

C O N F I D E N T I A L

2705 S. W. English Court,  
Portland 1, Oregon,  
June 25, 1952.

Hon. James P. Davis, Director,  
Office of Territories,  
U. S. Interior Department,  
Washington 25, D.C.

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Dear Sir:

As nearly as I have been able to find out no seriously ill or death notices were ever sent out from here before my time. Since I came here I have written such letters where in my judgement it was indicated. I believe that several times for some reason I sent copies to your office for your information. I once heard Dr. Thompson make a remark about Keller's free mailing service. This apparently came from Mr. Coe or Miss Hagna since they had to provide the stationary and postage. Originally Miss Hagna placed only three cent stamps on all of my letters. When I received complaints from people in Alaska about the length of time it took my letters to reach them I tried to make an arrangement with her to send any I so designated by air mail. I later found out that she did not always do so. After that I made the rule that all Alaska letters be sent by air mail. I have not had much trouble about that lately. Even Dr. Thompson now tries to suggest to me or remind me to write seriously ill notices when in his opinion one is indicated. These people are like the Russians. They thought about and did everything first. This brings up the question should I continue to write such letters and send them out over my signature and forward copies to your office or should they be written by someone representing the company or hospital?

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June 23, 1952

In the event of a patient's death their routine has been to call the undertaker to come and get the body. They would either write out a list of names and addresses of contacts to be picked up at the same time or give them over the telephone depending on time of day or who was doing it. It was up to the undertaker to do the notifying, request permission for autopsy, and make burial arrangements. This some times took days and weeks. Some times they failed to make any contacts. Eventually, they some times just had to go ahead and bury them. The hospital usually heard nothing more unless consent for autopsy was obtained. The medical student used to do the autopsy if he wanted to. I have arranged for autopsies to be done by a qualified pathologist. I never heard of any special arrangements such as in the case of James Donnelly. Death certificates are furnished by the hospital. I took care of that myself while the hospital was without another unlicensed physician for a while one time. I have several times written letters in addition to what the undertaker was supposed to have done for them when in my judgement there was an indication to do so. In going through the folders of deceased patients I have seen receipted bills for the contract amount from the undertaker. On such statements would also be listed other data as name of cemetery, lot number, etc. I assumed that the undertaker telegraphed, but learned that they some times sent air mail letters instead. I have often wondered about what kind of service they were giving and about Greenwood Cemetery, but hesitated to inquire or investigate because I knew it would not be welcomed. On several occasions during my early experience when I called the undertaker for information of some sort Mr. Caldwell was always put on the line. I always got the impression that they were on the defensive and never felt satisfied. No doubt there were reasons for this. Their own attorney ruled that according to Oregon law I could request autopsies on patients without known relatives. The

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place does not have a good reputation and Mr. Caldwell is a fast talker. In this respect it resembles another place and individual. I visited the place last Monday and the first person I met was Mr. Caldwell. He looked surprised when I introduced myself and promptly rushed me upstairs to his large elegant private office. There he stared at me and waited for me to start talking. I was very casual and told him that I had been wanting to meet him and see his establishment for a long time and had just stopped in as I was passing by. He confirmed that he has had the Morningside contract for a long time and volunteered that he was not making any money on it. He told me that for the past year Mr. Coe has been giving them \$75.00 even though the contract called for \$65.00 after they asked him for more. He spoke very cordially and admiringly about Miss Hagna and Mr. Coe and referred to him as Wayne. He told me that they used a plain casket and burial shroud and provided everything that could be expected for \$65.00 or \$75.00. He confirmed that they used Greenwood Cemetary. With reference to religious services he stated that they were held only when requested and then a preacher would be called in to read a simple prayer. That was on second thought after he had first said no. When asked if anyone from the hospital ever attended the answer was no. He told me that the location of the graves was recorded in the cemetary office. He told me that no markers are placed on the graves because markers are not permitted in that section of the cemetary. He told me that \$297.00 was their lowest cost for a private funeral and did not include cemetary, but only casket and service. He told me that there was all the difference in the world between a contract and a private funeral and that people got only what they paid for. This is about all that I can recall about the conversation. The interview was concluded about as it began and I was ushered out about as fast as I had been ushered in. He did not offer to show me anything. I believe that the VA cancelled a contract with this undertaker one time.

Upon returning to the hospital I looked in the telephone book for the address of the Greenwood Cemetary and found it listed as Greenwood Hill Cemetary. I called there and found out that it was the same and that they took care of Morningside patients. I had a little trouble finding out how to get there. Tuesday afternoon I took a ride over there. It is twelve miles from Morningside Hospital. I found an old neglected cemetary. The caretaker was taking a nap when I arrived. He was surprised and immediately began to apologize for the looks of things. He said he was behind in his work and that the grass and weeds grew faster than he could keep up with. He told me that it was a private cemetary and that he was a stockholder in the corporation. He told me that the Colonial Mortuary brought Morningside Hospital patients there for burial. When asked for the location of the patient's graves he told me that they were quite a distance from where we were, around over there on the other side of a ravine behind some trees. He didn't think that I would care to go that far to see them. I prevailed on him and he reluctantly got into my car and directed me to them. When we got to a remote corner of the sixty acres to where the road turned to come back the graves were still about a block away along the edge of a ravine. He did not want to get out of the car and walk over there on account of the tall wet grass, but we did. There he showed me a row about a half a block long and an adjacent shorter row into which one had to imagine graves. By examining the ground closely under the grass one could find slight depressions in the ground outlining what were supposed to be graves. This was the latest addition of Morningside patients. He pointed out the older addition for Morningside patients on the other side of the ravine which was overgrown with tall grass and weeds. He said that that used to be his potters field, but that he did not have a potters field any more. He complained that he got only \$15.00 for the lot and his services. He said that he had to pay his crew top wages, but I did not see any crew around.

He said that the patients were brought out in a plain brown wooden coffin. He did not know if the coffin was lined or how the patients were dressed because he never looked inside. He said that one driver would bring them out and dump them and he would have to do the rest. (I forgot to ask if they were brought out in a hearse.) He said there were never any religious services or any mourners. He said that they used to save them up and bring them out four and five at a time. I had him take me into his office and show me his records. I recognized many of the names. I looked for James Donnelly's name, but could not find it. Then I asked him about different ones including Donnelly, but he could not find a record of Donnelly either. I'll let you take it from there. That was more or less what happened at the cemetery.

I can hardly say that all is satisfactory and have suspected as much from the beginning. I hope you appreciate the spot I am in and how difficult it is to deal with such people. One cannot begin to look for anything without finding too much. Its all part and parcel of the same thing. Likewise, one cannot begin to tell about or discuss one situation without many others coming up and entering in and the whole thing becoming more involved, complicated, repetitious and worse.

I have been procrastinating about commenting on Mr. Coe's report. It requires such an effort to try to set the record straight after that fellow has written anything. I have developed inhibitions along those lines. I believe you will receive another good report from Dr. Schumacher. I will state that I did not see the report until I asked about it after you wrote about it. It seems that Mr. Coe made it up in Washington from material which Dr. Thompson and Mrs. Mickelson sent to him and had it typed there by a public stenographer. He had sent a copy of it back however, but I was not shown that one. Instead, Mrs. Mickelson typed one up especially for me from which she said that she omitted a lot of unimportant stuff. Apparently, I was not supposed to see their copy as such. They did show one to Dr. Schumacher at his request and permitted him to finger through it. There are many flaws in as much as I have been permitted to see of it, as might be expected. I shall comment on it later, or rather on that part of it which I have. I meant to say soon, rather than later. I believe this covers the high spots. At least, I don't want to be too verbose and circumstantial. Here are two names and addresses I believe you should have. Mr. Worth W. Caldwell, President, Colonial Mortuary, Sandy Blvd., at 14th, Portland 14, and Mr. Kenneth G. Beam, Greenwood Hill Cemetery, 9002 S. W. Boones Ferry Road, Portland, Oregon.

With best wishes and personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

*G. F. Keller*

G. F. Keller, M. D.