

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*

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1926

A hell of a year in that annex to the cavalry stables. Fortunately not a hard winter. I went east on June 18, & spent a week in Yonkers. (John & Mabel Duell married in February & went to Italy.) Saw Po'keepsie races and caught the Empire at Po'keepsie. Saw H.P. at Syracuse at 1 A.M. (Mother Smith visited us in Benning in June '24, & in Leavenworth in June '26.)

We left Leavenworth in our new Dodge (turned in old one in June, + \$500) on July 1, 1926 at 4:15 A.M. (Win sold about \$2000 worth of Chinese stuff at Leavenworth.) (Had detail at Ecole de Guerre all fixed till the Chinese detail fell on us out of a clear sky.)

Trip to coast. First day – HOT. Salina & Russell. 2nd day, Flager, Col. 3rd day Denver (lunch with Coopers) to Cheyenne, Wyoming. 4th day Wamsutter. Cloudburst. 5th day. Montpelier, Idaho. (Bear Lake). 6th day, Boise to Twin Falls. 7th day La Grande. 8th day, Portland (Woodie). 9th day Wolf Creek. 10th day the Willows. 11th – Frisco. St. Francis. Pep & Martha up for dinner. (Al went to sleep on a chair.) 12th Carmel.

At Carmel, at the Perch, from July 12 to Aug 14. Dad & Mom at the Highland Inn from July 13 to Aug 1. Win mystified by their appearance. Pt. Lobos, beach, river, Carmel Valley, 17-mi. drive, Monterey, Pop Ernest, Hazzards, crabs, kids' play on Golden Bough theater, etc. etc. Stopped at San Mateo, Saturday night & Sunday, & went in to Frisco on Sunday night. Bellevue Hotel. Shopped for trip. Pep & Martha up for dinner. Suitcases for Nance & Doot, doll for Al, paints for Joe. – Left on the old Thomas on Aug. 20. I had the casuals & was adj. for John D. Long. Capt. McClellan, ship's master. Capt. Banbury (Ajax) ship's Q.M. Capt. Poage, asst. adj.; Capt. Whittaker, police off. Capt. Barnes mess officer. Hafford, medico, Gen. Holbrook & Col. Gambrill for Manila. 21 officers for China. 93 kids on board.

Honolulu on Aug. 26. To Moana Hotel for dinner & the night. Hawaiians singing in the beach pavilion. Rode all around town on the 27th – Pulled out at 4 P.M. – Guam about Sept 9 – Manila on Sept. 14. Got rid of casuals & went to Gotham Hotel. (P 20 a day.) Noisy as hell. Shopped. Had uniforms made. Al was sick with acidosis for 3 days. (Capt. O'Brien, attending surgeon.) Dinner with Parsons. Lunch with Woods at Malacañan. Dinner for Gambrills & Parsons at A & N Club on 21st. Pulled out on Wed. 22nd at 3 P.M. (Car off boat for 5 days.) Hot as hell. Delayed sailing to let Yates, (Q.M. B.G.) get a big send off. Salutes, flowers & blah. Cool at once. Sleepless night.

Thurs Sept. 23: Cool & breezy. Along coast of Luzon. In rooms 24 & 26 as on way home in 1923. Bad night again.

Fri Sept. 24: Along Formosa. Breeze again. Tunney-Dempsey fight returns.

Sat Sept. 25: Still hot. – No land in sight.

Sun Sept. 26: Cooling off. Rounded the Shantung promontory tonight.

Mon Sept 27: Past Port Arthur at noon. 203 m. Hill monument. Lights at Chingwangtao at 7 P.M. In about 9:30 & anchored out. Pierce (2nd Lt.) came aboard & gave us the dope. Kai Lan tender along side. First sight of Chinks.

Tues Sept 28: Up early. Clear brisk autumn air. No definite dope on anything. Q.M. (Jordan) nowhere. Castner's dirty aide McDaniel. Two cars run down on dock. Finally threw our stuff on & got aboard. No one looking out for Willingham. Got Curti and put him on train. Up to Chingwangtao & hooked on to Peking express. Gypped on lunch – 1 coarse 75 cents. (1 mao = 26 coppers! instead of about 16.) Arr. Tientsin about 5. To Astor House. Went to Court to cancel. No one there. Lewises at Astor.

Wed Sept. 29: Reported to Castner & Newell. No work till Monday. Prov. Bn. for me – Hqs. & Ser. Co. Looked for a house.

Thurs Sept. 30: Still after a house. Tea at Marshall's.

Fri Oct. 1: Saw Finance Off. & looked around. Merritt's house offered, & we tentatively closed.

Sat Oct. 2: Closed on Merritt's house. Review at barracks. P.M. took Joe to Peking, arr. 10:15 – Language School.

Sun Oct. 3: Heymans, Fette, T'ungchow & back to Tientsin.

Mon Oct 4: Vaccinations. To work. Went over service co. & corral. Petro here in Tientsin.

Tues Oct. 5: Over Hq. Co. etc.

Wed Oct. 6: Got car out of hock & washed.

Thurs Oct. 7: Put car in garage. Still roaming around getting oriented.

Fri Oct. 8: Special court – Dinner at Marshalls. Borrowed his coat.

Sat Oct. 9: K.O. of troops for review. Inspected regt. & hospital. P.M. drove around with Lewises looking for a rickshaw. Petro went to Shanghai about Thursday. Win & I took him to Makletzova, Russian dancer, Wed. night. (?) Rotten colds all the week, everybody but Nance. Sat P.M. to country club & danced. Doe drunk. Going to get married – Back at 1 A.M.

Sun Oct. 10: Chinese shuang shih. To see Ch'u Yüeh P'u, – Chihli tupan across the river – Usual reception – champagne & cake. Met Takada, Ch'u, Carl, Hunsiger, Ting (C. of Police) etc. Castner tied up his spec & gave a lot of chink propaganda to a Jap! I got him stopped in time. Home for lunch.

Mon Oct. 11: Handball

Tues Oct. 12: Handball

Wed Oct. 13: *No entry*

Thurs Oct. 14: Handball

Fri Oct. 15: Handball

Sat Oct. 16: Usual review. Court. Took family out for ride.

Sun Oct. 17: Worked on house.

Mon Oct. 18: Entirely forgot the anniversary. Down & out. Lewises in for dinner. Handball.

Tues Oct. 19: Handball.

Wed Oct. 20: Went over defense plans & lines with Poage, Evans, Lewis & Buracker.

Thurs Oct. 21: Newell's dinner. 40 people. Handball

Fri Oct 22: Handball – Pearson Adams & M^cQuarrie. To bed early.

Sat Oct. 23: Usual review. K.O. of troops. Worked on house all day. To bed early. Petro.

Sun Oct. 24: To T.C.C. with Lewises & Newells for breakfast. Very pleasant time. Win & Lewis bowled in Tao Yuan.

1926-27 – Winter – Skating at regtl. p'êng south of compound –

 Dubbed along till Jan 1 as K.O. Provisional Bn. (Henderson, Hq. Co. – Tuttle, Serv. Co.)
– Castner took over command of post in Dec. –