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OSBORN, DAVID L.: Papers, 1947-94

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The papers of David L. Osborn were deposited in the Eisenhower Library by Mrs. David L. Osborn in October 1995.

Linear feet of shelf space occupied: 5
Approximate number of pages: 5,600
Approximate number of items: 2,000

An instrument of gift for these papers was signed by Mrs. Osborn in August 1997. Literary rights in the unpublished writings of David L. Osborn are held by Mrs. Osborn until her death and thereafter pass to the people of the United States. Under terms of the instrument of gift the following classes of documents are withheld from research use:

1. Papers which constitute an invasion of personal privacy of a living person.
2. Papers which are required to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy and are properly classified.

CHRONOLOGY

January 11, 1921	Born in Bethlehem, Indiana
1940	BA, Southwestern University
1942-46	Japanese Language Officer, U.S. Navy MA, Harvard University
1947	Joined Foreign Service, Department of State
July 13, 1949	Married Helenka Anna Polichnowski
1947-64	Various diplomatic assignments in Asia
1964-65	Attended National War College
1965-67	Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs
1967-70	Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy, Tokyo, Japan
1970-74	Consul General, Hong Kong
1974-77	Ambassador to Burma
1978	Retired from Department of State
September 16, 1994	Died in San Diego, California

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

David Lawrence Osborn, diplomat and linguist, was a native of Indiana. He attended Southwestern University at Memphis, Tennessee, where he majored in Greek. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree he went to Harvard University where he studied Chinese and Japanese. At the start of World War II he enlisted in the Navy and became a Japanese language officer in the Pacific. His knowledge of Japanese was put to good use during the Okinawan campaign when he swam ashore on Akashima, a small island near Okinawa, to open surrender negotiations with Major Noda, the commander of the Japanese garrison. As a result of these negotiations, U.S. personnel were allowed to land peacefully on Akashima and a major battle was averted. In 1987 Osborn attended a reunion with Major Noda and other soldiers on Akashima, which was recorded by a Tokyo television station.

After the war Osborn returned to Harvard where he completed work on his Master of Arts degree in Chinese. In 1947 he passed the foreign service exam and was given a job in the Department of State where he spent his entire professional career. Due to his skill with oriental languages most of his assignments were at U.S. diplomatic posts in Japan and Taiwan. He also assisted with the first negotiations between officials of the U.S. and the People's Republic of China in Geneva in the mid-1950s.

During the 1964-65 academic year Osborn attended the National War College where he became familiar with the use of computers by the Department of Defense. After returning to the State Department he spent several months in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs while waiting for his next assignment in the Far East. He took the opportunity to develop a computer program to help the State Department analyze its budget more efficiently. After his retirement he worked with various private organizations to develop computer programs to teach the Japanese language.

Osborn spent the years 1967-1970 at the U.S. embassy in Tokyo, Japan, and then became U.S. Consul General at Hong Kong. He helped make arrangements for Richard Nixon's 1972 trip to Peking which resulted in regular diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. He later served as Ambassador to Burma before retiring in 1978. After his retirement he settled in San Diego, California, where he was active in promoting cultural relations with Asia. He died following a bicycle accident in San Diego in 1994.

David Osborn appears to have kept very little material relating to his early career. Except for a few items of memorabilia, most of his papers are dated after 1965. Most of the available information on his early career is from an oral history interview which was conducted by Georgetown University in 1989.

The bulk of Osborn's papers pertain to his interest in Burma, China, and Japan. The material includes correspondence, reports, speeches and printed material relating to cultural, economic and political relations with these countries. The collection also contains information on his interest in language studies and in the use of computers in the State Department. The material is arranged alphabetically by subject.

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	Akashima Island (1)-(4) [1987 Japanese documentary re Osborn's role in 1945 surrender of Akashima; Osborn's reunion with Japanese soldiers] Allocation of Resources (1)-(5) [development of computer program to manage resources available for State Department foreign affairs programs, 1966-70; programs in Japan used as test project] Appointment Book 1966 Appointment Book 1967
2	Appointment Book 1968 Appointment Book 1969 Appointment Book 1971 Appointment Book 1972 (1)(2)
3	Appointment Book 1973 Articles Articles – Japanese Arms (1)(2) Articles – New York Times Magazine Feb. 22, 1970 [Osborn article re Japan] Articles – U.S., Japan, and Divided China [proposed 1969 article by Osborn on U.S. policy toward Taiwan] Burma and Southeast Asia (1)(2) Burma – 1976 Bicentennial Burma – After Retirement (1)-(3) [conditions in Burma, 1987-91; Burmese groups in U.S.] Calendars

- 4 China 1965-72 (1)(2)
- China 1973-76 (1)(2)
- China 1984-94 (1)(2) [draft memoirs of Marshall Green re U.S.-China policy; Henry Kissinger; Nixon trip to China]
- Commissions
- Educational and Cultural Affairs (CU) Dept. of State [1966 report on strengthening cultural relations with NATO countries]
- Hinduism
- Japan (1)-(4) [memoirs of Yasuhiro Nakasone, 1982 prime minister; U.S. objectives in Japan, 1967-68]
- Japan – Contacts (1)(2)
- Japan Society, Inc.
- 5 Japanese Friendship Garden (1)(2) [park in San Diego, California]
- Language Studies – Chinese
- Language Studies – Japanese
- Language Studies – Mayan (1)-(3)
- Miscellaneous Correspondence (1)-(3)
- Miscellaneous Photographs
- National War College Paper 1964-65 [research paper by Osborn endorsing increased trade with Soviet Bloc]
- Okinawa – 20th Anniversary of Reversion 1992 (1)(2)
- 6 Oral History Interview (1)(2) [1989 interview by Georgetown University re Osborn’s diplomatic career; foreign language study; service in Japan and Taiwan; Taiwan straits crisis; Japanese riots 1960; Japanese concern over nuclear weapons; Robert Kennedy visit to Tokyo Feb 1962; Japanese reaction to JFK assassination 1963; proposal to use computers to analyze State Dept budget 1966; Henry Kissinger and “One China” policy; assignment to Hong Kong 1970; Nixon’s visit to China 1972;

Osborn's meeting with Kissinger 1973 re China and Japan; assignment to Burma 1974; drug trade; Burmese economy and politics; attempted coup 1976]

Pacific Basin (1)-(4) [1985 conference on improving economic cooperation among Pacific Basin countries]

Passports (1)(2)

Pocket Diary 1962, 1963

Pocket Diary 1964, 1965

Pocket Diary 1967

Pocket Diary 1969

Pocket Diary 1977

7 Printed Material (1)-(4) [Japanese publications]

Scrapbook – Tokyo 1967

Scrapbook – Tokyo 1969

Scrapbook – Hong Kong 1972-73

Speeches 1967-73 (1)(2)

Speeches, Retirement (1)-(3)

8 Oversized Material (half-suit box)

END OF CONTAINER LIST