

# Memories of the September 21, 1944 Air Raid by Carr Hooper

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For ENGL 618: Research Methods in English

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## Introduction to the Series

This transcription and its attendant annotations, explanatory material, and bibliography were prepared by students in ENGL 618: Research Methods in English, the required gateway class for the MA in English at Western Carolina University. The learning outcomes for this class include the following:

1. Conduct appropriate, effective, and ethical scholarship
  - a. Effectively find and use advanced research tools (handbooks, databases, guides, bibliographies, etc.) appropriate to a subject.
    - Students will be able to use a wide variety of such tools and evaluate those tools.
  - b. Find appropriate advanced research (print and electronic scholarship) and apply that research to specific disciplinary questions or issues.
    - Students will be able to find a variety of scholarship, evaluate both the appropriateness and rigor of that scholarship, and incorporate that scholarship correctly and effectively.
  - c. Develop accurate bibliographies and reference citations.
    - Students will be able to annotate, abstract, and cite materials following standard MLA format.
2. Understand the process by which the texts we use are made available.
  - Students will be able to conduct basic editorial work and evaluate the editorial work of others.

All work is presented as submitted by the students. While these students take great care with their transcriptions and annotations, errors are always possible. As these students learn throughout this class, good scholarship requires checking of sources and corroboration by authoritative sources.

It is hoped that the transcription and annotation of WCU Special Collections materials will be useful to the institution, students, scholars, and other patrons and users of WCU's Special Collections materials.

## INTRODUCTION

Weston Carr Hooper (May 5, 1903–December 8, 1981), a native of Jackson County, North Carolina, married Ruth Hooper in 1931. After obtaining a degree from the Teachers College at Western Carolina University, Carr worked as superintendent of Sylva grade school. In 1932, the Hoopers relocated to the Philippines when Carr accepted a position as an English teacher. After America entered World War II, the Hoopers were forced into Santo Tomas internment camp. The following manuscript is a handwritten account of an air raid that occurred at the camp on September 21, 1944.

The Hoopers were not the only American family to relocate to the Philippines. After the Great Depression, many college-educated U.S. citizens found a better quality of life in Southeast Asia. Even though these citizens knew the impending danger of the newly-founded war, some were reluctant to leave a steady career and a seeming stability. The internment camps consisted mostly of American and British citizens, and differed significantly from a POW camp or the Japanese internment camps in America. Citizens of Santo Tomas, like other camps in the Pacific islands, were largely responsible for their own administration and regulation. For the first six months of internment, there was little to no assistance by Japanese camp authorities to provide food or proper sanitation for the prisoners. If only by necessity, the internees at Santo Tomas formed an “Executive Committee,” which undertook sixteen subcommittees, including a job assignment committee. Some of the jobs listed include weeding gardens, cleaning drains, repairing books in the library, and serving food. In the WCU Special Collections, there are certificates for both Carr and Ruth Hooper that state their work positions—Carr worked in the sanitation department, while Ruth was assigned to peeling vegetables. The Hoopers’ internment earned notoriety at home when the local newspaper, *The Sylva Herald*, published an article during their time at Santo Tomas. The article detailed a letter, written by Alvin Aurell, who had just returned to America from the internment camp. Aurell wrote a letter to Carr’s parents describing the welfare of the couple. He detailed Ruth’s job at the hospital (contradictory to her camp records), and claimed she is having a slight relief from her normal migraine headaches. In addition, he explained that Carr lost weight and had even built a small bamboo shack in the college grounds.

It was difficult for the American forces to rescue internees from a city that was under battle, and the first rescue attempt on Manila did not come until September of 1944, when Carr writes this first-hand account. Conditions worsened from this point on and many internees died from starvation. Finally, on February 3, 1945, Santo Tomas internees were rescued by the American military—including Carr and Ruth Hooper.

After returning home to Western North Carolina, Carr resumed his teaching career at Sylva High School. He was promoted to principal in 1956 where he maintained that position until his retirement in 1969. The football stadium at Sylva-Webster High School (presently Smoky Mountain) is named after Hooper.

Other written documents and information relating to the Hoopers can be found at the WCU Special Collections, both online and on-site in the Hunter Library at Western Carolina University.

## EDITORIAL PRACTICE

In order to maintain the integrity of Hooper's writing, we decided that correcting his grammar and spelling would be too compromising. The urgency and excitement of Hooper's tone would be understated with corrections. His first-hand account of the under-reported air raid is what we hope that readers will focus on, which the flow of the relatively minor errors adds to.

There are some notable consistencies in Hooper's spelling and grammar that is important to remember while reading through the document. He used commas and apostrophes sparingly, and left out commas where it would have been appropriate otherwise; not correcting these allows the reader to understand exigency driving Hooper's words. He does not dot every lowercase I or T and it is increasingly so as the pages go on. His lowercase letters B, H, and K look very similar to each other, which made transcription time consuming but not impossible.

Hooper's cursive handwriting became increasingly more difficult to read as the pages went on. We believe that it is partially because the account is written on the back of a Spanish textbook and the ink bleeds through, and because of Hooper's hand growing tired as he continued to write. We have styled the specific instances in various ways, depending on the legibility of Hooper's hand writing:

- Words that we were able to read fully, but not completely confident of are written with brackets around the word—[Carr Hooper]
- Words that we were able to read various letters but not the complete word will have letters and underscores between and/or around the letters—[C\_\_r Ho\_\_r]
- Words that we were unable to read at all will be in bracket with underscores to indicate the word's placement in the document—Carr [ \_\_\_\_ ]

There are instances where Carr crosses out words; we transcribed those as best we could. They are stylized with a mark through the word (e.g. ~~Carr Hooper~~). These crossed out words and phrases provide an insight to what Hooper was thinking and feeling as he was writing about the air raid. They also provide more to the context for words that are harder to decipher.

On the final transcription, we decided that breaking the text up by page would be disruptive to the flow and readability of Hooper's whole account. There will be a footnote of when the pages begin and end to orient the reader of page length and Hooper's writing style.

## MANUSCRIPT DESCRIPTION

The description of the air raid was written on the back of what appears to be a Spanish textbook. There is handwriting in the margins of the textbook, but it does not seem to exactly match Carr Hooper's. The paper is faded yellow with time, and is extremely thin and fragile. The individual pages are housed in plastic protectors. When the pages were digitally photocopied, the printed text from the back of the page showed through and made it difficult to discern the account at times. The account, which is physically located at WCU Special Collections, is much easier to comprehend in person.

On pages 5 and 6 of the handwritten account, there are large sections torn out on the bottom left of the page. After speaking with WCU Special Collections employee, Jason Brady, we learned that Carr Hooper had a habit of tearing out the bottom of pages. Brady directed us to a Rudyard Kipling novel that belonged to Hooper, which had dozens of pages cut out in the very same size as the air raid account. Brady suspected that Carr used the torn pages for cigarette rolling, and we agree with this theory. Because there are sections missing on those two pages, comprehension is difficult. We formatted those sections in our manuscript to accommodate what is decipherable of the remaining text while maintaining the visual integrity of the document.

## Air Raid Sept 21 1944

Nine months, two years and ~~half~~ of constant drumming overhead of Japanese<sup>1</sup> zero fighters two motored bombers and transports, volumes and volumes of idle fruitless stupid humans and speculation, and at last an ~~air~~ alert signal. A week of this alert and on Sept 20 afternoon at five oclock this alert called off—written next day, Sept. 22 1944<sup>2</sup>

Nine oclock and a friend is cutting my hair after I had finished his. He steps outside for a minute and calls back to me—

“Wonder where all those Jap planes are going—

I step outside. One<sup>3</sup>, two, three, four, as fast as I can count. Fifty [six] at an altitude of 10,000-12,000 feet. Tier on tier of dark planes [against] a [light but] solid cloud bank. Then, no, they're not flying the regular Japanese figure V formation. They are one over the other the top of one slightly over lapping the other. They pass directly overhead there, [those] lower ones have clipped wings, ship board! American planes! Look! Look! Look! These come from the [North] of all [places]. There's no alarm. There's no<sup>4</sup> signal! Oh! the double cracks of anti aircraft<sup>5</sup> pom! Pom, pom<sup>6</sup>. Quick, to the south, can from the southwest scores and scores of planes countless. These are nearer the Port<sup>7</sup> area nearer the attack. Bursts of shells, thousands of them cover the sky. These birds of ours, these Eagles of the seas, our plains go through ~~them~~ these shells like they were not there. What these [overhead] are changing [(crossed out words)] then up goes wings, down goes noses and the power dives of US Navy [bombers] go and—what a dive.

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<sup>1</sup> Upon researching regional dialects (both the Mountain and Southern dialects), we concluded that Hooper spelled it “Japnese” because of the following reasons: One, he simply misspelled the word “Japanese;” and two, the influence of the Tagalog language as the Hoopers had lived in the Philippines for 14 years when the air raid happened. He also misspelled it on page 2.

<sup>2</sup> Written in pen, not pencil like the rest of the documents, and in a different handwriting.

<sup>3</sup> First page ends here.

<sup>4</sup> Second page ends here. The typed text of the Spanish textbook starts on page three.

<sup>5</sup> Ground-based defense that is used for hostile aircraft and designed to fire shells at very high elevations.

<sup>6</sup> Hooper uses “pom” as an onomatopoeia, “pom pom gun” is a slang term for automatic, quick-fire guns.

<sup>7</sup> Because Hooper capitalizes “Port,” we believe that he was referring to a nearby port. Santo Tomas was very close to the Manila Bay.

Down, down more vertical<sup>1</sup> straight up and down, what kind of an attack is this? Hundreds of planes tip up [crazily] like plunging hawks and dive on target, any target from all angles.

I rush home. Nearing my shanty<sup>2</sup> I hear Ruth shouting merrily “Pour it on em, pour it on em.”

“Come, lets get to the education building<sup>3</sup>.” We do [quickly]. By now the full attack is on. It is hard to distinguish the anti air craft fire from distant bombs, but there’s no mistaking the wicked rattle of machine gun fire from every side, completely<sup>4</sup> surrounding the town there is this shattering, chattering crash of machine guns. Against darker clouds on the bay side these guns like fireflies attached to the wings and [fuselage]<sup>5</sup> of these [d\_\_\_\_\_y] devils can plainly be seen. Whir, whir whir the song of strut<sup>6</sup> and wire, motor and wings, nothing ever can stop those hurdling, diving, stunting planes. They don’t look like machines, they look

<sup>7</sup> avenging spirits whose  
 destroy and  
 after a  
 planes can  
 plane and  
 a diving<sup>8</sup>

[\_om\_], a hawk, a kind of prey pouncing—[driving], [diving] death.

Over the bay front the planes still pound targets, the others have bombed, machined gunned, and left, but wait heres another wave as many as before or more. Lower this time, seemingly faster too—smoke

columns toward the  
 and these  
 [\_\_\_\_\_’ll]

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<sup>1</sup> Third page ends here.

<sup>2</sup> A shanty was a form of housing within the camp. It was about 20 square feet with wooden floors and very little else. It was, however, considered a privilege to have one because of otherwise cramped housing.

<sup>3</sup> The education building was a three-story edifice that was used as dormitories for internees. It originally housed only female internees, but it later housed men as well.

<sup>4</sup> Fourth page ends here.

<sup>5</sup> A fuselage is the main body of an aircraft.

<sup>6</sup> A strut is a structural element that carries compressive forces along its length.

<sup>7</sup> The page is torn here (and in page six) possibly because Hooper used it to roll tobacco into cigarettes.

<sup>8</sup> Fifth page ends here.

One over the  
of dots darker  
as they near  
toward the bay are<sup>1</sup>

can now see the [end] the perfect finish of those thrilling dives from the clouds. At the [right] minute a few hundred feet above, I swear it [seems] the housetops, those [atoms] at the rudder of those destroying steeds of air, pull up the reins and those block chargers of victory actually rear and buck their way back to safety after jerking away from that lethal load underneath. Now, is where we see the speed the perfect<sup>2</sup> control. Hardly ~~has~~ does the plane cleared that [load] unloaded on an unprepared target then it shoots upwards, wings straining, engine shouting for more power, more lift and up and up and up to turn slowly [at] top and repeat and compete their angry cycle of destruction and death to the enemy. All guns again going, following and pursuing, this great [demon harnessed]<sup>3</sup> by and driven by our naval men.<sup>4</sup>

At the end of the dive the plane ~~turns~~ roaring toward a point [and] for on the horizon one sees the assembly of planes ~~the~~ into groups, the whole. (~~One/Our~~) How many are [missing]. One hopes that there are none. [Certainly we have] seen none whatever.

Now this raid has [\_\_\_\_] and gone. The thrill of a lifetime, the end of the weary road is at hand or in sight. No more rumors. They have come back. They are back.<sup>5</sup>

They'll be back time and again. Hundreds of planes overhead, our planes attacking theirs [\_\_\_\_], our [\_\_\_\_] too. Their splendid disregard of danger, that brave determined intent on target, that ~~perfect~~ display of mechanical perfection and human training. All these thrill, delight and [over awe] us, [but to \_\_\_\_ and for \_\_\_\_] two of those [planes] fall out, that defiant leap toward death and pass roaring overhead going up [\_\_\_\_ing]<sup>6</sup> power and achievement. And as these two planes slightly tilt on their upward climb— [clear] and right and gloriously correct is that blazing emblem of American—the red, white and blue naval [\_\_\_\_], the star of hope and might and right.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sixth page ends here.

<sup>2</sup> Seventh page ends here.

<sup>3</sup> There are two large marks through the page. It is unclear if Hooper meant to make them to edit his writing.

<sup>4</sup> Eighth page ends here.

<sup>5</sup> Ninth page ends here.

<sup>6</sup> Tenth page ends here.

<sup>7</sup> There are numbers in the blank space of the page. It is unclear what the purpose was for or who wrote it.



## WORKS CITED

“Anti-aircraft.” *Oxford Dictionary of English*, edited by Angus Stevenson, 3rd edition, Oxford University Press, 2015.  
[www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199571123.001.0001/m\\_en\\_gb0031370?rskey=0jR48L&result=8](http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199571123.001.0001/m_en_gb0031370?rskey=0jR48L&result=8)

The definition varies, so we wanted a concrete example. In the account, Hooper is referring to the American military as anti-aircraft.

Atkins, Tony, and Marcel Escudier. “Strut.” *A Dictionary of Mechanical Engineering*. Oxford University Press, 2013. *Oxford Reference*, 2013.  
[www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199587438.001.0001/acref-9780199587438-e-6325](http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199587438.001.0001/acref-9780199587438-e-6325)>.

Used to provide context of the term in Hooper’s writing, which relates primarily to parts of an airplane.

Cogan, Frances B. *Captured: The Japanese Internment of American Civilians in the Philippines, 1941-1945*. University of Georgia Press, 2000.

Used for historical information on WWII, including why civilians were present in Manila after the Pearl Harbor bombing. Provided information about the work committees in Santo Tomas, as well as a short description of the American rescue. Also provided information on housing in Santo Tomas.

Death Certificate for Weston Carr Hooper, 6 December 1981, Ancestry.com North Carolina, Death Indexes, 1908-2004, NC Department of Health North Carolina Deaths 1979-82.

Used to verify Hooper’s location, birth date, and death date.

“Fuselage.” *The Oxford Essential Dictionary of the U.S. Military*. Oxford University Press, 2001. Oxford Reference.  
[www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199891580.001.0001/acref-9780199891580-e-3241](http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199891580.001.0001/acref-9780199891580-e-3241)>

To provide context information about what the function of a fuselage is.

“Former Teacher of Sylva is Jap Prisoner.” *The Sylva Herald and Ruralite* [Sylva, NC], 5 Jan. 1944, p. 1.

Written while Carr and Ruth were in Santo Tomas, this article details public concern about the couple as well as information about their jobs and well-being.

Herman, Lewis. *American Dialects: A Manual for Actors, Directors and Writers*. Theatre Arts Books, 1947.

Provided in-depth understanding of American dialects based on where Hooper lived before moving to the Philippines (Southern and Mountain dialects). It was used specifically to see if Hooper’s spelling of Japanese was part of his dialect or otherwise.

“Pom Pom Gun.” OED Online. Oxford University Press, 2016. Web.  
[www.oed.com/view/Entry/147554?redirectedFrom=pom+pom+gun#eid47178617](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/147554?redirectedFrom=pom+pom+gun#eid47178617)

Used to speculate what Hooper may have meant when he was describing the sounds he was experiencing in the air raid.

Stevens, Frederic H. *Santo Tomas Internment Camp: 1942-1945*. Foreward by Douglas MacArthur. New York: F.H. Stevens, 1946.

Provides the initial perception of the internment camps, as well as an overview of what was known about the camps at that time. The Hoopers owned this book, and their version is housed in WCU Special Collections.

"War News Summarized." *New York Times* (1923-Current file) Sep 22, New York, N.Y., 1944.  
<http://proxy195.nclive.org/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/106963794?accountid=14968>.

There was very little coverage of the air raid on September 21, 1944. This is used to demonstrate the way that the raid was reported—short and lacking detail, making it a lesser known event of American presence in World War II.