

Mr. Charles Kuhns
Library
Hood College
Frederick, Md. 21701

1/13/87

Dear Charles,

There is no way of knowing whether any students will be interested in the Evans Mordyce Carlson book I gave the library or whether it will ever be appropriate to any courses but in the event a little personal touch may be of interest I write and enclose a bobtailed version of the connection ~~at~~ a friend who is an authentic old China hand had with Carlson.

James D. White, a Missouri farm boy, after getting his bachelor's degree at the University of Missouri, was an exchange student for his MA, I think at Peiping Univ. A Chinese student went to Missouri for his MA. In China Jim met and married a remarkable Scotch-Chinese woman, Jennifer. He also went to work for AP as a reporter and to the best of my knowledge, from then until he retired he never worked for any other employer. Jim and Jennifer were prisoners of the Japanese and from his account they were both treated well and with some compassionate adjustments after they were evacuated from China, I think to the Philippines. What may have accounted for this good treatment is a little thing reflecting Jim's determination to live as much like the Chinese as possible. He and Jennifer had cats and dogs and they wanted a house for the dogs in the back yard of their house. He called in a Chinese craftsman, explained what he had in mind and asked the Chinese if he could do it. The man asked him when he'd like to get started and Jim said now if you'd like. The Chinese replied that the feng-schwei were not good and Jim then explained that he wanted the man to do it as though he were doing it for a Chinese, exactly that way, in all details. The man waited for what he regarded as better auguries and proceeded to make a magnificent doghouse complete with all the traditional inscriptions added. When the Japanese officer who took them captive came and saw that he asked Jim what he was doing with such a doghouse and Jim recounted how he'd had it built. That Japanese officer apparently decided that this was an American full of respect for the orient and something like this seems to have remained with the Whites until they were repatriated. In China he knew all those Americans who subsequently achieved fame as China experts, has met with some in the recent past, and is excessively modest about the whole thing. He still speaks Chinese and is a great Chinese cook. In the course of correspondence a short while before I gave you this book he'd told me a bit more and in a bit more detail than the enclosed shorter, more modest version I received today. He is about 80 now, lives in San Rafael and, if he ever gets here again, I think he would be a fine subject for what if his innate modesty and self-efacement can be overcome, might be a remarkable oral history, particularly about the side of the Japanese he saw and his experiences and people who achieved some fame, American and Chinese.

When I was freelancing before I went into the Army in World War II I read Carlson's book and I found a cooperative enlistee man in the Navy information office, who helped. I then also had a friend who'd been the ghost writer for Warden Louis Laves, of Sing Sing. That book became a weekly radio show and my friend became the editor of a small magazine. He wanted my Carlson story, I'd not sought a better-paying market, so I sold it to him for \$100, not very much for a story in those days. The book indicates Carlson's adventures and learning about 8th Route Army tactics and strategy and perhaps (my memory is not clear on this) some of what happened to him because the brass did not like it. After Pearl Harbor, however, the Navy learned how right Carlson had been and it named the first of those raider battalions after him,

Carlson's Raiders. I think the second was Edson's Raiders. Anyway, too late for maximum benefit, the government finally recognized its error in not heeding Carlson. I think they eased him out. What I got from the Navy for the story related to these new-fangled sort-of-guerilla organizations.

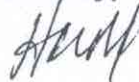
The editor liked the story so much he offered it to the Readers Digest. It liked the story but it did not like his magazine. So, it offered him \$2,000 for the story, half for him and half for me, if he'd not print the story and let them place it in the publication from which I think they said they'd prefer to pick it up. My friend, as he later told me the story, figured that if it was worth that much to the Digest it had to be worth that much to his magazine and he turned them down. So, he printed it, I got my \$400, and the Digest, having all that public-domain information, had no trouble duplicating my work, placing it where it wanted to, and then it made a movie. I guess I put "gung ho!" in our language and I know I didn't get a penny from a very successful movie which picked that Chinese phrase up from what I'd written and I think included in or used as the title.

Not long after that experience my editor friend, who wrote under the pen-name C.J. Wyle and whose wife ^(Neha) also was a writer, started a public relations outfit that at least to begin with specialized in representing electric cooperatives. Then, at least, nobody stole stories and movies from him.

To give you an idea of what that \$1,000 could have meant to me, not long before that I'd bought a new Plymouth for 80% of that sum. And four years later I bought a fine Cape Cod in Arlington. That \$1,000 would have been 15% of what it cost me. My mind did turn to Ms. Church's thought of oral histories earlier today. I finally got from the FBI, after trying for about 10 years, a copy of the most sensational of my Nazi cartel exposes. I'm giving Jerry a copy. There is a Harry Truman story in this, his reaction when I tried to interest him in this whole thing only a fraction of which was in the story. He then headed the War Preparedness Committee. I won't now take the edge off it.

At the time in question the Pentagon had just been completed and occupied. It was built where old National airport had been. I used to fly out of it in DC2s. National Airport as it now exists was part of the Potomac River and the shore there was known as Gravelley Point. They brought in dredges, sucked the bottom of the river up, deposited it on the shore and worked their way out into the river and when they were finished they had the runways and the rest of the land. The Navy information office was in a World War I "temporary" building of two parts known as The Munitions Building. It was on the south side of Constitution Ave. west of 17th.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg

13 January 1987

Dear Harold:

It took some time, but I finally located Noah Griffin and sent along the letter you sent here for him. (I never had an address for him, and had lost the one phone number for him that I had picked up somewhere.)

Also, I found what appears to be the letter to you that discussed Evans Carlson. It recalled that he had been a good friend in Peking. He had come to China as an enlisted man in the U.S. Army's 15th Infantry [Brigade?] which was ~~was~~ stationed at Tientsin following the Boxer Rebellion with the task of keeping communications open to Peking some 90 miles inland. When I knew Carlson he had somehow become a captain in the U.S. Marines and was an Assistant Naval Attaché with the U.S. Embassy in Peking. He was a charming man, quiet and mild-mannered, with a lean but husky physique. He learned Chinese at the North China Language School in Peking, and I assumed that he functioned as the local intelligence officer concerning Chinese army affairs. I think it was about a year after Edgar Snow made his historic trip to Red China in 1936 that Carlson disappeared from the local scene. In 1938 a courier arrived at my office with an envelope addressed to me, with another inside addressed to the Naval Attaché and a request from Carlson to see personally that it reached him. I did, of course, and assumed that already Carlson had made his way first to the Red headquarters in Yanan and then overland to the edge of the guerrilla areas outside Peking, from where couriers regularly made their way into the city. I had no reason to doubt the courier when he said he had come from a village less than 30 miles outside Peking's city walls. Already, the guerrillas had consolidated themselves between the railways which the Japanese held, and controlled nearly everything outside the main cities and big towns. Carlson must have walked or ^{ridden} ~~ridden~~ horses more than a thousand miles to reach the area outside Peking, and his presence in the Red areas probably was arranged secretly to ~~to~~ avoid stirring up the animals around Chiang Kai-shek in Chungking.

Everything fine here. I just had a complete physical (required by Hospice) and the doc says I'm okay.

Keep warm and healthy, and all the best,



jdw