mr. Veryard who arrived on Monday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, expects to return at the same time. More than half of the American folding chairs, about one third of the arm chairs and a number of school desks have been taken away from the main building, also a number of square table

[Page 4]

-4-

July 27, 1927

and "PT" from the dining room. A few wardrobes and a number of desks and chairs have been taken from the dormitories. The corridors and rooms of The Milton Stewart Hall which have been occupied just fill one's heart with grief, it seems incredible that rooms could become so dirty in a few weeks. Most of the soldiers occupying this building are boys whose ages run from 11 to 16 and 18 years, you perhaps can imagine what boys of this age and this class would do. There is quite a spirit of enthusiasm and hopefulness among the Christians of the city, regular services are going on in the Evangelical, Leibenzeller, Norwegian, Presbyterian and Swedish Missions though the Evangelical services are conducted in the school building in the rear of the premises not in the regular chapel. At the Liebenzeller Mission they have street chapel preaching three nights each week to crowded houses and they have many enquirers registering for training with a view to future baptism. Most of our bands will now discontinue work for the regular summer holiday, but several men of Band No. 7 say that they have had all the holiday they want and prefer to go on with their work, so we are allowing them to continue. Band No. 9 will also continue for a time. I would like to stay right on here instead of returning to Shanghai, but Mr. Lockhardt, the American Consul at Hankow, would only grant me permission to come on the basis of my promise to return as promptly as possible. I hope, however, when I call on him next week to secure his permission to return to Changsha permanently about the middle of September. Financial conditions here are very bad, Mr. Steybe is leaving to-night on a Japanese steamer for Hankow to try and secure some silver dollars there to bring back here for current use. Mr. Li, the contractor's time-keeper, did a very clever bit of work and probably saved our property by it. The day I left, a short time after I had started, a man named HYH came into our compound and looked over the buildings. This man is a member of the Christian & Missionary Alliance Church, he was for a short time a student in the Bible school and now is at the head of the Farmers' Association, he evidently was planning to have the Farmers' Association occupy these buildings and had this been accomplished our compound would have shared the fate of the Union Theological Compound. This is the man who drove all our people out of the old school building

and occupied it and the Y.M.C.A. houses. Mr. Li and Mr. Ho were old friends and seeing Mr. Ho on the compound Mr. Li went out to meet him but Mr. Ho turned his back on Mr. Li pretending not to recognize him. Mr. Li at once suspected what was being planned and rushed off to the Labor Union and asked them to make this place their headquarters. They at once responded, sent a few pickets to act as guards and put up notices at the gates stating that this compound had been occupied by the Labor Union as their headquarters. This move kept the Farmers' Association out and we have great reason to be most thankful to Mr. Li for his prompt and wise action and to our God for giving him success at such a moment of real crisis. [*sic*]

[Page 5]

-5-

July 27, 1927

The Norwegian Mission in the city is occupied by a large number of Christian families, some from Changsha and some from Yiyang and other places, it has escaped injury. The Norwegian houses on Pa Pao Kiai have been occupied by military officials, the Kiaer house is still occupied, while the Gotteberg and Gilje houses are now occupied by Lutheran Christians, these houses have not been seriously injured. Doctor Wang Tzu Kan is now in charge of the Yale Hospital. The Yale College buildings, dormitories and residences have suffered very little as far as I can learn though I have not been able to visit them. We hope to be able to have at least nine bands at work by the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, please pray much for guidance and blessing in this matter. You may be sure that I am praying earnestly for each one of you daily, may God's will be very plain to you and may His loving care and guidance be most manifest in every detail of your lives. In my morning Bible study one verse made such a deep impression on me that I would like to quote it in closing this long letter. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight" II Peter 3:14. I hope that this letter will answer many questions that may be in your minds. I have tried to mention the things that I myself was anxious to know about before coming back here. With warm love to you all, Every truly yours,

Frank

PAK/PCT