

Wa, Ponape
January 12, '51

My dear Mom, Pop, & Kids,

Today is a beautiful day - bright but not too hot with a stiff breeze blowing. Chet has gone to a funeral this afternoon & will go out into Kolonia after it & come back tomorrow.

It is the kind of a day that makes me want to do something - but I'm not sure just what.

If we were in Honolulu I think I would get some Chinese food & take it to the beach - here there really isn't too much to do in the way of amusement.

This afternoon I could mend, or grade papers,

or write letters but frankly, none of these occupations appeal to me. I'll try writing letters for awhile. I suppose I could also study

Ponapean or work on translating a hymn which a group here at Wa wants me to teach them. Michael is awake now & is trying to

cut out pictures & paste so is quite a distraction. Soon I expect Merrill will wake up too & then I won't have to decide what to do - they will decide for me. They have to go on a walk with some food & have a "picnic" so if I can find anything suitable to eat maybe will go on a ~~big~~ picnic. The boat has any bread

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Today as I haven't baked anything today or yesterday I haven't tried yeast bread yet as I never seem to have time to get started on it far enough in advance. I did bake corn bread, & a date bread this week. That will probably have a couple of loaves when he comes back tomorrow if they have it in Kalouia.

We have certainly enjoyed the things you sent in the food line. We have especially enjoyed the marshmallows. The kids like the Cocomalt etc. & what a difference it makes in the way they drink canned milk. Of course we ate the fruit cake in a hurry. But store here just got raisins in but we appreciate the ones you sent anyway as we hadn't had any in a long time. The Kalaid was very welcome. I will have to write Howard and thank him for the stuff you said was from him.

Jan. 14 - Sunday P.M.

Before me I have a list of 17 letters which I ^{as I} must write so this one will not be as long as I would like it to be. This list does not include all the various members of the Arpstra family who sent us nice presents & to whom I should write. Nor does it include a bunch of other back letters which I have been meaning to

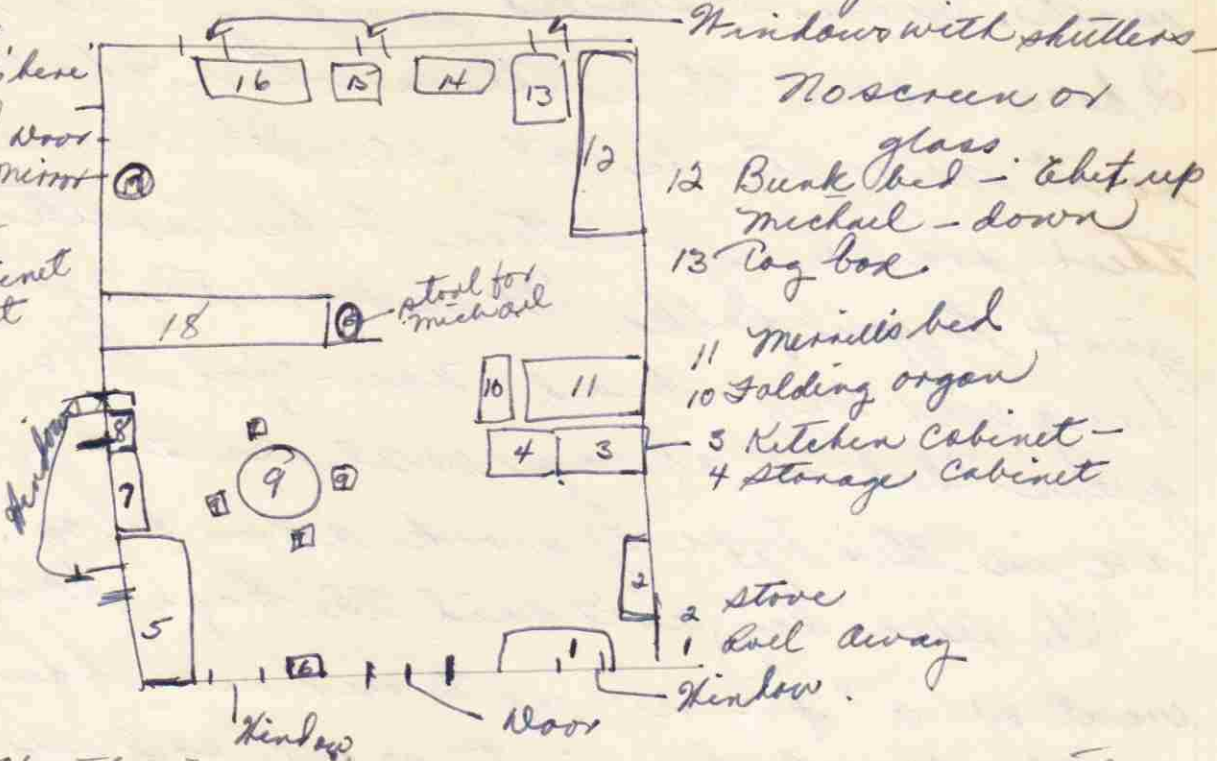
1. Since I started writing this paragraph
 & added three others which I had forgotten
 so it now stands at 20. It seems like
 these are always letters to be written & not
 just to you folks. It is something which has
 hung over my head now for 5 1/2 years & I
 guess that it always will as long as we
 are in this type of work so far away.

The other day, as I said the boys got up, & we
 went on a "picnic" up to our new house. Our
 big treat out here is to go out and see how the
 house is coming along. We think now that
 we will get in it around Feb. 1st. We shall see!
 However, our life here last week was the
 best it has been since we started living in this
 room. I came back determined that with
 the Lord's help I was going to try to make the
 best of this situation. I worked at getting things
 cleaned up & strengthened around & tried to
 have better meals with baked things etc. We
 miss the refrigerator here - & the stove when
 we are in Kalonia. Best room here is

19' x 23' & we have it fixed up as we
 say into a "four room apartment". Really
 it is much better than some missionaries
 have for years I am sure. I thought that
 you might be interested in knowing a bit

More about it. Here is our arrangement.

- 14 - 2 pint cases out.
- 15 - Chest of drawers here
- 16. Box used as stand for wash pan, soap, mirror
- 17 Chemical toilet
- 18 Large wooden cabinet we use for a closet
- 9. Table & 4 chairs
- 8 Filing cabinet
- 7 Small desk
- 5 - Iron cot where I sleep.
- 6 - Chair -



Along with the items I have marked we have other things such as projector, screen, mimeograph, roll of bromium in a box, a large mirror in a crate sewing machine typewriter etc. etc. which take up some of the blank spaces. Well it can be ~~done~~ done - living in one room that is.

Michael & Merrill like it here at Oa - Today Michael said that he liked Oa better than Kolonia & I think that he does. It is like living in the country (which of course it is) lots of space, pigs & chickens. We are really very fond of our chickens. I don't think that I'd ever want to live again where I couldn't have chickens. He killed 4 today.

& I made tsukiyaki for the students. You should see Michael & our dogs chase the pigs. Maybe I mentioned it before.

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It is really funny. Her two puppies are awfully cute dogs - both about the color of Michael's hair & the 4 of them make some pals! Really we beg are darling & how I wish that you could be enjoying them. Michael is a very handsome little boy & say the cutest things. Today we got caught in some rain & Michael wanted to know if "Jesus got wet" then he said that he was "going to go up & tell Jesus to turn off the rain." He picks up all the songs which we teach the students but of course doesn't sing them perfectly. Right now he is still singing "O Come All Ye Faithful" quite often. Merrill's favorite of the moment is "Do Lord." I think of you, mom, when he sings it. He is real cute on "do Lord, o do Lord" - but "remember me" faults him pretty much so he goes on to "do Lord" again. Really Merrill is the most lovable little guy. It is hard to believe that he is over 2 1/2 yrs. He is still soft, & babylike in so many ways & rather short but he tries to be so big & tough that it is a joke. He goes around saying "bang-bang" & putting up his fists to fight. He can play hide & go seek real well & talks real cute. He

really just started talking this fall but now
he can say just about what he wants. His voice
is different than Michael's - sort of sweet &
babyish - Michael's voice is lower husky.

Merrill is still much lighter than Michael but
they make a darling pair. The other day they wanted
to see Chet at the house & I didn't want to go
so Michael said that he was a big brother & would
take Merrill. Since Michael has come home
from there several times alone I thought that
they would make it. The distance is about

equivalent to 7 blocks but there are no
streets or cars & the path doesn't go by the
water so they set out. Hand in hand they
went one of the cutest sights I've seen lately.
Chet said that he saw the 2 dogs at the
house so he thought I must be coming. Then
about 5 minutes later 2 dogs appeared. Chet
asked "where's mama?" - "oh she stayed
at home & we came along - I the big
"buddie" was Michael's reply. Well, now,
don't try to tell me that boys aren't as cute
as girls - I'm liable to fight about it.
At the S.S. program at Halls I thought my

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boys looked cuter than all the girls. However, I
must admit that the girls did better. Although
Michael knew his part & went up, held his
card & gave some indication of going to be a
success where his turn came he cried. It
was stage fright you could tell just by the way
he looked. He said that there were too many
people there. Really there weren't many at
all but he doesn't know the people well like the
rest of the kids do. Oh well at least he isn't
a show off!

I haven't told you much of anything yet
about our Christmas but it is after 10^{p.m.} now
and we get up at 6^{am} or before so I can't
say too much more tonight. Beth & Alice
& us paid for half a turkey (they come in
halves) John & I each cleaned a half & I stewed
it together while he held it together. Alice
fixed the dressing & stuffed it. I baked
two pumpkin pies - she one mine. This
we did Christmas Eve. The last time I
left there place it was 10:30. Beth had
been at a church service until about 10 -
The service went on until about 12 but

he did his talking & broke away around 11^{PM}.
or so that I opened our presents. We went to
bed sometime around 10^{PM}. We had to get
the kid's stuff all opened by 9^{AM} as there was
another service from 9-12. As Merrill was
sick I didn't get to either of the services. I
fixed the 2 kinds of potatoes; vegetables, ^{spinach salad} & supplied
cranberry sauce (canned) olives, & whipped
cream. Alice made delicious rolls so you
can see that we had a perfectly standard
Christmas dinner. Alice maybe leaving any
time now as the Navy starts to leave Jan. 20.
By July all the Navy should be gone & the Interior
Dept. will have taken over. We will miss
the friends we have made & hope that some
who come in will be suitable friends.

Really Christmas here was a tremendous
job. Whit put up over 600 gifts for SS.
children, deacons, SS. Teachers, & native pastors.
Of course, he had help & they were gift wrapped
etc. but it was a job. I worked hard on the
program & with the dinner etc. Merrill
sick & all it wasn't our best Christmas. Next
year (D.V.) I think that we will be settled etc & have
a nice time. Love, Marge