
Inventory of the Steingrimur Octavius Thorlaksson Papers, 1916-1970

Processed by Lucinda Glenn Rand; machine-readable finding aid created by James Lake

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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

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Processed by:

Lucinda Glenn Rand

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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

[Identification of item], Steingrimur Octavius Thorlaksson Papers, GTU 89-5-010, The Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA.

Access Points

Lutheran Church in Japan --Sources

Japan --Church history --Sources

Missions --Japan --Sources

Missionaries --Correspondence

Biographical Description

Steingrímur Octavius Þorláksson (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.

Þorláksson 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 Þorlákssons moved to the San Francisco area which became their permanent home. Caroline died in 1956 --Þorláksson 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 Þorláksson, 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 Þorláksson had a summer home.

Correspondence, 1916-47

Location: 2/B/6

Arrangement

Chronological arrangement, majority incoming, some outgoing

Box Box 1 , Folder ff
1-17

English (some Icelandic)

Folder ff 18-19

Japanese

Correspondence

Location: 2/B/6

Box Box 2 , Folder ff
1

Paul P. Anspach, 1917, 32-40

Folder ff 2

Board of Foreign Missions, 1923-28

Folder ff 3

Personal, 1930-39

Folder ff 4

n.d.

Folder ff 5

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	National Christian Council Bulletin, 1938-40
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 , Folder ff 1	Pan-American Japanese Christian Congress, 1939
Folder ff 2	Record Books on Church Members (?)(Japanese), c. 1919-20
Folder ff 3-4	Sermons in Japanese, 1925-34
Folder ff 5	Service Book, handwritten in Japanese, n.d.
Folder ff 6	Stamps
Folder ff 7	Student Volunteer Movement 11th Convention, Buffalo, 12/31-1/32
Folder ff 8	Sunrays (Bible lesson cards), 1905
Folder ff 9	Thorlaksson, Biographical Sketch, c. 1972
Folder ff 10	Tsuboike (lawyer), n.d.
Folder ff 11	J.M.T. Winther Memorial Service, 1970
Folder ff 12-13	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

1916-21, 29-37

Box Box 6 , Folder ff
1-5

1937-40

Books

Location: 2/B/6

Box Box 7 , Folder ff
1

Japanese Language (the history of a city ?)

Folder ff 2

New Testament (Icelandic), 1903

Folder ff 3

Martin Luther (Icelandic), 1883

Folder ff 4

Prayer Book (Icelandic), 1918

Folder ff 5

Service Book (Japanese), 1916

Folder ff 6

Services of Song for Christmas and Flower Sunday, n.d.

Folder ff 7

Stanley's Expedition (2 in Icelandic), 1890, 1891

Folder ff 8

Sumarian Tablets in the Imperial University, Kyoto, 1928

Periodicals

Location: 2/C/1

Box Box 8 , Folder ff
1

Colegrove, Kenneth: reprints of series of articles, 1929-41

Folder ff 2-5

Foreign Missions Conference Journals, 1919-22

Folder ff 6

Handbook of Foreign Missions, Lutheran Church, 1921, 29, 39, 40

Folder ff 7

Japan Lutheran Bulletin, 1/37 (3 copies)

Folder ff 8

Japanese language periodical

Folder ff 9

Rules for Missionaries, Lutheran Church, Japan, 1920, 23

Folder ff 10

Selkirk Weekly Record, "Japan in Agony", 9/21/23

Box Box 9 , Folder ff
1

Single copies: Bjarmi, 1931; Buddhist Missionen, 1926; The Christian Graphic, 1934

Folder ff 2

Tanker Tog Toner, 1932-37

Folder ff 3

Tokyo Gazette; 8/37, 2/39, 5/40

Pamphlets

Location: 2/C/1

Box Box 9 , Folder ff
4

Jon Bjarnason Academy, 1931

Folder ff 5

Foreign Languages in Japan, 1929

Folder ff 6

Freemasonry in Japan, 1941

Folder ff 7

Grace Cathedral, San Francisco (poems), n.d.

Folder ff 8

The Icelandic Lutheran Synod, 1885-1935

Folder ff 9

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 ,

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

Japanese Destroyer, caption in Japanese, n.d.

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

Folder ff 14

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 ,

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

Karuizawa

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

Folder ff 25	Kamedo
Folder ff 26	Kyoto
Folder ff 27	Biwako, color tinted
Folder ff 28	Various Japanese scenes, English captions, color tinted
Folder ff 29	Hakone, color tinted
Folder ff 30	Asuke
Folder ff 31	Nara
Folder ff 32	Mt. Fuji, some color tinted
Box Box 13 ,	Koyasau
Folder ff 1	
Folder ff 2	Single cards of various places, some color tinted
Folder ff 3	Churches, identified in Japanese
Folder ff 4-5	Various scenes identified in Japanese, some color tinted
Folder ff 6	Korea (Keijo), identified in English, color tinted
Folder ff 7	Scenes of Korea with English captions
Folder ff 8	C.P.S.S. Empress of Asia
Folder ff 9	Single cards: Chicago, Vancouver B.C., Iceland (?)
Folder ff 10	Empty envelopes for photographs and postcards
Folder ff 11	Postcards with correspondence, various scenes and dates, in Japanese and English