

July 25, 1945  
Portland, 1, Oregon.

Dear Mrs. Grinnell:

I am sorry I have not written to you before. It has taken me a long time to decide. Writing has always been a somewhat difficult task for me and this time it is especially so, but I feel that I want to tell you about some of the things we did together and how I feel about Carroll.

I went into the camp on January 6 and picked out a sleeping space in what later became Room 32, in the main building. In the following few days and nights confusion reigned. We didn't worry because they had told us that we would be released soon. Some of the fellows had been able to get folding cots, mosquito nets and blankets. Others less fortunate still slept on the concrete floor; yet in two days the 40 men and boys thrown together into that single room, and all of the other people from all walks of life who had been rushed into the camp, had already begun to form together into a united whole.

About 8; p.m. on the evening of January 8 a fellow came into our room looking for a place to sleep. He had been refused in several other rooms because they, too, were already crowded beyond belief. He had no baggage, not even a tooth brush, wore a dirty white shirt and dirtier white trousers streaked with mud and grease, and by the looks of him hadn't shaved or washed his face for a week. On top of that the poor guy was obviously suffering from a severe cold. Our newly elected room monitor, Dr. Barker H Brown of the University of the Philippines, asked the room in general "Have we any more room boys?" a few dissented but the majority came back with "Sure, bring him in, we'll fix him up somewhere if he doesn't mind another guy's feet in his face!" and like welcomes. So Carroll started life in the camp. We were able to get him a cot and a net. Someone contributed soap and a towel and someone else dug out a couple of aspirins. No one knew who he was, or cared very much. Even the General Electric rented their offices from us in Port Area, the name meant nothing to me as my part in the Luzon Brokerage Co. had always been the transportation and building maintenance and I hadn't met many of our tenants.

I first became really acquainted with Carroll a few days later when I was sitting in the hall outside our room eating a piece of dried bread and drinking my last can of milk. We had not yet set up our central kitchen to feed the camp and many of those who brought no food, on the advice of the Nips, were beginning to suffer from hunger. One of Carroll's friends outside camp had sent him in a basket of food and he was sharing it with one of the other fellows in our room when he noticed me. I must have had an awfully hungry look on my face because he invited me to join them. We soon became fast friends and exchanged confidences, experiences and tales of our home lives. He never tired of talking about you and the boys, and whenever he felt particularly low after a trying day he often dug out your photos and showed them to us and talked about the things you used to do.

I told him about the time I went to your house just before you left to bring one of our Jap packers, and how the Jap wrapped up one of your Satsuma bowls and offered to drop it on the floor to show you how well it was made. Perhaps you will remember me by that incident. Forrest Meyers had sent me out especially to see that your things would be taken care of properly.

It took Carroll some time to get over his cold; he told me he had caught it while working with the Army. He had gone to the Ordnance depot just before the troops pulled out of Manila, to see about some G.E. lights they had, and when he got there it soon became apparent to him that the boys were going places but were terribly short of manpower so he peeled off his coat and helped load trucks, clean guns, and do many of the dirty jobs that needed doing. That's how he got covered with grease. He stayed right on the job until the Army had all left.

It soon became apparent that we were not going to be released, as promised, so we started organizing the camp. I took on the job of sanitation on our floor, which meant cleaning the toilets, dumping the garbage, and educating the people in the ways of emergency sanitation, while Carroll, due to his ill health, took a light duty job as night watchman.

Later, when four men escaped, and three were recaptured and executed, the Nips informed us that in the future if any person escaped, his monitors, both room and floor, would be executed also. Of course this resulted in wholesale resignations, and as the job of floor monitor was considered pretty important inasmuch as the floor monitor was the chief means of communication between our committee and the internees, I felt that something should be done, so I volunteered for the job along with my other duties.

I think that pleased Carroll very much, which, in turn, made me feel good. We had become better friends as time went on and I soon came to realize that here was a man worth knowing. As big a man as he was, he never let his position or standing influence him in his treatment of the smaller people.

When our floor representative of the Release Committee resigned, I asked Carroll to take the job. He accepted, and when I submitted his name to our monitors' council as candidate, was elected. Later when floor representatives were abolished it just seemed natural for him to become a member of the regular committee, and was soon elected chairman. He was the sort of super-salesman that could talk the Nips out of almost anything, and his success in securing releases, medical and otherwise, were astounding. His popularity gained, and when the time came to elect a new Executive Committee, I, being on the nominating committee, submitted his name. He was nominated and elected and he was elected chairman. When the Nips abolished the seven man Executive Committee and appointed a three man Internee Committee, he was again appointed chairman.

During the time Carroll was on the two committees we worked together on many things. He championed my Emergency Organization, and above the protests of other committee members, made it a legal and operating body, and when I submitted lists of supplies to be purchased and held in reserve, he procured the necessary funds for many of the items himself. Once when I questioned him about how he expected to pay back all the money he was borrowing, both for the camp and for individuals, he answered "Jim, let's not worry about that now. The lives and health of these people mean much more than a few dollars. I am sure my government and my company will back me as far as I care to go. This is a time when we must all do as much as we can." He was the same way all the time. He seldom took into consideration his own well being and health, and times without number I or Eva Davis, his secretary, or Monnie Robb, who also helped take care of him, had to practically force him to stop work long enough to eat.

I had some terrible arguments and near fights with Carroll about various things. I very often accused him of being too slow, too conservative. Sometimes he would bring problems home and we'd discuss them at length and in detail. He always insisted on trying to find out what the public thought about a proposed plan or measure. I contended that he should go ahead and do what he thought best and let the public scream afterwards if they wanted to. A democracy is all right, but not in an internment camp, under the enemy. It just doesn't work. People have to be told what to do for their own good. Sometimes I was right in our arguments, but more often he was. He once told me "Jim, you would be almost perfect if you didn't get mad". He got mad many times but he didn't let the other fellow know it. That was one of the reasons he was so successful, and I have since profited by his example.

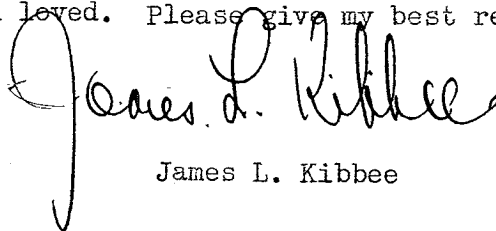
After we had lived together for quite a while in room 32, and Carroll had become a figure in camp politics, he was invited to move to a room whose occupants considered themselves a little above the rest of the camp (and some even thought they were too good to work), but Carroll told Arthur Evans, the room monitor, "Arthur, I am perfectly comfortable where I am. These birds took me in when others refused, gave me a bed, took care

me when I was sick and no questions asked. I don't see why I should move now." Needless to say, Carroll's stock with us went up about 1000 percent after we heard of that conversation.

Our room was finally broken up when the nurses from Corregidor and Bataan were brought into camp. We had assumed that they would be treated as internees because they were brought to us, so one of my last official acts as 2nd floor monitor was to talk the men of 3 rooms on our floor and 2 rooms on the 3rd floor into moving en masse to the gymnasium to make room for the girls. The women of the camp volunteered at once and began an orgy of de-bedbugging, scrubbing and polishing, the like of which had not been seen before, or after, in the history of the camp. They donated beds, mattresses, pillows and even pillowcases and sheets/ They arranged flowers in each room, gave their personal mirrors and brooms. And then the Nips spoiled the whole thing by placing the nurses in a small building just across the street from the camp and hold them incommunicado.

However, that worked to our advantage in the end. Carroll and his committee had been working for months trying to get additional space for the camp, with their eyes on this place in particular to use as a camp hospital, and having the nurses placed there gave him the opening wedge they needed. We found that the Nips intended to use the Army nurses in their own hospitals to care for Jap wounded and sick, but the concerted pressure of the committee, headed by Carroll, averted this disaster and the nurses were finally turned over to us, after we had built a fancy high board fence connecting their grounds with the camp proper. Then Carroll was able to get permission to use the building as a hospital after we had moved the nurses to other quarters. Santa Cataline Hospital, as it became known, developed into the best equipped hospital in Manila, with the exception of X-ray and cancer equipment, purely because of the efforts of Carroll.

Carroll wasn't always a slaving sobersides. He enjoyed a practical joke as well as the rest of us. He nearly had a fit laughing the night we put a stuffed iguana in Stu Barnett's bed, while he and Carroll were playing bridge outside the room; and another time he helped us tie Jim Turner's bed to the ceiling of the room as a just as fitting punishment for all the things Jim had done to us. We had as good times as anyone could have in a place like that; bridge parties, little picnics, occasional movies, and radio plays over our P.A. system. Toward the end we used to go into his blacked-out office and sit for hours talking or sometimes reading and just being together. He showed me a whole file of letters from you and even let me read some of them. He was so proud of you and the work you were doing, and of the boys. I believe I enjoyed reading your letters almost as much as Carroll did. I hadn't had a word from home in all the time we were there and those little peeks into another fellow's family doings cheered me up immensely. If it hadn't been for Carroll's help financially and otherwise, it would have been quite a different story with many of us. I and many others would have gladly done anything in our power to help him at any time, but when the time came that he needed us most, there was not a thing we could do, even tho we would have given our lives for him, as he did for us. My wife and I loved Carroll almost as much as you did, and he was the only person in the camp we counted as a true friend. Indeed his is one of the few friendships I have had in my life that I really value. Mrs. Grinnell, this rather rambling and disjointed letter is not one of consolation; I don't believe in consolations, they are too often shallow expressions of one person fulfilling a fancied obligation to another. I hope you will accept this for just what it is - a little personal story about a grand fellow we both knew and loved. Please give my best regards to your boys and God bless you. Sincerely,



James L. Kibbee

5244 SW Humphrey Blvd.

P.S. There are thousands of details I have left out, not because I have forgotten, but because they would fill a good sized book. I only wanted to tell you a few things about Carroll.