Inventory of the Steingrimur Octavius Thorlaksson Papers, 1916-1970

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Inventory of the Steingrimur Octavius Thorlaksson Papers, 1916-1970

Accession number: GTU 89-5-010
Shelf location: 2/B/6-2/C/1

The Graduate Theological Union Archives
Berkeley, California

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Processed by:
Lucinda Glenn Rand
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Encoded by:
James Lake

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Steingrimur Octavius Thorlaksson Papers,
Date (inclusive): 1916-1970
Accession number: GTU 89-5-010
Shelf location: 2/B/6-2/C/1
Creator: Thorlaksson, Steingrimur Octavius, 1890-1977
Size: 13 boxes
4 1/2 linear ft.
Type of material: Papers (English, Japanese, some Icelandic); photographs; postcards; books; periodicals; pamphlets; financial records; glass slides; 1 plaster relief; 1 copper negative, 1 printing block
Repository: The Graduate Theological Union.
Berkeley, California
Language: English.
Source and Date
S. O. Thorlaksson, c. 1973
Access
Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation
Steingrimur Octavius Thorlaksson (1890-1977) was born in Mineota, MN, May 26, 1890, his father the first immigrant pastor of an Icelandic Lutheran congregation. He graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College, 1913; Chicago Lutheran Seminary, 1916. That same year he married Caroline Kristin Thomas of Winnipeg, Manitoba (4 children: Margrethe, Octavius, Erik, Esther). They were commissioned missionaries to Japan --by the Icelandic Synod of America on behalf of the old General Council of the Lutheran Church --arriving there in the fall 1916.

Thorlaksson served various pastorates, including Kobe, and as the Treasurer for the American Lutheran Mission in Japan until his evacuation at the outbreak of WWII. Before evacuation, he transferred all mission properties to the independent Japanese Lutheran Church which prevented confiscation by the military during the war.

The Thorlakssons moved to the San Francisco area which became their permanent home. Caroline died in 1956 --Thorlaksson remarried in 1959, Liv Cecilie Oddson. He worked as a Field Missionary for the Board of American Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America serving congregations on the West Coast maintaining a continued interest in Japanese and Scandinavian churches.

In San Francisco, 1944, he entered diplomatic service on behalf of Iceland as Honorary Consul General. He was given the title "Member Emeritus of the San Francisco Consular Corps" by that body on February 17, 1971. (See Biographical Sketch of Thorlaksson, Box 4 ff 9)

From 1967, he lived and served as resident chaplain of the Martin Luther Tower, a retirement home in San Francisco. He died in Webster Grove, MI on July 10, 1977; and was buried from St. Mark’s, San Francisco.

Scope and Content
This collection was processed in two separate sections. The first section had been partially processed and cataloged by library staff. The second section processed two years later when four boxes of unprocessed material were discovered after a shelf move. The two sections of material have been incorporated into one collection. The arrangement here is the archivist's construction, there having been no inherent arrangement. Most of the collection has to do with the business or financial aspect of mission work (bills, statements, correspondence, etc.). There is very little personal material. Some of the collection is in Japanese, some in Icelandic. Major portions of the collection concern the Japan Lutheran Mission, and the Lake Nojiri Summer Resort where Thorlaksson had a summer home.

Correspondence, 1916-47
Location: 2/B/6
Arrangement
Chronological arrangement, majority incoming, some outgoing

Box 1 ,
Folder ff 1-17
Folder ff 18-19
English (some Icelandic)
Japanese
Correspondence
Location: 2/B/6
Paul P. Anspach, 1917, 32-40
Board of Foreign Missions, 1923-28
Personal, 1930-39
n.d.
envelopes
Subject Files, 1917-70

Location: 2/B/6

Arrangement

Alphabetical arrangement

Box Box 3
Folder ff 1
American President Lines, 1941

Folder ff 2-3
Annual Field Reports, 1917-37

Folder ff 4
Articles from periodicals, c. 1939

Folder ff 5
Applications and Permits

Folder ff 6
Baggage claims and shipping receipts, 1941

Folder ff 7
Bank Accounts and General Receipts

Folder ff 8
Japan Lutheran Theological College and Seminary, 1970

Folder ff 9
Baptism Record Book, 1918-30

Folder ff 10
Bills, receipts, financial statements, 1932-52

Folder ff 11
Blueprints of a church, n.d.

Folder ff 12
Budgets, 1917-25

Folder ff 13
Business cards

Folder ff 14
Church matters (English language)

Folder ff 15
Church matters (Japanese language)

Folder ff 16
Conference of Fellowship of Christian Missionaries in Japan, 1940

Folder ff 17
Convention of Japan Lutheran Church, 1937

Folder ff 18
Steinun Johannesdottir Hayes Biography, c. 1950

Folder ff 19
Inventory of House, 1938

Folder ff 20
Japan Lutheran Church, Committee for Promotion of Self Support, c. 1935

Folder ff 21
Japan Lutheran Church Rules and Regulations, n.d.

Folder ff 22
Japanese Language documents, n.d.

Folder ff 23
Japanese Language publications

Folder ff 24
Japanese Language Service Book, 1929, 1940

Folder ff 25
Japanese Students Christian Association in North America, 1937-39

Folder ff 26
East Kobe Lutheran Church, c. 1930-35

Folder ff 27
West Kobe Lutheran Church, c. 1928-40

Folder ff 28-30
Kobe Union Church Building Project, 1925-37

Folder ff 31-40
Lake Nojiri Summer Resort, 1921-40

Folder ff 41
Ledger Book, 1937-39

Folder ff 42
Missionaries Mutual Aid Association of Japan, 1915, 1927

Folder ff 43

Folder ff 44
National Lutheran Council News Bureau, 1929, 31-39

Folder ff 45
Notes, handwritten or typed

Folder ff 46
Newspaper articles (Japanese and English)

Folder ff 47
Newspaper articles: Thorlaksson's return to Japan for Expo '70, 1970

Box Box 4
Pan-American Japanese Christian Congress, 1939

Folder ff 1
Record Books on Church Members (Japanese), c. 1919-20

Folder ff 2
Sermons in Japanese, 1925-34

Folder ff 3-4

Folder ff 5
Stamps

Folder ff 6
Student Volunteer Movement 11th Convention, Buffalo, 12/31-1/32

Folder ff 7
Sunrays (Bible lesson cards), 1905

Folder ff 8
Thorlaksson, Biographical Sketch, c. 1972

Folder ff 9
Tsuboike (lawyer), n.d.

Folder ff 10
J.M.T. Winther Memorial Service, 1970

Folder ff 11
Writings, articles, addresses, 1917-40
Japan Lutheran Mission

Location: 2/B/6

Additional Note

Chronological arrangement; general reports, correspondence, information from the Mission. Also Thorlaksson's work as Treasurer of the Mission (financial statements, receipts, accounts). Some personal material and material concerning Lake Nojiri Summer Resort mixed in.

Box Box 5, Folder ff 1-14
Box Box 6, Folder ff 1-5

1916-21, 29-37

1937-40

Books

Location: 2/B/6

Box Box 7, Folder ff 1
Folder ff 2
Folder ff 3
Folder ff 4
Folder ff 5
Folder ff 6
Folder ff 7
Folder ff 8

Japanese Language (the history of a city ?)
New Testament (Icelandic), 1903
Martin Luther (Icelandic), 1883
Prayer Book (Icelandic), 1918
Service Book (Japanese), 1916
Services of Song for Christmas and Flower Sunday, n.d.
Stanley's Expedition (2 in Icelandic), 1890, 1891
Sumarian Tablets in the Imperial University, Kyoto, 1928

Periodicals

Location: 2/C/1

Box Box 8, Folder ff 1
Folder ff 2-5
Folder ff 6
Folder ff 7
Folder ff 8
Folder ff 9
Folder ff 10
Box Box 9, Folder ff 1
Folder ff 2
Folder ff 3

Colegrove, Kenneth: reprints of series of articles, 1929-41
Foreign Missions Conference Journals, 1919-22
Handbook of Foreign Missions, Lutheran Church, 1921, 29, 39, 40
Japan Lutheran Bulletin, 1/37 (3 copies)
Japanese language periodical
Rules for Missionaries, Lutheran Church, Japan, 1920, 23
Selkirk Weekly Record, “Japan in Agony”, 9/21/23
Single copies: Bjarmi, 1931; Buddhist Missionen, 1926; The Christian Graphic, 1934
Tanker Tog Toner, 1932-37
Tokyo Gazette; 8/37, 2/39, 5/40

Pamphlets

Location: 2/C/1

Box Box 9, Folder ff 4
Folder ff 5
Folder ff 6
Folder ff 7
Folder ff 8
Folder ff 9

Jon Bjarnason Academy, 1931
Foreign Languages in Japan, 1929
Freemasonry in Japan, 1941
Grace Cathedral, San Francisco (poems), n.d.
The Icelandic Lutheran Synod, 1885-1935
Japanese Language pamphlets

Miscellaneous

Location: 2/C/1

Box Box 10

1 plaster relief of Martin Luther
1 copper negative, Japanese women
1 box glass negatives: pictures of the life of Christ (some with Japanese captions)
1 box glass negatives: Japanese & English language hymns (?)
1 printing block for a Japanese hymn
Card Index, c. 1930

Location: 2/C/1

Arrangement

Divided geographically by city then alphabetically by name.

Box Box 11

Names, addresses and other information; Japanese language

Photographs

Location: 2/C/1

Additional Note

Though the bulk of the photographs are undated, they were mostly taken ca. 1920-40. The photographs are black and white unless otherwise indicated. The photographs were received with no order, the arrangement here was done by the processor.

Box Box 12, 13

S.O. Thorlakkson (identified in small group shots), ca. 1926

Folder ff 1

West Kobe Lutheran Church, 1935

Folder ff 2

Groups of people, Meetings, identified, ca. 1919-40

Folder ff 3

Places, Churches, identified, ca. 1920's

Folder ff 4

Mounted photographs, identified, dated

Folder ff 5

Individuals, small groups, unidentified, n.d.

Folder ff 6

Groups, Meetings, unidentified, n.d.

Folder ff 7

Places, Churches, unidentified, n.d.

Folder ff 8

Rural and farm scenes, unidentified, n.d.

Folder ff 9


Folder ff 10

Negatives, unidentified, n.d.

Folder ff 11

Professional published sets: The sets have been broken and are not in order, though numbered. The sets are accompanied by lists with numbered captions corresponding to numbers on the photographs. Color tinted.

Folder ff 12-13

Professional published set: Yusaki and Shirahama Spa

Postcards

Location: 2/C/1, 2/B/3

Additional Note

The postcards are undated, but are ca. 1920-40. The postcards are black and white unless otherwise indicated. The postcards were received with no order, the arrangement here was done by the processor. All are captioned, those in English are grouped and filed according to geographic area; those in Japanese are not divided by area, but grouped all together. All are postcards of Japan, except those so indicated. The postcards are all blank, except those in Box 13, ff 11 which contain correspondence.

Box Box 12, 13

Lutheran Church, West Kobe, ca. 1935

Folder ff 15

Kobe, color tinted

Folder ff 16

Kyushu Grakuin

Folder ff 17

Janice James School

Folder ff 18

Karuiwaza

Folder ff 19

Female missionaries and missions (Japan, Africa, India)

Folder ff 20

Leper Hospital of the Resurrection of Hope

Folder ff 21

Nagoya, some color tinted

Folder ff 22

Tokyo, some color tinted

Folder ff 23

Tokyo Higher Commercial School, color tinted

Folder ff 24

Kamedo

Folder ff 25

Kyoto

Folder ff 26

Biwako, color tinted

Folder ff 27

Various Japanese scenes, English captions, color tinted

Folder ff 28

Hakone, color tinted

Folder ff 29

Asuke

Folder ff 30
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ff 31</td>
<td>Nara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff 32</td>
<td>Mt. Fugi, some color tinted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 13</td>
<td>Koyasau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff 2</td>
<td>Single cards of various places, some color tinted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff 3</td>
<td>Churches, identified in Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff 4-5</td>
<td>Various scenes identified in Japanese, some color tinted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff 6</td>
<td>Korea (Keijo), identified in English, color tinted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff 7</td>
<td>Scenes of Korea with English captions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff 8</td>
<td>C.P.S.S. Empress of Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff 9</td>
<td>Single cards: Chicago, Vancouver B.C., Iceland (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff 10</td>
<td>Empty envelopes for photographs and postcards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff 11</td>
<td>Postcards with correspondence, various scenes and dates, in Japanese and English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>