

---

## The Newletters: E. Gail Carpenter Describes Life on the Home Front Part II

---

*edited by Charles William Sloan, Jr.*

NEWLETTER NUMBER ELEVEN

January, 1943

Dear Gang:

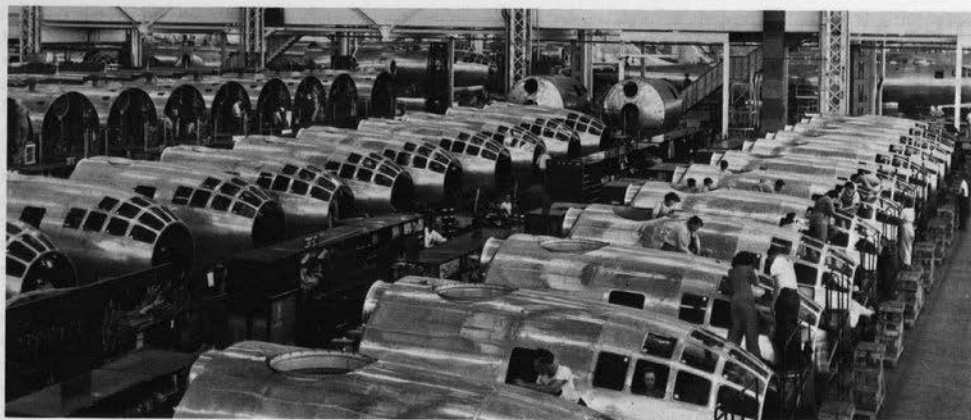
The New Year is less than three weeks old and already The Old Home Town has been just a bit shocked by developments. The OPA [Office of Price Administration] has reported that more than two hundred and thirty thousand sugar ration cards were issued in Wichita. Remember the village of scarcely one hundred thousand which you left behind? Those who know about such things estimate that the Greater Wichita, which you know, includes everything not claimed by Kansas City, Omaha, Denver, Amarillo, Oklahoma City, and Tulsa, has now attained a population of one quarter of a million. Now Dick Wellman can tell the boys from the East that we are actually becoming metropolitan. There are here and there other signs that we are putting on the airs of a Big City. The streets are filled with activity and the eating places are busy all night long—not with revelers but with workers who are manning the home front. It is not uncommon for an evening group to break up early so that one or two of the women can get to work on time. Many childless housewives are now working the shift which begins at eleven thirty p.m. They get home in time to get breakfast; sleep until the evening meal; have an hour or two of home life, and then off to work. Another type of night life more typical of Kansas City than Wichita is supposed to flourish here now. Petty thieves are active and our streets are not nearly so safe nor nearly so friendly as they once were. When a country town doubles its population in a few months it is to be expected that a little of the undesirable will be found in such a wealth of fine new citizens.

The home town atmosphere can best be brought to you by talking about the weather. Perhaps that militarily doubtful subject can be discussed in a way which will tend to confuse rather than to comfort the enemy. We are now in the midst of the second blizzard in less than thirty days. The first came between Christmas and New Year's. It was one of the most beautiful snow falls imaginable. For hours the big flakes floated to the ground undisturbed by the usual Kansas wind. When the blow finally came it piled the roads and driveways full and pulled down the telephone lines so that for several days we were unable to use the highways to the west of town and it was almost a week before all the lines were repaired. Yesterday it was near zero all day long, with a strong north wind and a fairly heavy snow thrown in for good measure. The bus driver used both hands to shift gears. An old man who sat next to me shivered and shook all the way to town. Anxious passengers scraped a bit of the frost from the bus windows to see if perchance it was time to get off. For the ladies, fancy millinery was out and good old-fashioned scarves tied around the ears were much in style. People on the streets pulled their coats about them and dashed from doorway to doorway. The snow underfoot squeaked with each step and someone pulled that old gag about how good a little of this would feel next August. Last night the bottom dropped out. It was nine below zero. Brr!

Wichita folks, in spite of the weatherman, are warm enough and they are not suffering any real hardships. The war is being felt by all of the home folks but there is everywhere the feeling that it should be felt. All of the inconveniences are accepted for the most part in rare good humor. It is so typically American to be able to kid each other about our war "shorts." Suddenly on the clean kitchen linoleum there appeared great splotches of black. Everywhere in the house where a bit of bare floor was exposed to the not too gentle footsteps of the children were the same great black splotches. It was the

---

Charles William Sloan, Jr., a native of Wichita, received his B.A. and M.A. from Wichita State University. The home front newsletters presented here are the second in a four-part series.



*The Boeing plant in Wichita produced the B-29 Superfortress. Shown in the foreground are nose sections of the Superfortress, while in the background can be seen the double bomb bay sections.*

new reclaimed rubber heels. And a sailor home on leave says, "You think you have trouble. We have to take that stuff off the decks every day with steel wool!"

The home folks are all getting plenty of the right kind of food to eat. Dinner the other evening was so different that the menu should certainly be passed on to you. There was meat—*small* tee-bone steaks, but so tough that one felt guilty of consuming leather needed by the army; there was butter substitute or rather a sort of butter saver made by mixing butter, gelatine and milk. There was bread of the unsliced variety since it is now unlawful to slice bread; and finally, there was postum to drink. All meals are not like that and even though many fancy foods are disappearing from the grocers' shelves, there is plenty of good food for all. This may be a very delicate subject, but there is the matter of beans. There are to be no more canned baked beans. They say that the boys in the service just beg for beans three times a day, so no more canned beans for the home folks. That simply means that the old bean pot comes out of hiding and that most any day from the oven comes the delicious aroma of tomato sauce as it runs down the side of the sizzling pot and we have real baked beans which are far better and far cheaper than any of the beans which Mrs. Heinz ever put in a can. Enough of atmosphere and food.

#### NEWLETTER NUMBER TWELVE

February, 1943

Dear Gang:

This letter was to have been written this afternoon in that delightfully lazy period between the drying of the

last dinner dish and the first contagious chuckle of the Great Gildersleeve.<sup>1</sup> It was one of those rare February afternoons when all out-of-doors seemed to be calling Kansans from hibernation, and instead of writing a letter I draped myself with two of the neighbors over the back fence and there we proceeded to exchange misinformation upon subjects ranging from globular strategy to apple juice and from rationing to the correct time to burn the grass.

As you have already suspected we are either at the close of Winter or upon the threshold of Spring. Since these are days when we are all straining our vision for the first glimpse of a great new day, it seems that this surely must be the threshold of Spring. One of the fine things about Wichita is that there is a distinct break between the Seasons. There are places upon the face of this shrinking globe where there are no torrid browns of Summer, no painted leaves of Autumn, no pure white blankets of Winter and no fresh greens of Spring. As we leaned upon the back fence in the warm sunshine we could sense that the seasons are about to change. A couple of flying fortresses seemed to hang just under the stratosphere, a commercial transport roared across the cloudless sky, and several lesser planes pattered around above us. Three neighborhood boys wrestled, no holds barred, on the dead brown grass and between falls lifted the stepping stones to collect "roly poly" bugs. The male dogs dashing about busily seemed to find romance

1. "The Great Gildersleeve" was a popular radio program.

temporarily more important than gnawing upon meatless bones. Here and there a tulip dared to thrust a whitish green tip through the soil. A pussywillow bush nearby had put out a few fuzzy kittens to see if the rumors about the coming of Spring were actually true. As if to cinch the argument, a robin came in for a two point landing on the highline. But you can't fool three neighbors on the back fence. We know that a warm day in February is nothing but propaganda designed to lure unsuspecting fruit trees into a premature coming out so that they can be nipped in the bud.

The clouds of war continue to cast their shadows over the home front. It is now time to apply for new gasoline books. So far all of those who have actual need for gasoline in the conduct of a business essential to the war effort have been able to get enough gas to get by. We have not been under the severe pleasure driving restrictions which have applied to the East. Each car may drive its ninety miles per month as the owner sees fit. In view of the fact that a mechanized army is impotent without gasoline, the oil industry is gradually being recognized as essential to the war effort. The two most perplexing

problems are transportation and the discovery of new reserves.

A few days ago shoes were placed on the ration list. The allowance is fair and entirely adequate for all normal needs. All canned goods and many other foods are to be rationed March 1st. We are constantly coming into contact with priorities and voluntary rationing. One no longer goes into a store to be sold something by a clever salesman. In order to get anything one must be a clever buyer armed with the proper credentials. The proper approach is, "Please, Madam, what priority rating must I have in order to buy this ruling pen?" The correct answer to that is, "Listen Squirt, before you can even inquire about draughting materials you must have a priority rating of quadruple A, five triple B, four double Y, three Z one." Remember how you used to buy a couple of candy bars, one for you and one for the girl friend? A few nights ago at Stafford, a complete canvass of the town revealed not a single candy bar. At Dockum's the other day a few candy bars were offered for sale and a man daring to ask for two was accused of sabotage by the zealous girl at the cigar counter.



*Carpenter reported many times on the traffic and changes to Wichita streets. Shown here is South Oliver Street (looking north) during the morning hour change of shift at Boeing. Boeing Kaydets, used for flight training, can be seen near the plant entrance.*

These are but the strange and prophetic shadows of the clouds of war. The war itself we feel in our hearts. We feel it in church when we look over the congregation and realize that most of the male heads are fringed with gray. We feel it in the morning when we hurry to get that very personal headline. We feel it when we listen to our radios. We feel, as Hitler and his despised allies must feel, that the fortunes of war are about to change as the Gang drives on to Rome, Berlin, and Tokyo.

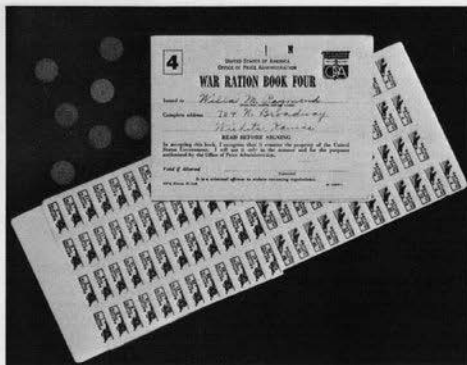
NEWLETTER NUMBER THIRTEEN

March, 1943

Dear Gang:

Entomologists tell us that never before have prospects been so bright in the insect world. Cut worms are busy whetting their cutters; potato bugs are having their red bodies with the black spots all waxed and polished; and the tomato worms are already dyeing their coats a tender tomato green. The cause for this underground activity is Victory Gardens. All of the news space usually devoted to the antics of ball players in spring training is just now devoted to the antics of Victory Gardeners. Every patriotic and red blooded husband is searching for a plot of ground for his wife to spade, plant, and harvest in her spare time. Small talk chiefly has to do with whether or not you are going to have a garden, where it is, how you are going to get it plowed, and what you intend to plant. Most folks are planning Victory Gardens this year, not because they fear that they shall go hungry but because they realize that every pound of beans or peas and every peck of potatoes or tomatoes raised at home will permit just that much more space to be used for the transportation of war materials. And then too, there is the little matter of rationing. It will not take any ration points to pick a mess of beans in the garden. You may have heard that the Saturday shopping is not quite so simple as selecting the things you want and paying for them. It is now sort of a game—something like Monopoly. If the shopper wins she takes her hamburger and her can of spinach and heads for home with the flush of victory glowing through her rouge. If the grocer wins he loses because he makes no sale.

It is about time to bring you up-to-date on the bus situation. (The Sage of the College Hill Bus, he was known as in them days.) It just naturally follows at this point because every third woman on the bus these days has a big sack of groceries, with a loaf of bread and a big bunch of celery sticking out of it. Several weeks ago we were just a bit shocked upon boarding the bus to see a big red headed gal dressed in a bus driver's uniform, sitting right back of the driver. She seemed to be a bit self-conscious but she was watching every move which the driver made and she was listening to the many things



*Rationing became a way of life on the home front. Housewives, merchants, and businessmen became accustomed to the use of ration books and points. Willa Raymond, a Newell class member, used this ration book, with its accompanying stamps and red and blue point tokens.*

which he seemed to be telling her. A couple of days later the redhead was beaming from the driver's seat and the driver was sitting behind her looking slightly fussed. Thought the passengers, "Buddy, how does it feel to be talking yourself right out of your job?" Sure enough! Now the redhead drives alone and she does a mighty good job of it too. At the end of the line it used to be, light up a cigarette and once around the bus inspecting all tires. Now it is, powder the nose, light up a cigarette, once around the bus inspecting all tires and powder the nose again.

Upon this, the first day of Spring, we can report that March so far has been a very rough month in Wichita. We have had several heavy snows and at no time has it been warm for more than a day or two at a time. Even one balmy day brings the neighborhood junior soft ballers out into my back yard. This year they will call themselves the Window Smashers as they have already made home runs through two of the panes in my garage window. The OPA has ruled that the damage can be repaired and that other repairs or additions may be made upon the house not exceeding two hundred dollars in any one year. When the mosquitoes and flies come North again this year they may find that their invasion plans have been frustrated by the Carpenters' screened in back porch.

It seems that every city suffering from growing pains must have its streets and curbs torn up about twice each year to accommodate some new sewer, water main, or buried high line. And so, that not too distant ancestor of the modern tank and from which all of its destructive

qualities were derived, the steam shovel, with Caterpillar trucks, is moving up East Second digging a ditch which is far too wide and deeper still. A ten or twelve inch water main is being buried which in itself is of little interest. It is interesting to know that the new water main is to serve a whole new village which is springing up as if by magic, just south of Forest Hills and west of Beech Plant No. 2.<sup>2</sup>

These are truly slack times in Wichita. Government statisticians have just disclosed that two legs out of every three are now covered with slacks. This disclosure can be verified by actual count at the corner of Broadway and Douglas most any time of day. The mischievous March Zephyrs which have always darted about gleefully blowing up the ladies' dresses, have discovered that it takes a real wind to blow up a pant leg. One of our War Poets has put it this way

A QUERY ADDRESSED TO A LADY IN SLACKS

Won't you tell me which is right,  
Looking at you from the back,  
Are your slacks a little tight  
Or are your tights a little slack?

NEWLETTER NUMBER FOURTEEN

April, 1943

Dear Gang:

It might be interesting to begin this letter by mentioning a few of the things which we never expected to see happening in Wichita. There are, for instance, balmy Spring evenings without steak fries in the parks—Fishing tackle supplies at Sears reduced to two steel rods and a twenty-nine cent bamboo pole—The card displayed in Armstrong's [Creamery] window, "No ice cream sold retail here"—Passengers alighting from the Streamliner from Kansas City "all in" from standing in the aisles all the way—Vacant lots all over the City beginning to sprout with peas, beans, lettuce, radishes, and corn—School girls waiting on the tables at the hotels in the evenings—Innes Tea Room refusing to serve meals to evening groups—No Sunday afternoon rides to the Airport—Jenkins Music Company stocked with "notions"—Lawrence Photo Supply Store stocked with games and novelties—One film for your camera every Monday if you are there in time—Lunch menus at the Cafes with most of the entrees scratched by twelve-thirty—An unfortunate car owner changing his tire in the traffic line at the intersection of Broadway and Douglas—

House to house canvassers selling War Bonds instead of Real Silk and Fuller Brushes—Making an appointment with the repairman to have your car fixed ten days hence—The cobbler telling us that we could pick up our newly half-soled shoes in thirty days—The candy counter at Kress' reduced to peanuts and cookies—Seeing the face of a man who has saved enough meat coupons to buy three pounds of bacon at one time—Eating delicious biscuits baked with chicken fat for shortening—Knowing a culprit who was fined twelve fifty and who lost all of his gasoline coupons for driving forty miles per hour in the City—Filing cabinets made of wood and painted green to resemble the steel files which the Army uses—Handles made of plastics—Binding posts made of plastics—Stenographers without chewing gum—And then—there are those which seem to top all of the rest: A man walking to the bus, passed by his neighbor who was working diligently among the weeds in his lawn. As he passed by he paused to remark, "I see you have installed a scarecrow in your Victory Garden." To which the indignant neighbor replied, "Sir, you are speaking of the woman I love!"—And then there is the strange adventure of one of the girls who delivers the milk for Meadow Gold these days. A short time ago we were driving East on Central. Just as we crossed Hillside we became aware of a team of horses pulling a milk wagon toward us at a very rapid pace. As the outfit sped by we were surprised to see that there was no driver. A glance up the hill revealed a very short and plump but very fast on her feet milkmaid in hot pursuit of her runaway team. As we pulled to the curb a pedestrian dashed into the street and captured the horses—I, for one, never expected to see the day when any of these things would come to pass in Wichita.

This is Holy Week and I would like to close by reminding you that Easter has a very special message for those who are in the midst of very difficult and trying experiences. It is the assurance of better and brighter days to come. It is the promise of the morning which follows close upon the heels of the night.

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in and found not the body of Jesus.

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. And as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of man must be delivered unto

2. Carpenter refers here to the Beechwood Federal Public Housing Authority project mentioned in footnote 26, Part I. The area is now the site of office buildings, a Marriott Hotel, and the world headquarters of Pizza Hut.

the hand of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to the rest. . . . And their words seemed to them as idle tales and they believed them not. . . .

And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened and they knew him. . . . And they arose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, "THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED."

#### NEWLETTER NUMBER FIFTEEN

May, 1943

Dear Gang:

Many of you in your letters have learned to speak in terms of rainy seasons and dry seasons. Perhaps you have almost forgotten that such climatic terms also apply to the Old Home Town. Just now we are being chilled by an unseasonably cold and prolonged rain. The back yard just now is an inland lake upon the shore of which has finally been collected the material for screening in the back porch. A little more rain and the plans will have to be altered to include pontoons.

With the rain comes thunder and lightning and the queer antics of people who are about to get wet. This afternoon there was a loud and sudden clap of thunder, a sound which sends me dashing to the window as surely as the siren of an approaching fire truck. A few big drops of rain were beginning to fall and the pedestrians were scurrying for cover. The war workers in their (tell-tale) coveralls glanced at the threatening skies and defiantly plodded on their way without bothering to change their pace. The afternoon shoppers grabbed their hats and pulled their coats about them and headed for the nearest doorways. Boys and men commenced to trot and a very impressive number of soldiers and sailors in that one little cross section of Downtown Wichita, lengthened their strides and quickened their steps into a dignified and orderly double. It was interesting to notice that there are more Service Men on the streets of Wichita than ever before. We have been aware of their presence because there are two distinct groups of people in the City who are attempting to make Service Men feel that Wichita is a fine hospitable City where soldiers and sailors are welcome and where they are entertained. One group can be identified by bright lights and the empty money belts of the departing guests. The other group would like to be known for its shared dinner table and fireside. Both groups are working tirelessly to show the boys a good time but as the chicken, which

no soldier came to eat, said to the empty beer mug, "There is no accounting for tastes."

It appears now that the Victory gardens are a huge success. The city is full of them. In many parts of town even the curbing is green with straight, well cultivated rows of vegetables. Most V-gardeners are already enjoying onions, lettuce and radishes. The sweet corn is knee high and the peas and beans are in bloom. Just now the community's saddest and wisest man is the man who failed to plant potatoes. Potatoes, believe it or not, are one of the rare delicacies. These same Irish spuds of which you have peeled so many are now costing from eight to ten cents per pound when they are available at all. One shopper went to the store the other day asking for bananas. The clerk said, "We have no bananas but we do have potatoes!" The shortage of potatoes is one of the several indications that we do not have everything that we want. We do have everything that we need for health and comfort. We had all learned to want too many things. There are still many things which we are anxious to do without in order to speed the day when we can welcome you all home. This parting remark upon a certain kind of food may bring down upon my head whatever it is that soldiers and sailors bring down upon the heads of certain civilians, but it is being noised about that strawberry shortcake is here.

It is well that this is not expected to be a news letter this month when we are all thrilling to the big news which some of you have made in North Africa and which others of you are making in the Aleutians and in the South Pacific.<sup>3</sup> You might expect that news such as the victory in Tunisia would be received with cheers and hat throwing. Your folks at home were glad in a quiet sort of way and their exultation was very deep. It was gladness and exultation tempered with thanksgiving that so much of the ultimate victory which is our goal had been won. Most of us have come to realize that this is not a cheering and hat throwing war. It is a working and praying war. It is not that people are on their knees making eloquent prayers of words. They are at their work-benches filled with something which is beyond mere anxiety, and where anxiety leaves off prayer begins. The bridge which spans the gulf between anxiety and faith is prayer.

3. Carpenter refers here to the first decisive successes of the Allies. The Japanese drive into the South Pacific was halted with the retaking of Guadalcanal and Papua, and the German forces in Tunisia were defeated with the taking of 250,000 prisoners.



*Fashion Wise... Ration Wise...*

## Our New Fall FOOT SAVER SHOES

They boast all the fashion  
wiles your feminine heart could  
hope for — yet they're patriotic too! Styled in finest  
"civilian" leathers and made over famous Shortback\*  
Lasts that hug heels without slipping, yet give  
ample toe room. Choose your new Foot Savers today!

Pat. U. S. Pat. Off.

Third Floor

*Geo. Innes co.*

this time

*Let's be Sensible!*

about coupon



Remember what happened the week preceding June 15? We are not likely to forget it, and the chances are that you will not forget it, either. We want you to have the shoes you want, with the courteous, leisurely service that is part of the Innes tradition. We think you'll prefer to buy your shoes that way. There are plenty of shoes for everyone, and the selections right now are complete. That's why we say to use your Coupon No. 18 now.

Right — LaVonne  
— a Foot Saver in  
black sueds,  
priced at \$12.95.



Left — the Ken-  
sington, a Foot  
Saver Skuffie in  
black or army  
russet calf, priced  
at \$9.95. Other  
Foot Savers at  
\$9.95 to \$12.95.

*The purchase of rationed goods was sometimes a confusing, if not frustrating, experience. When the Innes store advertised its fall line of shoes in August 1943, customers were urged to be "sensible" and to remember the earlier events of June. At that time, the OPA had announced that stamp eighteen in war coupon book one was good for shoe purchases from June 16 through October 31 and that stamp seventeen was still good for a period of time. Some customers were confused about which stamp to use first while others were upset that they might have to make a choice between summer or fall shoes and possibly do without the coming winter.*

## NEWELLETTER NUMBER SIXTEEN

June, 1943

Dear Gang:

Your June letter is being written in part from Ness City, Kansas. You may have heard somewhere someplace that there is a shortage of oil. You may also have heard it said that we have reserves enough to last for a great many years, a statement which is still true. War conditions in the field of transportation have completely upset the distribution of oil and then the demands are so great that it is very difficult to discover new reserves as rapidly as we are depleting the oil which is in sight. There is also the small matter of the unavoidable shortage of steel and marked increase in the cost of production and the cost of discovery with the price of oil remaining at the same level. Since most of the fun of the Oil Business is in trying to find oil, we go right ahead trusting that we will at the same time be able to find enough to prevent any serious shortage. The search just now takes us to Ness County where to use a military term, it might be said that your correspondent is with some other oil men on maneuvers. Farmers are sometimes of the opinion that Oil Men are constantly on maneuvers. They usually think of the word maneuver in anything except its military sense.

Bruce McVey has been writing about some pretty warm weather in Georgia and it just happens that there are a few of us who can begin to appreciate just a little of the condition which he describes. This hotel room must be located near the Torrid Zone of Ness City. The curtains are moving just a little bit suggesting a whisper of a breeze, but like most whispering, it turns out to be hot air. The bed, which by some miracle, escaped the metal scrap drive, has been dragged from what was to have been its final resting place in an airtight corner to a position between the door and the window in order to be in the path of any cool air. Once in the days of travel a hotel in one of our Midwestern cities, sent a vase of rose buds to our room shortly after we had registered. This is the first hotel which has ever provided not "a cricket on the hearth" but scads of crickets everywhere. They are big fat shiny black ones and each one seems to carry a complete one man band. One has just landed in the waste basket with a metallic ping. Another has just hopped out of range of a shoe which was hurled with deadly intention. A third has just landed on my bed so it looks like a hot time in Ness City with the crickets.

This week is the beginning of harvest in these parts. Yesterday evening as we were driving through this country near sundown it seemed to me that there was everywhere a beauty which is peculiar to Kansas. There were the broad rolling acres of golden ripe wheat. Here



*From his office in the Union National Bank Building (shown above in a pre-war photograph), Carpenter had his own "window on Wichita" from which he could observe wartime changes in the city. Right, Dockum's, on the ground floor of the bank building, was a favorite spot for Carpenter's coffee break.*

and there was a patch of green with fat cattle grazing. The streams were marked by the winding irregular rows of cottonwoods. The farm houses sprinkled over the landscape looked neat and comfortable. The clouds were white and fleecy overhead and the sun about to set was beginning to paint a border to the firmament using all of the delicate colors on Mother Nature's palette.

Today the lid was off and Old Sol turned on the harvest heat. After all, who is there who would want it to be cool and damp at harvest time? The hot dry winds are just as much a part of harvest as are the laden stocks of wheat which dive head first into the combines. It is right for men to be wet with sweat and black with dust at harvest time. Sweat and dust are just as much a part of harvest as is the stream of newly threshed wheat which pours into the waiting truck. This year there is a discordant note in the harvest scene. The folks who are doing the harvesting are boys and women and older men. A slight thirteen year old kid climbs down from his tractor and takes a long drag on the water jug and as he drives home the cork with his fist and wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, you know exactly what is going through his mind. It is, "Today I am a man."





*For Carpenter a surprising change at Wichita restaurants, cafes, and soda fountains was the lack of menu choices and service.*

Many of your letters indicate that you are disappointed and disgusted as your home folks are by the strikes which are so widely publicized and which must certainly give great comfort to the enemy.<sup>4</sup> We are shocked to know that there are those who are willing to put selfish interests above the public interest at this time. Of course those of us who have had any dealings with people know that it is impossible for a human organization to be one hundred per cent efficient. We have supreme faith in the American way of doing things which even in war time guarantees to all a remarkable amount of freedom, knowing full well that there are some who will abuse it. Certainly a solution to the more pressing problems will be found so that our job of winning the Victory and the Peace can be done quickly. It is well to think in times of discouragement of the tremendous job which is being done by the many rather than of the shortcomings of the few. In Colorado there is a stream which rushes down through a narrow rock strewn canyon. The water is so churned on the surface that it often gives the impression that it is flowing up hill. A stick tossed into the stream leaves no doubt as to the direction in which the stream flows or the force with which it moves. The stream of our National life is now crowded into the narrow canyon of our War Effort. The surface cannot be expected to be serene. There are many indications that we are moving in the right direction and with a force which can be of no possible comfort to the enemy.

NEWLETTER NUMBER SEVENTEEN

July, 1943

Dear Gang:

During the nightly news broadcast from one of the local radio stations there often comes into the background the sound of the whistle of a locomotive. The fact that it is heard night after night establishes it as a part of a very definite pattern of sounds. It is the sort of thing which the writer of a mystery story might use as a clue. It suggests that a community such as ours has certain sounds by which it can be identified - sounds

4. In 1943 hardly a week went by without a labor crisis. At the beginning of the year, 15,000 coal miners left their jobs in a wildcat strike; Pres. Franklin Roosevelt ordered them back to work. Walkouts then followed in rubber, plastics, railroads, coal, and a host of other industries. But always, the main problem was with John L. Lewis and the United Mine Workers. In the months prior to the writing of this Newletter, the miners demanded an additional two dollars a day and went out on strike, only to return to work shortly thereafter. Later the War Labor Board denied the pay boost, and the miners again went on strike. Roosevelt ordered government seizure of the mines, but could not prevent the workers from striking. Finally a face-saving concession by Harold Ickes, on behalf of the government, granted the miners special allowances for travel time and reduced lunch breaks.

which are as much a part of the Home Town as Sim Park or Lawrence Stadium. Of course, the war has brought to Wichita new identification marks and has altered some of the old ones. There are new sounds in the air too, and some of the old ones are now heard in a different key.

Through the office window there come the daytime sounds of Douglas and Broadway. Only a few months ago there was the occasional squeal of rubber on the pavement as carelessly driven cars came to a stop for the red light. This sound is gone as the cars roll circumpectly and silently to a standstill. When the light changes there is the shrill blast of the cop's whistle and the temper raising squawk from the horn of the impatient driver three cars to the rear; there is the hurried and complex sound of speeded up engines as the cars pull away and the bronx cheer blast from the interurban bus as it lumbers through the intersection like a fat lady in a crowd. Even the louder scraps of laughter and conversation can be heard faintly as the pedestrians move with the lights.

Then there are the random sounds of most any time of most any day - an ambulance on some side street as it races toward its objective with its siren screaming bloody murder - a fire truck roaring and shrieking down Broadway slowing down just a bit for the busy intersection as the tall man hangs cockily to the railing. There is the modernistic toot of the Zephyr, the Kansas City,<sup>5</sup> or even the diesel switch engine as they signal for the crossings. There is the shrill cry of the news boy and the fog horn of the old hand at the game, as they yell something purposely unintelligible about the invasion of Sicily.

Down on the street one hears the muffled rush hour shuffle of the crowds punctuated now and then by the decidedly off key soprano and contralto profanity of the women war workers as they jostle for places on one of the crowded buses. Many of the cars passing by have the metallic rattle of a 'jalopy' which should have been traded in last year. There are the time telling factory whistles, and the air raid alarms which the officials seem to love to test. Overhead there are assuring sounds, the light flutter of single motors of all kinds, the heavy drone of twin motors, and the businesslike roar of four motors.

Wichita has its full share of neighborhood sounds, the whir of the lawnmower, the sharp bang of hammer on nail as things are kept in repair, the faint scraps of steel on the well baked earth as today's "man with the hoe" sweats in his Victory garden. There are the shouts

5. The Zephyr and Kansas Citian were passenger trains.



*The war had its impact on women's fashions, as Carpenter observed in "A Query Addressed to a Lady in Slacks."*



*Carpenter assured his readers that the folks at home had the essentials although some items were difficult to find or had increased in price. The OPA attempted to hold down prices, and in this photograph of the Dillon's store at Kellogg and George Washington Boulevard, the OPA's listing of "community ceiling prices" can be seen posted behind the customer.*

of excited kids as they play Air Force or Crash Dive. The hopeless protest of the tiniest shaver, "How come I always have to be the bombardier? Why can't I ever be the pilot?"

Sunday brings sounds of its own, the chimes from high up in the belfry of the church, the children singing in Sunday School, and the warm babble of friends in the Newell Class. Then there is that sound which moved Emerson to say, "I love the silence of the church before the service begins better than any sermon." Unfortunately, he had not heard the quiet and reassuring voice of Dr. Ferry<sup>6</sup> who in these days of confused thinking reminds us that only that nation is blessed whose maker and builder is God.

Your letters, of which there was a bountiful crop this month, are appreciated more than words could possibly tell. They are being treasured as a record of your great

6. The Rev. Asa J. Ferry was pastor of First Presbyterian Church from 1934 until his retirement in 1946.

contribution to this wonderful chapter in the History of our Nation. It was especially thrilling to read of events in North Africa as described by Bill Chapman, Bill Miller and Dick Wellman. The censors have occasionally taken liberties with most interesting parts of the letters from abroad. This slight inconvenience has moved one of our lesser war poets to glorify these indispensable letter shredders as follows:

If I were only a cussing man  
 And could express myself like a teamster can,  
 There is a guy whose name I don't care to mention  
 Who richly deserves some special attention.  
 He works on your letters with scissors and pen  
 As he clips and he blots and he clips them again.  
 He leaves all the verbs and cuts all the nouns—  
 He blots out the names of the countries and towns.  
 You say that you are now at (hole in the sheet)—  
 That you plan to go up to (blot blot) to eat.  
 What you saw, what you did is all covered with ink!  
 (Blank, blank!-) to the censor. That's what I think.

## NEWLETTER NUMBER EIGHTEEN

August, 1943

Dear Gang:

It was not until your last letter returned from being mimeographed that it appeared to be many words too long. Our heretofore trustworthy office scales indicated that the document, in spite of its five pages was still within the three cent limit. Your correspondent's face was really red when letters commenced to come back marked, "THREE CENTS POSTAGE DUE." Will those of you who may have paid the extra postage accept my apology. Henceforth brevity shall become the soul of wit.

Speculation upon the problem of the untrue scales has led to some strange observations in this day when all of our standards of weights and measures seem to be a bit awry. We are looking at things from an entirely new point of view. From an offside position scales as well as events can be easily misinterpreted. Then too, the spring may have been weakened by excessive tension or by abnormal temperatures. It is just possible that all of our standards of convenience may have become a bit distorted by the tension of conflicting forces and by the heat of world struggle. Fortunately in the realm of Spiritual Values as well as the realm of material values there is a bureau of standards to which we may retire for occasional recalibration of our scales.

How differently we have come to measure the capacities of our automobiles! Remember when you used to point the nose of your car down the road and tramp the gas to the floorboards. The speedometer would read sixty, seventy, seventy-five, eighty, eighty-one! It seems a long time since any of us have tried that floorboard stunt. What she'll do today depends upon those tires which are becoming very, very smooth; upon the fact that at eighty most cars drink gas at an excessive rate; and finally upon the fact that there is a national war speed limit of thirty-five miles per hour. You used to drive into the filling station and yell, "Fill 'er up." It takes a lot of those scarce little coupons to fill 'er up these days.

The shopper has new standards to govern his purchases too. Remember how it used to be done at the grocery store. You went down the line filling your basket with all of the good things which you could pay for. Now grocery shopping has become a job for a specialist in the use of various kinds of peculiar stamps. That big, thick, tender, juicy steak has become that small, thin, tough, dry steak super-charged with vitamins.

Even though it is different we would not complain about our war time way of living. The boys out in the Atlantic and in the Air over Europe have done such a

good job that coffee filled bottoms are moving in from South America. Now we can have that good second cup. It is rumored too that sugar and chocolate will soon be increased to industrial users so that there will be a few more candy bars and chocolate cakes.

We have always accepted cleanliness and courteous service in public eating places as a typical Americanism without ever realizing that some one was responsible for it. Now with soda fountains so filthy that one hesitates to drink and with service not far from impudence one begins to realize that cleanliness and courtesness along with a great many other fine things left our communities with our young men and women.

We have followed the fine campaign in Sicily with great personal interest knowing that some of you were taking part in it. Bill Chapman has already addressed a letter to the Class from Sicily in which he has indicated that he was at the Beach Party at Gela.<sup>7</sup> We congratulate those of you who were a part of that fine Campaign which must leave no doubt in the minds of our enemies as to our plans for their future.

There has been no noticeable change on the home front. We are still trying, each in his own way, to do as much as we can toward winning the war. News dispatches have been carrying accounts of the B-29 so it can certainly do no harm to say that we all feel a little bit nearer participation when we hear the roar of those motors. The Community Chest has already started its Fall Campaign and a very large share of the funds raised this year are for the benefit of those who are in the Service. Next month comes the New and Bigger Bond Drive which should provide some of the funds for new and bigger equipment. September 15 is also a date to remember for those of us who are in business but not on a salary. On that date we begin to pay bigger taxes on a brand new basis. This war is a very complex business. When the pipe organ first came into use there was a boy down in the cellar or in the back room whose job it was to man the bellows which supplied air which in turn caused each pipe to toot the proper note when the organist pressed the keys. John Q. Public finds himself in the position of the bellows boy today. With each sour note of which there are bound to be a few, the organist points to the bellows boy even though the pressure gauge shows that he is delivering the goods. The truth is that most folks are doing their best to put on a good performance. Your folks at home are proud of your achievements. Let no one shake your faith in them.

7. It was at Gela that the U.S. First Infantry Division invaded Sicily.

## NEWELLETTER NUMBER NINETEEN

September, 1943

Dear Gang:

One of the questions which seems to be uppermost in the minds of Service Men is musically expressed in the words of that old song, "Where do we go from here, boys? Where do we go from here?" Experience soon teaches that it is the better part of valour to keep silent on that tantalizing question and so every man becomes a detective in his own right. Special significance is read into everything which he sees and hears from the cut of the Major's hair to the tremble in the Shavetail's voice. The thing which brings on the greatest wave of speculation is the issuance of certain articles of wearing apparel. Many a private has, in his own mind, been transferred half way around the world on evidence no stronger than a pair of tropical shorts. A few weeks ago it was rumored

that a certain soldier had been issued a winter overcoat; and sure enough, he has landed at a place which he describes as being mighty cold. His wife, who can also figure a few things out for herself, suspects that he is either in Alaska or in Iceland. It just goes to show you how military secrets stay military secrets.

We mortals wear our Virtues very much like we wear our clothes and in spite of the efforts of Philosophers and Teachers to outfit us in an ensemble of virtuousness suitable for all times and all places, the outfit which we have been issued sometimes indicates just where we are going. When many of you left for Camp we had almost discarded an outfit which featured as the greatest possible good the killing of baby pigs, the plowing under of crops, unrestrained spending, and the profitable employment of leisure. The regimentals of virtue which you now wear feature discipline, skill in the use



*Carpenter recounted his experience as best man at the wedding of Reta and Ralph "Buck" Schaude. Front row: Mona Wallingford Cunningham, Reta and Ralph Schaude, Carpenter. Second row: J. Alton Bayless, Everett Wood, the Rev. Asa J. Ferry, J. Arthur Freeman.*

of weapons and equipment, physical fitness and that famous G I personal appearance. The Civilian has put on his livery of War Virtues and here and there the suit is beginning to be a little tight and uncomfortable, even as your own. What are the War Time Virtues? They are Productivity, Conservation, and Thrift. Whereas, only a few years ago it was Virtuous to raise small crops, to work short hours, and to spend lavishly, it is now little short of criminal to fail to produce all that one is capable of producing, to fail to make anything last as long as possible, or to spend more than is necessary except for taxes and bonds. From today's Virtues which we are wearing like the working clothes of the laborer at his bench, it is very apparent that we are at war. Some day in a store a salesman will once more turn on all of his selling power to persuade a prospect to buy his goods. When that happens it will indicate that styles in Virtues have changed and we shall again speculate upon the problem of whitherbound. Perhaps we shall actually be clothing our Souls in the Christian Virtues of Peace.

Your folks at home have experienced a few very anxious days this month while some of you were on the beach at Salerno.<sup>8</sup> Of course, there was never a moment's doubt that the job would finally be done. We have reason every day to be proud of all of the branches of the Army and Navy. It is marvelous to realize that during all of the years of peace and peacemindedness the spark of military genius could have been preserved ready to burst forth into such a bright flame in so short a time. And it is marvelous to consider too, that men and women like yourselves could in such a short time become such a powerful force all over the World. We also have been watching anxiously the progress in the Pacific where success comes a yard at a time, realizing more and more that the price of Victory is the same the World over.

Several times Uncle Sam has amazed us by his wonderful mail deliveries. This time our hat is really off to the old gent. Replies to the August letter were received yesterday from Lee Carter<sup>9</sup> who is in the South Pacific and from Bob Richey who is in Alaska. My letter went out as regular first class mail. Lee's letter came V-Mail and Bob's came Air Mail. As Lum and Abner<sup>10</sup> would say, "Small World!"

8. It was at Salerno that American and British forces invaded Italy. Four days after the landing, the Germans made a major thrust against them. The Allies held their beachhead.

9. Before entering military service, Lee Carter worked for the First National Bank in Wichita. After the war, he moved to California, and no whereabouts has been found.

10. "Lum and Abner" was a popular radio program.

#### THE LESSER WAR POET'S DEPARTMENT OF FREE VERSE

Some day when you are hiding in a hole like the foxes dig,

Only not so deep and not so big,

With not a thing in the world to worry about

Except putting the punks who are shooting at you to rout,

The guy at home coming in on the rim

Would like to have you think of him.

I guess that it was General Sherman who said

That no tire at all is better than a retread

Because, then one would stay at home

Instead of being tempted to roam

Here and there in search of oil

Which might mess up some farmer's soil

And indirectly perhaps

Do away with a few Germans and Japs.

Anyway, it's hard to imagine anything more pathetic

Than a guy with a flat and no spare, not even synthetic.

And so, if you have a fox hole to weep in,

Weep for the guy who has to creep in

On the rim.

I'm him.

#### NEWELLETTER NUMBER TWENTY

October, 1943

Dear Gang:

It may be hard for some of you to visualize an October Saturday afternoon without a procession of cars speeding toward Wichita U.; the milling of the fans as they find their seats; the splash of color which comes from the student bleachers; the punts and the passes as the teams warm up; The Star Spangled Banner; the blast of the starter's whistle; the kick-off; the spills and the thrills of the game; the teams streaming and steaming from the field at the half; the R.O.T.C. Band; the shot which dashes the hopes of some and halts the suspense of others as it ends the game; the customers leaving the stadium like chickens scurrying in out of the rain; and the fancy side stepping of the pedestrians and the honking of the impatient drivers as each tries to get away first to avoid the traffic jam. To the chance couple strolling by the stadium ten minutes after the game it is an arena of emptiness flanked by its hundreds of vacant seats shockingly eloquent in their stillness. And that is the way the stadium at Wichita U. looks these beautiful Saturday afternoons which have about them the very feel of football. On the north end of the Campus there is the excavation for the new stadium, its sides grown up with weeds and its one unfinished section of bleachers, a symbol of unfinished business on the American scene.



*The Wichita Canteen in Union Station, sponsored by the Soroptimist Club, offered military personnel a little "home away from home."*

It forcefully reminds us that for the present there is more urgent work to be done.

In spite of the fact that there is no football at Wichita U.<sup>11</sup> October is still Beautiful October in Kansas and the Old Home Town is not without seasonal activities. The World Series took its place as a minor event in the lives of folks who used to stand in front of the Eagle and Beacon score boards until the last ball was pitched.<sup>12</sup> A few radios were to be heard in offices but most folks seemed to be content to read about it in their evening papers. The failure of the Cards to hit their stride may have had something to do with it.<sup>13</sup>

Bill Floto is taking advantage of the increased population and the decrease in the number and variety of things for which money can be spent to bring lots of

shows to town at increased prices. We have had Tito Guizar and Sigmund Romberg at the Forum already this month. Tito is said to have played a splendid program to a small house. Romberg presented a program which he said was too highbrow for a jazz band and too lowbrow for a Symphony Orchestra. Those who went expecting to hear the First Movement of the Bull in The China Closet from Confusion by De Blunderbussee were delighted to hear instead selections from Blossom Time and The Student Prince.

The Forum was also the scene of The National Horse Show. The announcer explained that it was the horse in each case which was being judged but it did seem a bit strange that horses carrying nice looking females, well seated, seemed to have a better chance to win the blue ribbon. The Fat Stock show of the Four-H Club was running at the same time with its usual parade of wide-awake, clean cut, and ambitious young farmers to which the stock which they so proudly display seems to be incidental.

The girls and boys of Boeing have sponsored a Rodeo which has been holding forth here for the past three days. The feature of the Rodeo was not the calf roping but the judging of the beards which have been sprouting upon a host of contestants for several weeks, with the result that there has been more than a sprinkling of hard looking hombres upon the streets lately.

11. The only year Wichita University did not play football was 1943.

12. When the *Wichita Eagle* purchased the *Wichita Beacon* in 1960, ending an eighty-eight year rivalry, the *Eagle* published morning, evening, and Sunday editions, and the *Beacon* published evening and Sunday editions. In 1980 the surviving morning *Eagle* and evening *Beacon* were merged to form the *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, a morning and Sunday newspaper.

13. The St. Louis Cardinals were the local favorites in the World Series, and unlike 1942 when the Cards defeated the New York Yankees four games to one, in 1943 the Yankees defeated the Cards four games to one. In 1944 the Cards made a comeback, defeating the St. Louis Browns four games to two.





As part of one of the war bond drives this booth was set up in the Beech plant.

The Newell Class candidate was Ed Keening<sup>14</sup> whose normally handsome countenance looked very much like the business end of a carpet sweeper.

Yesterday the Junior Chamber of Commerce put on a Jalopy Parade for the purpose of stimulating the scrap drive. Ft. Riley sent an expedition consisting of men, jeeps, peeps,<sup>15</sup> armored cars, half tracks, guns of several shapes and sizes, and a band. The Wichita U. Aviation Cadet Unit marched. There were cars of ancient vintage in various stages of deterioration from those barely able to be towed, to those which were hauled in pieces. High School Students swarmed over the wrecks like bees in a field of clover. Airplanes to an advertised number of five hundred, which by actual count proved to be thirty-one, droned overhead. Both Sunday papers herald the parade a huge success. Although the figures are not all in it can be safely estimated that enough gasoline, rubber, and productive man-hours were consumed to keep an average arm chair strategist in sure knock fuel for several years. It was the largest crowd which has assembled in Wichita to witness any event since the Beacon reported that three hundred thousand souls had

witnessed their colossal Santa Claus Parade of several years ago.<sup>16</sup>

October has not been without activities of a social and mildly scientific nature. For no one knows how long there has been a lot of speculation concerning the conversation which the pitcher has with the catcher. To this day the mystery remains unsolved. Have you ever wondered what the guests say to the best man as they greet him in the receiving line after the wedding? Do they say, "You made such a sweet best man.," "Your train was a little short where it crossed the veil.," or "Nice fumbling with the ring, Old Man." The opportunity to discover the answer once and for all came when Reta and Buck honored the old Sunday School Teacher by inviting him to be best man at their October 1st wedding. Reta was beautiful and Buck was handsome and glowing with pride. He weathered the ceremony without the assistance of the best man. The wedding was over and the time for research had arrived. The wedding party assembled to receive the guests. There at the end stood the best man. The question was at last to be answered. What do you think they said? They said, "Oh, Mrs. Carpenter, look at the lipstick on Mr. Carpenter's face!" Perhaps Don [Carpenter] summed the whole matter up when he said, "Well, Buck is now Mr. Schaude."<sup>17</sup>

14. Ed Keening (1909- ) is retired from Boeing in Bella Vista, Arkansas.

15. One of the results of wars is new words: "jeep" and "peep" are examples. Jeep became a permanent addition to language; peep was quickly forgotten. A peep was a jeep-like vehicle that was, depending on the source, either larger or smaller than a jeep.

16. The *Beacon's* figure probably should not be trusted.

17. Reta, the widow of Buck Schaude, is retired from Innes and Macy's where she was secretary to Walter Innes and his successors. She is a member of First Presbyterian Church.

## NEWLETTER NUMBER TWENTY ONE

November, 1943

Dear Gang:

Our greatest concern since the last letter has been for Bill Chapman. First came word from the War Dept. to his Mother that he had been seriously wounded October 7. Then came a letter from Bill himself, addressed to the Class, which was reassuring and which promised the particulars soon. Willa<sup>18</sup> has just phoned to say that another letter has been received in which Bill writes in fine spirits. We who are at home have not been kidding ourselves. We know that where Wars are fought people are sure to get hurt. Even thus prepared, we were all shocked to have the finger of cruel reality point to Bill. You should have heard the smiles of joy and relief

18. Willa Raymond (1909- ) is a retired secretary who has lived since 1979 in Texarkana, Arkansas. For the autobiographical writings of her grandfather Elbert Olin Raymond, see Robert S. Raymond, ed., "Prairie Preacher," *Kansas History* 4 (Autumn 1981): 191-210.

when Willa announced in Class a week ago that she had a letter from Bill Chapman which she wanted to read. It just goes to prove once more that you can't keep a good man down.

A job of searching for oil which commenced in Ness County last July has been concluded with the drilling of a well and the discovery of a still undetermined amount of the elusive black liquid which greases and turns the wheels of War and Peace. For almost six months we have been in a position to appreciate the changing moods of Western Kansas. Just now there is over everything that barren appearance which must have moved early explorers to include Western Kansas in the Great American Desert. The combines are rusting in the barnyards and the sometimes too chill Autumn winds are like a cool soft hand upon the feverish brow of Summer. Brown is the color which best becomes Western Kansas at this time of year—the earth is brown, the pastures are brown, the trees are brown, and even the man made fence posts, telephone poles, houses and



Along with his description of the Christmas season, Carpenter included his own frustrations with shopping for the holidays.

barns, are brown. Who would suspect that this dull brown land is filled with surprises?

The darkness which is blackest just before dawn gives way to the rose of the sunrise which is reflected on the eastern mackerel sky. The blanket of the night's fog has lifted leaving the steel derrick and lines covered with long white hoar frost. An early morning passenger train roars across the prairie dragging its long white plume behind it.

Even the sparse wildlife of Western Kansas puts on a real show in the Fall. Flocks of crows flap and scream over the feed lots. A hawk sits majestically upon a fence post; another floats high in the sky; still another attempts to fly away with the carcass of a jack rabbit upon which he has been working. A beautiful ring neck pheasant struts out into the road with his four wives. A few miles up the road another treats his family to breakfast among the row crops. Neither the skunk nor the opossum seems to be able to escape the night driver. A driller tells of the coyote which he shot from his car. Not a buffalo in sight!

#### NEWLETTER NUMBER TWENTY TWO

December, 1943

Dear Gang:

Says the Prophet, "And the selfsame well from which your laughter rises, was oftentime filled with your tears." By the same token the jester's mask oftentime hides the soul of a saint and our most serious moments may be but the counterpart of our moments of folly. Therein lies the explanation of and some justification for the hectic days just before Christmas. This has been the screwiest pre-Christmas season of all.

The first indication of seasonal insanity came early in September when a few of the stores placed Christmas decorations in their windows and displayed gifts for soldiers overseas. There were silk unmentionables, fur lined bedroom slippers, red, white and blue pajamas, and synthetic Christmas trees which played White Christmas when dropped in a glass of water. Window shoppers gave generous and good humored patronage to these attractive displays, but it was not until the day before the October 15 deadline for mailing gifts to our absentee voters that the cash register began to toll the knell of parting pay.

Then came the display of gifts suitable for our sailors on the high seas. More windows were bedecked with holly paper and galloping reindeer. A brand new stock of appropriate gifts was displayed. There were golf clubs, skis, grand pianos, and permanent wave machines. Again there was the last minute rush of shoppers as the foolish virgins finally awakened to the fact that the oil for their lamps had been rationed.

It was October 31 and the News Papers let it be known by permission of the OWI [Office of War Information] that there were only forty-seven more shopping days until Christmas. John Q. Public, that yehudi<sup>19</sup> of the air waves who is always referred to as "certain selfish heartless and ungrateful interests," having by now become used to "being prepared," assumed that wonderful-if-true-but-I-don't-believe-a-word-of-it attitude. And as usual the report was greatly exaggerated because the same story was repeated in the papers every day and the estimated number of shopping days grew less and less as Christmas approached.

In spite of public lethargy and apathy and other such reactions there was definitely something in the air. It could have been smoke. We have had several very bad fires. Wichita is not like it used to be when Dick Wellman<sup>20</sup> was in the business of preventing fires for us. There was The Central Christian Church which was thoroughly damaged by fire early one morning.<sup>21</sup> Then there was the Downtown Studio of Wichita University which was also gutted by a break of day fire. Next came the Jenkins Music Company. All three were serious fires with only Jenkins able to recover in time for a pre-Christmas sale.

At Broadway and Douglas it is sand which is in the air. The Union National Bank Building is being sand-blasted.<sup>22</sup> It is rumored that the building is to be water-proofed. The next statement of the bank will doubtless show plenty of liquid assets. Those men gathered around the Salvation Army bell ringer are not contributors as one might suspect. They are attorneys waiting hopefully for a grain of sand to damage irreparably the wide open optic of some frantic Christmas shopper.

19. While "Yehudi" is a nonderogatory word meaning a Jew, "yehudi" is a bit of 1940s slang meaning an invisible person or force, as in the expression, "yehudi did it." It was most likely originated by Jerry Colonna of Bob Hope's radio troupe. Interestingly, the word was so short-lived that it has been overlooked by dictionaries of slang. Carpenter states that he here meant that John Q. Public was constantly referred to on radio as a person having "certain selfish, heartless, and ungrateful interests."

20. Before entering military service, Dick Wellman worked for the Kansas Inspection Bureau, now the Insurance Services Office, which sets fire insurance rates for commercial property.

21. Central Christian Church was located at Second and Market. Because of wartime restrictions and postwar material shortages, its new building at Market and Central was not completed until 1948. In 1980 it withdrew from the Disciples of Christ denomination and relocated to 2900 N. Rock. Those members who wished to maintain denominational ties then purchased the old church and formed First Christian Church.

22. In 1956 the Union National Bank moved to a new building at Main and First.

Christmas is in the air. Every third pair of slacks is projecting from the lower end of a fur coat and the fur coat is carefully pushing a baby carriage filled not with bundles of love, but just bundles. What bundles! Ladies hand bags, steamer trunk size, at from thirty-five to one hundred twenty-five dollars. This is not the inflation which you have been hearing about—this is just a little bit of sharp marketing versus dumb buying. A toy automobile made from plywood and dowels, with wooden wheels priced at twenty-nine dollars; a plywood scooter priced at four ninety-five (anybody seen Jim Garver?)<sup>23</sup> one pound of chocolates to the customer, no

light bulbs for tree lights, no nail files, no scissors, no nail clips. It was cleverly reported that there would be a shortage of Christmas trees. Then a few came on the market at prices like four fifty for a six foot tree. They sold like hot cakes. It developed that there was finally a normal amount of trees at normal prices.

There was quite a smell in the perfume market. The new brands were very odoriferous. There was for instance, *A Night in Valley Center*, and *My Wrongdoing*, to mention only two. It all goes to show that the skunk was right when he said, "The trouble is, a scent just won't go as far as it used to." [KH]

23. Jim Garver (1919- ), an alumnus of the young people's department, is a banker at Severy. Carpenter's inside joke refers to the fact that while a student, Garver worked in the Innes toy department.