

Diaries of General Joseph W. Stilwell (1900–1939, 1945–1946)

Introduction

These diaries of General Joseph W. Stilwell are those remaining in the Stilwell Papers at the Hoover Archives that had not been placed on the Hoover Archives web site. In addition to chronicling his career and activities up to and following World War II, they offer insights into his developing character, as he matured from a twenty-one-year-old second lieutenant, fresh out of West Point, to a mature four-star general officer. They provide evidence of his early passion for exploring and observing different cultures and people and his innate curiosity, which led to an expanding mind and widespread interests. The entries also reveal his keen sense of humor, his ability to assess the character of others, his command of the English language, his artistic abilities, and his warmth for his family.

The diaries were Stilwell's private writings and notes; he never intended others to see them. Some of the language used in the diaries was commonly accepted during the periods in which they were written; it is not appropriate or valid to apply today's standards to it to draw conclusions about Stilwell's character or views. Writing about some of the language and labels in the diaries, Barbara Tuchman, in her book *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, makes the following statement, "Lesser vulgarities he used easily and seemingly without pejorative content."

Often the diaries contain short notes and observations made by Stilwell. Some of those entries he incorporated into the daily entries, some he later crossed out, some were simply meant to remind him of something, and some are so cryptic they make no discernible contribution to the diaries' historical significance. In those cases such entries have not been transcribed. When they are of interest or add to the daily entries, however, they have been incorporated into the transcripts.

The diaries were first transcribed several decades ago, when his widow and a daughter-in-law, Bettye Stilwell, manually typed them. The diaries, along with the rest of Stilwell's papers, were deposited at the Hoover Institution in stages from 1951 on. In 1998, my cousin, Deborah Bunce, began entering the manually typed transcriptions into a computer database. When Richard Sousa (senior associate director) and Linda Bernard (deputy archivist) agreed that the diaries should appear on the Hoover Archives web site, I began proofing the computer database text against the original diaries. Lisa Miller (associate archivist) provided the impetus for the project and coordinated formats, scanning of drawings and maps, and integrating the various elements into the final product. Lisa Nguyen (East Asia curator) transcribed and translated the Chinese characters Stilwell used in the diaries. Russell Rader (digital archivist) and Daniel Jarvis (digitization production specialist) did the scanning of the drawings and maps and the integration.

Principles of Transcription

Stilwell's spelling throughout the diaries was remarkably correct. Distinguishing between his handwritten n's and u's, however, was sometimes difficult, and errors in place names or names of people containing those letters could have made their way into the transcripts. Based on Stilwell's superb spelling elsewhere, then, any such errors must be attributed to the transcriber, not to Stilwell.

In some of the diaries Stilwell included drawings of maps, people, places, and things that interested him. Those drawings have been incorporated into the transcripts, with the exception of partially completed drawings or those not germane to the diaries.

Where Stilwell wrote Chinese characters in the diaries, those characters have been translated using the Wade-Giles convention, which was in use at the time he wrote them.

SYMBOLS USED IN THE TEXT

* Indicates Stilwell's use of military unit designations that have been translated into words because the designators are not reproducible online.

*** Indicates words or sentences redacted. Redactions were made where the words or sentences might negatively affect persons still living or where words or sentences are personal and have no impact on the historical content of the diaries. Redactions were made in the 1935, 1938, and 1946 diaries.

Words written in italics are editorial comments for which explanations were warranted.

Select Bibliography

Haith, Michael E. "Joseph W. Stilwell as Attaché, 1935–1939: Foundations for Command in the CBI." Thesis submitted to the Temple University Graduate Board, April 1985.

Schaller, Michael. *The U.S. Crusade in China, 1938–1945*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.

Tuchman, Barbara. *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911–45*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1970.

-John Easterbrook, 2012

Copyright Statement

Joseph W. Stilwell's diaries are covered by the copyright law of the United States.

Please refer all requests to publish excerpts or quotations to the Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 94305-6010, or to archives@hoover.stanford.edu. Such requests will be forwarded to the Stilwell family, who owns the rights to the diaries.

The Philippines 1911-1912

Black sow at Sulucan with prolapsed rectum. Hung down 8", raw & watering.

Bonifacio & his bride. O' yes got pickaninny. Where? O, not come yet, inside, but (demonstrating) berry big!

P-pot Bill Bowen, and his sapolis order. Turned out all officers at 2 P.M. to go to "L" Co. & see the terrible condition of filth there.

Ducat & his memoranda. "Two drunkin bums made night hideous etc." "The command of ex. is March & not Ouch nor Hurch. – as Der Hump & Gree Umph will not be tolerated."

Ducat a famous amateur scrapper. Was once prominent as a rival of John L. S.

The leaking pig in the Auloaque St. barbercá. Big joke. Barber jumped, patron laughed, woman held pig pointed out the door.

Goog kid burning a rat – over some lighted paper in the street. String around rat's neck – poor beast kicked & squirmed as kid swung him into the blaze.

Virgin of Antipolo – 1626-1911 – Fine candle business for the priest – candles sold over & over again. Diamonds on the virg. gold embroidered dress. Usual dumb adoration and mummery. Biggest miracle business in P.I.

Cockpit at Taytay. Old lad at door refused entrance price called a cop & put us in front row at the fight. (Picked 2 winners – grand winnings – P-1.50) Old lad & son in from the hills with pride of the family old fellow went thro. preliminaries, but son ran things during fight. Dandy rooster, won without getting a scratch.

No need for excusados; woman right beside train, conductor just beyond car on next track, old man at side of road in Antipolo, not 6 feet from stream of pilgrims. All leaking.

Hamacas at Antipolo. Bamboo hammock on pole. 10¢ or 20¢ from station to church. Embarrassed Googs riding along in style.

Chmos' present to the virgin – a picture of Christ. Foxy chinos keep on right side of priests; good peeznes in Antipolo.

Great sale for mats. Pilgrims come in great numbers & have to sleep out.

Pictures of Virgin saving various ships from disaster. Carved picture in the church showing events of her existence.

"English" on bill of fare at Antipolo café. "Pie lemon", "pie (pay) apple", "coconat cake", etc.

Sra-Dumguard "Propitoress"

Indian & "civilized" conceptions of death. His, a warrior on a white horse, beckoning to the Happy Hunting Grounds; ours a grim, gruesome black ghost come to drag us to hell.

Nalle and his Wyoming hike. Drank "sheep ----" at the little sheep water-holes. Toes curled up like a piece of bacon in the frying pan. – "Maj. Johnson is a pot of ---- (and so is ____)

Old woman marooned on shoal in Mariguina R., digging mussels. Pot floating behind & tied to her waist with a string to put the mussels in.

Moving day on Mariquin. Raft with house in sections, – doors, windows, beds etc. Stuck on a shoal. Family hiking along bank.

Different methods of fishing – hook & line for minnows, basket traps, dip net, drag net pushed ahead like a lawn mower, spear.

Prawn shell in house at Santolan. "In U.S. much bigger; I've seen them this big!" "Yes, that's very big, and that's a big story, too.

"Did the old Springfield kick? Why the first time I fired it, a dog followed me two miles trying to get some of that raw beef I had on my shoulder!"

Sal on the billiard table at Jossman. Cleaned out the room. Jock always tried to pull all the balls out of the pockets.

Jock & Sal used to climb up on the partition and come to garrison school.

Ricardo – "The padre at Antipolo must be rich by now."

"Road repaired & in excellent condition!" Tananan to lake Taal. Carretela upset coming back. Almost upset in the lake. Nag balked & came over backward.

"Did you see the geezer, Mr. Ward?" Eng. lad on Taal trip.

Quiet night at Tananan. Dogs, horses, hombres, creaks.

Malvar's astuteness. Had insurrectos clear & plant his land on Maquiling for future commissaries.

The Iqorat costume. 1 G string + (for full dress) an old soldier blouse. Bengret Igs much like Guat. Indians – women especially. Same color & make clothes – same tump strap basket.

Dog market at Baguio. P 1-2-or 3 per dog. Tied short with bamboo sticks (to keep them unsnarled). Starved before eating – better flavor – throat cut & hair singed off.

Various Ig. costumes – never anything on legs (men), breech-clout – always, and where possible a coat & hat. Soldier blouse if possible with campaign hat, helmet, cap, or straw.

Gold mines. Long horiz shaft, 1 Ig. follows lead, cracking rock with hammer & chisel, 1 Ig with wheelbarrow carts it out, 1 or 2 work a hand forge to keep the tools in shape. All naked. No overseer for Igs; do their work without being watched.

View from Mirador, 16 miles to Aringay apparently an easy way in to Baguio, much less troublesome than via Camp one.

Pigs colored like deer. Much better looking pigs than the goog towns.

“ALLKINDRY GOOGS” – Baguio sign. “Teguit para Trambía” – in Manila.

Mrs. Ham, in Aus. to? As to whether she had been to Antipolo. “Really, you know, I haven’t been out to Pasay for ages, as I haven’t seen any polo at all!” Cap’t McCaskey, re same thing, “Was she bubbling over?”

As to the Colt 38, Grinstead remarks, “If you shoot a man 4 or 5 times with one of those things, he’s going to get mad.

Centipede race – 8 men astride a 10 foot tent-pole – Also medicine ball race. Also 4-legged race, 3 men??

Contrast between the simple, inoffensive, mind your-biz, Igorot and the disgusting, nauseating, conceited, asinine, insignificant pisterine Googs in college clothes. Waugh!!!

Igorot bamboo clackers worked on strings to scare birds from rice-paddies.

The devil sticks.

That Ig. guide who took us straight up a 200 ft bank! O, agony!

Riding the Indian bull in the gymkhana. Coon in polo coat, croquet mallet & rubber ball. “This is how the gov. gen. does it!”

Freight from Camp 1 to Baguio = P 45+ per load! Commute freight at rate of P3.30 at 100 kilos and the loads average @ 1500 kilos! One family had P280 in transportation this season. Bell had 100 guests at U.S. expense!

Trinidad exper. gardens. Pretty little valley @ 5 mi. north of Baguio. Strawberries, cabbage, beets, etc. Roses, violets, pinks & daisies.

Working position of Ig women – Rest chest on one knee, other leg out behind, both feet flat.

Mrs. Kelly's school of Igorots a sensible woman. "No pants for the Igs!" Teaches weaving & breadmaking.

The union suit on the Ig on San Tomas.

View from S. Tomas. Across Lingayen Gulf to China Sea – past Dagupan to mts beyond – beyond Arayat down the plain – & over the mts. E&N. Elev. 7300 – 2500 above Baguio.

The night on S. Tomas – Cold as ice – Slept with clothes all on + jersey, sweater and blanket. Poor cargies shivered & had nightmares all night. "Judge" Harvey, the grouch, snored the roof off. A typical Mex, bamboo, jawbone, bootlicking Am. mut, sub for the goog attorney general. The horrible kid was with them, the fresh one with the voice that was on the transport. They had corralled everything in the house, but were "willing to share" it with us. The 2 women went up in chair & by horse – 8 A.M.-5:30 P.M. Our time on foot was 2:00 P.M. to 6:30. (They were great cooks!)

Mrs. Burleson's record from Bontocto. Cervantes to Tagudin 22 ½ hrs. Got peeved at the country & flew out. Told a squaw man hotel keeper. "I want you to understand that I accept no hospitality from anyone who could lower himself so far as to marry a Filipino woman."

The sentry at Ft. Santiago – "To open the gate for fire engines corresponding to a fire.

Capt. Davis (Glenn) stung by the centipede.

Haight, The American farmer, up above Baguio. Has an Igorot wife who resembles a flour barrel & 4 tow-headed kids. Raises all kinds of temperate zone vegetables.

Brugère, son of the French general. "Mrs. Holderness is so vee-vicious!"

Igorot reading cigar ad upside down, -- studying it intently. Greatly pleased to have it fixed for him. "Durnos" "Filipans?"

"--- shot a grizzly, weight 850 lbs.—" "O, yes, a tidy fellow, a tidy fellow!"

No 3. "Arrest all superstitious persons seen on my post."

Keeper told one of the Baguio prisoners from Bilibid that if he were late again, he would have to spend the night out in town, as punishment!

Moro constabulary's fence of spears & bolas at carnival.

Mingo the wild man. Coon in a pit with tusks in his mouth. Googs scared stiff. Sign showed mingo biting the arm off a victim, who has already lost a leg but is still standing.

Balthasar's nap on our bed.

The Taal pictures – many taken in rain – showing burial of victims. Sacks of 900 thrown into a trench & covered. Wounded at dress stations, etc.

The Chino dinner orchestra at the Binondo bridge restaurant – gongs, cymbals & squeaker.

Pamiques, flying squirrels, at the carnival. Soft fur, – skins – P2.50 each. (In Cebu, P 1 each.)

The English guy at the polo game. “Nicely picked old chap, nicely picked.”

The kids at Paco blowing each other up with a bike pump in the umbilicus.

Old sow on San Mateo-Pasig road, scouting the basket of corn out drying. Finally edged up to it & got busy with a vengeance.

Win says, “O, yes, we just had to see George coronated!”

Also that so-and-so was so conversible that morning.

Mike Marshall & the rookie, – “He talked so much I had to put me fist in his mou” –

Knabenshue & the pedometer – Thought it was broken because he couldn’t wind it up.

Rookie Stone – “Advance, mariquina, with the countersign.” & “Adv, countersign, to be recognized!” On night hike.

Puerto Cortez – Conductor’s wife’s kid, to burly nigger on the dock, “Hello, Papa!”

José de Jesus Paúl!!! And he was a member of the American-Venezuela Com. of 1903!

Grandma & her lavish expenditures – 1500 in 2 mos. Jumbo remarks “She must be keeping a man.”

What did you come to Baguio for? You don’t go to the hops, you don’t go to the polo games. What do you do?” Miss Butler(?) since dead.

Trip up to Taytay via estero. Water snake at RR bridge. Hit him in head from across stream with a piece of a pot. Rice all N.G. for lack of water – and river of it only 4 feet below field level.

Tall bamboo chicken roosts.

Beautiful sunsets on both trips. Paddled down river directly into the west. Gorgeous coloring.

Pagsanjan gorge up to Los Baños on Q.M. launch, which was 3 hrs. late! Left a 11:30 A.M. – Mulhall, Zahlman, Bluhm, Milbrant, Wilson, Colvin Corrigan & I – reached Las Baños at 4:30. Lake was rough & we were all splashed. Swim in the open air pool down the track. Kids

playing spit-marbles with sea-beans. Zahlman staked the little fellow & it was nip & tuck for 30 minutes. Serious business. Trian at 5:42; came at 6:10. At Magdalena at 7:00. (Mojou – they all called Mahoney. Pagsanjan – they called Fox & hounds – or Foxy John – or “That place, Lieut.”) Cooked up chow in tienda. Got the town orchestra for P3 & they played Honey Boy & Vol. Español, & Papa Ilch., and all the favorites. Fine orchestra. Gladdened la vieja’s heart with a peso. Moonlight hike to Pagsanjan – 8-10 P.M. For 6 pesos put up for night at Magdapio Hotel. P20 for 8 boats up the gorge & rapids. Fine coconut haciendas along river. – coconut, papaya, bamboo, betel, & banana growing. The gorge a winding affair – perpendic. cliffs 300 ft. high, on each side for a mile & ½ or 2 miles – Sides grown up luxuriantly with ferns, palms, grasses etc. Trickling waterfalls, overhanging rocks, & changing lights. About 8 or 10 rapids – hard work going up – to 1st waterfall. Shot down quickly & with no mishaps save 1 banca’s hitting a rock. Left town at 11:30 with some chickens & Bluhm’s mascot – rooster lantern. Stopped on road for chow & cooked a ton of chow & the 5 chickens. Mulhall the chicken cook. On to Magdalena at 2:30, ar. 3:30. Back to Calamba & Paco, 3rd class, at 7:30.

Grabbing the money at Hernandez’s – (65 – no, 62 – no, 65. No 62 – Took 2 pesos & ran with the stuff) (Cacho girls said “Ves el único – who gets a discount at all.)

Sibert Wier Weaver Whiteside & their little acquisition in N.Y.

Zahlman announces “I think I must have some nigger blood in me!” (Curly black hair.)

A dried-up codfish. A red headed hickory nut – a belching high-wad. Who is it?

At the typhoid prophylaxis – “I am Capt Ka-nabenshue!” Ponderously.

Pinky McDonough, as his audience faked sleep – “Well, in the name of God, I bid you all good-night.” – Mornings after company was turned over, “Well, now who’s got a good cigar?” Sgt. “I have one, Capt.” “No, no, Johnson, I tried one of yours yesterday!”

Reilly’s queer shoe work(???) Dressed up as teamster & shadowed shacks. Said “Sh!” when recognized. Charged a clerk with being in league with Filipinos in attempted insurrection! Sloane sent word from Japan that Japs would declare war on U.S. on Feb 1, 1910!!! (By cable) Reilly & Lang “were sent to make a big noise, and Wilby & others to do the work!”

Manila Bay was actually dredged 3 times looking for Japanese mines!

Goog kid riding Indian bull at small station near Los Baños.

Falls blowing “Went out & got 4 “fusils” – At night went out & got 6 “fusils”.” Ham – “Capt. is “fusil” the Spanish word for chicken?”

Walling “Of course, being a graduate of the school of musketry, I am eminently fitted to run a potato farm & that’s why I’m here.”

Inspector hopped Walding for big comsy. bill. Rendered insp. a long list of names of people he had entertained, some starred *. Noted that star signified that those persons had left the post without thanking him. (Pershing starred)

In the next cage we have the laughing hyena. His name, ladies & gent – in my opinion is a misnomer. His food is carrion & offal, his bowels move but once in six mos, and his opportunities for sex. intercourse are limited to one a year, so what the hell the S.O.B. fiends to laugh about is beyond me. Larry, turn the crank. Keep your seats, ladies; there will be nothing in this lecture that could possibly give offense to even the most fastidious.” – Quite unique etc – All in front rows who can't swim – Elephant takes 3 turns around his leg etc. – Leopard, one spot for a day. – etc etc.

At Nagasaki – Jan 21 – plum blossom, (mei), pussy-willow (yanagi), small chrysanthemums. Camphor trees (Kus)

Pin-wheels for the kids – about 30 odd – street jammed – girls vendor danced & sung with the entire stock on her head.

Bill Taylor & the lizard. “That's mine.!” “I want that!”

Resting Hooper on way up hill back of Buddhist temple. 3 stops! Beautiful cultivated hillside at top. View of bay & city & valley.

Overcoat joke. Counted out \$9.00 with a 5, 2 ½'s & 8 half-yen. Jap beat it, & I laughed – till I remembered the price – \$6.

Ricardo's chill while being measured for clothes. Nearly fell over.

“Didn't have the chance of a tallow dog chasing an asbestos cat through hell.”

Bridge repartee, “If you had my brains & could talk like that, you'd be a wonder.” “Anybody can play a pianola make.”

(Ayres) Hombre out on Indian campaign got back to his mail & found letter from chf of Ord. stating that he had taken the matter (unanswered communications) to the Sec of War. Hombre endorses letter “Reply ret'd etc. What did the Sec. of War say?”

Rhino-cerious-curious cuss

Uegaremos allá donde hasta ahora no ha podido ver.