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## Charles Albert Converse Papers, 1939-1940

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November 11, 1939

# Converse, Charles. Letter to Family.

United States. Embassy (Great Britain).

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Nov.11,1939  
Armistice Day

Dearest Dottie and Little Folk,

It seems rather ironical but nevertheless here we are celebrating Armistice Day. The Embassy is closed except for a skeleton staff. I am not on duty but came down early this morning to get this letter off to you by Air Mail. There has been certain conjecture that the Germans might pick today to get really rough but thus far nothing. I noticed walking through the park this morning that the battery was all unlimbered and prepared. However the day is very overcast and I think will rain before it is finished so I don't have any worries along that line. Speaking of rain, we have had a thoroughly miserable week of it and there are lots of colds running around but fortunately I have been spared and have no fear of getting one. I have been using Russell's sun lamp here at the office regularly and I do believe that it has done me lots of good. For a while after you all left my headaches came with renewed intensity but for the past few days they have eased up considerably.

While it is on my mind I would like your advice re the Selfridge bill. I paid the one that you approved with the watch of Tinas added after you approved it. I have just received a new bill from them with the following entries which I am lost to understand: 3 cream soup cups 3/8, 2 tea cups and saucers 2/9, packing and postage 9d., 2 gloves 13/10. Then a charge on Oct. 27, three days after you sailed, 2 hose repaired 1/9, postage 2d. The other ~~xxxx~~ charges listed above were made Oct. 18. I presume they are alright since they were made while you were in London on your short trip but I thought it best to check and satisfy myself since we have found so many errors in their bills. Holland, the butcher, sent a bill along with an entry for steak 2/- Sept 7th. I telephoned them and told them that you had been out of London for two weeks when that charge was made and the flat was closed. I am liquidating the accounts as quickly as possible, so that in case of a transfer, I will be able to leave town with bands playing.

Jeff Revely stayed in town last night and we had supper at Schmidts and then went to the Regal to see Good Girls Go To Paris, a very cute picture. He stayed at the flat with us last night. Ed went down to Maidstone yesterday afternoon for the weekend with ~~xxx~~ an English friend he had known in Formosa. Bob and I are having lunch today at the flat but what we will do with ourselves over the weekend, we have not yet decided. We saw Goodbye Mr Chips the other night and it is a grand picture. You must see it and send the kiddies too. They will love it. They are easing up quite a bit on the blackout restrictions now as they apply to cinemas so that some are allowed to remain open until eleven o'clock. However the Air Raid Wardens have been very strict lately. I suppose the long awaited German drive might be expected to commence at any time now.

You know so very little happens to us here that it is difficult to write a long interesting letter and I was never very good at padding or inserting extraneous details that really make a letter worth reading. We keep extremely busy and the removal of the US Line boats from the North Atlantic hasn't helped any. Our fellow citizens are worried now as to how they will get home and not without good reason too. We have had no instructions as to what is contemplated in order to cope with the situation. Maybe the Panama Flag idea is supposed to answer the question but I am afraid that I don't agree personally. But what is my opinion against thousands, a la Snuzzle Durante.

I haven't been called to the New Bond Co., for a fitting since you left the coats there. Mr Gustavson says that he hasn't been able to get his fitter from the workrooms down in the city is the reason. I don't know what the reason is but I do wish that he would either hurry up and get them ready or give me credit for them and leave me free to buy others. I am pretty ragged. My old faithfuls are getting pretty seedy now. The black doublebreasted I am afraid, can't stand up in its old age to very much heavy office wear. The brown too is going in places particularly in the edge of the trousers. By the way do you remember whether or not there was a small balance left for the cleaning of Sonnie's suit with the cleaner. He put it on my bill.

I know that you will be surprised to hear that Mary decided after all to go back up to Lincoln to work for the man who took over George's house. He seemed extremely anxious to get her and She didn't seem too happy at Winnie's. I spoke to her twice over the phone and she wasn't satisfied. Mary said the house was old and dirty with no modern equipment to work with. She even had to heat old handirons on the gas range with which to do her ironing and she had to do all of the laundry at home. Winnie gave me the impression of not being too clean and when I told Ed that she was dissatisfied he remarked that he didn't blame Mary for not wanting to work for her. Our dear Alice goes on in her usual manner but I do believe that she is trying a bit harder to please us and do her work properly. She has turned out some very decent meals lately. It is much better with just the three of us at the flat. I am so anxious to hear how you all have settled down and what sort of place you have found. Don't forget to take some snaps of the place and of all of you and send them to me.

I am extremely eager to hear from the kiddies and their schooling. What has Laura decided to concentrate on, art music or writing? I suppose all three of them will go to the same school and have the same hours or maybe Puss will get out a little sooner in the afternoon as Jimmie did. It will be fine if you found a place about a mile from school so that they will be able to have a nice walk in the morning before settling down to a desk for the day. I am wondering if there will be a football team for boys of Sonnie's age. Puss and Laura both should play basketball and hockey. It will get them into grand condition. We do a lot of talking about all of the exercise that we are going to take but I am afraid that up to now it hasn't gotten beyond the conversational stage. I do take long walks but I am the only one. Ed amuses me by his chatter. He says that he is going to put on shorts and go for an early morning run in the park each day. I'll believe that when I see it. He continues in his effort to put on more weight in the meantime. I don't think that I have put on any since you all sailed. As a matter of fact I might have lost a pound or so. How do you find everyone at home? We got our ration cards this week but they haven't gone into effect as yet. We will be notified when the amount of surplus in the country demands rationing. The list hasn't as yet been increased, only butter and bacon (including ham) are included.

I have had to spend a great part of this morning writing an informal report of the Emergency from approximately Aug. 26 until Sept. 15 for the Ambassador. I have just finished it and sent it up to his private Secretary who phoned to say that it was just what was wanted. It is funny how events that take place during such a hectic time are so soon erased from your memory. It took lots of jogging to recapture that period. The present is so calm that it has to visualize the 1200 Americans we had rush in on us the day after war was declared. If things would start happening quickly again we would have another bad time of it but it couldn't be as heavy as the last for we have only approximately 4000 citizens left in GB. Quite enough though if things do go sour.

I shall have to send you a draft this next month since the new allotment cannot go into effect until January 1. I promise to get it to you as soon after the first of December as I possibly can. After next month you won't have to worry. You know with the stopping of the US LINE service it makes us look even <sup>stupid</sup> for having sent our families home, doesn't it. If Ed and I had had positive information we couldn't have timed your departure better. We are certainly both relieved that you are safely on the other side for things will most assuredly get progressively worse. Every thing is the same over at the flat. I go over once or twice each week just to be sure. The flat doesn't seem so damp especially considering all of the rain we have had the past few weeks.

Paul and I had supper at Maxims this week and then went to the ----- guess where? Right the first time, The Prince Of Wales and believe it or not it was even poorer than usual which I didn't think possible. The last time that I will go there positively. However there was one good point to be said for it. Gillie Potter was there and as insane as ever with his latest regarding Hogs Norton and the Marshmullows.

I suppose that you have tired by now of reading my chatter and I don't really know anymore news to write. I can take a weeks holiday this month and I believe that I will and just loaf and sleep. I feel that it would do me worlds of good. Will write plans in next installment. Tell all, of the kiddies to write to me and give their reactions to the old USA. Looking forward to getting your first letter this next week. All of my love for you all and take good care of yourselves,

Devotedly,

*Charlie*

*How do you like my typing?*

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