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J. LINSLEY GRESSITT (1914–1982)^{1,2}

Dr J. Linsley Gressitt and his wife Margaret were aboard a regular commercial flight that crashed in south China on April 26, 1982, leaving no survivors. Considering the many adventures of Dr Gressitt's life—biological explorations in remote areas, mountains climbed, internment by his country's enemies in war, and countless flights in small planes in the most dangerous terrain—one must recognize the irony in this stroke of fate.

One word that comes to mind when considering Dr Gressitt's extraordinary life and career is *indomitable*. While his professional activities in no way diminished as he approached his 68th birthday, he had already packed the equivalent of several productive careers into his lifetime. This could only have been done through an unusual concentration of will, in addition to his other attributes.

That my own appreciation of the range of Lin Gressitt's experiences and accomplishments has been increased significantly in preparing to write about his life, despite a close association of many years, is indicative of his unassuming nature; he was a genuinely modest man. He was also a man who could at various times call four countries "home": the United States, Japan, China, and Papua New Guinea.

Judson Linsley Gressitt was born in Tokyo on 16 June 1914. His parents were American Baptist missionaries. His childhood, largely spent in Japan, was not uneventful. He experienced the great Japanese earthquake and fire of 1923 and was among the refugees on the east coast of Japan during the following year. In 1925, he barely survived an illness combining pneumonia and typhoid fever. He was brought to recuperate in Oakland, California, on the east side of San Francisco Bay, where he lived until returning to Japan in 1929. It was during this stay in California that his enthusiasm for natural history developed to a high intensity, from which it never waned. His cousin, E. Gorton Linsley, had already developed an interest in ento-

^{1.} I am greatly indebted to several members of the Gressitt family who made available letters, notes, and other materials. Dr Felicia Gressitt Boch of Berkeley, California, Dr Gressitt's sister, and Mrs Rebecca Gressitt Lau of Maui, Hawaii, daughter of the Gressitts, were especially helpful with materials, and both of them also read and commented on a draft of the manuscript.

^{2.} A complete bibliography of J. Linsley Gressitt's publications will appear in the next issue of the *International Journal of Entomology*.

Vol. 25, no. 1

mology and both he and Lin were given further impetus towards a career in that field as Boy Scouts. At summer scout camps, they were influenced by a naturalist employed by the Oakland [City] Council, Brighton C. Cain. In his posthumously published autobiography, Robert L. Usinger wrote that Mr Cain "... proved to be such an inspiration that he was directly responsible for starting several scouts ... into careers in entomology," and he named E. Gorton Linsley, Elwood C. Zimmerman, W. Harry Lange, and J. Linsley Gressitt in addition to himself.

Lin's mother wrote a poem about him at that time, including the lines:

But bones of beasts upon his desk Enjoy the light of day; He sleeps well with a million Mounted insects round about.

His field trips included weekends and summer collecting in the Sierra Nevada. His interests and collecting then spanned many groups—birds, reptiles, amphibians, plants, as well as insects—but a special devotion to Coleoptera was already developing. When he returned to Japan, it was with a determination to pursue his activities in natural history. He made contacts with some of the leading entomologists in Tokyo and also spent time at the Japanese Beetle Laboratory of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Yokohama.

In the spring of 1932, after graduating from the American School in Tokyo and teaching English for a year in a Japanese high school, Lin Gressitt, as a youth of 17, carried out his first major expedition: three months on the island of Formosa. He had already travelled extensively in Japan and developed a taste for mountain climbing in conjunction with his biological fieldwork. In Formosa, he covered all regions of the island, climbed the two highest mountains, travelled several hundred miles on foot, and returned with major entomological and herpetological collections. His college studies, begun that fall at Stanford University in California, were interrupted the following spring by another three months in Formosa (and a brief first trip to China), which resulted in more than 50,000 specimens of plants, reptiles and amphibians, and insects, including a number of undescribed species in the last two categories.

In January 1935, he transferred from Stanford to the University of California at Berkeley, where he received his B.S. in 1938 and his M.S. in 1939. His first published article, on new Japanese Cerambycidae, appeared in the *Pan-Pacific Entomologist* in January 1934, and this was followed in 1935 by eight publications in five journals on Cerambycidae from Japan, Formosa, China, the Philippines, Borneo, and Siam. These were substantial papers, and at 21 years of age Linsley Gressitt was already a recognized coleopterist with an international reputation. He also continued his Far Eastern field explorations, remarkably ambitious trips for one so young. There was a threemonth trip to Hainan Island off the south coast of China in the summer of 1935, and during 1936 an equally long period of collecting in a scientifically unexplored area of the interior of southern China (NE Kwantung, SE Kiangsi, and SW Fukien provinces). The Hainan Island investigation was a particularly gruelling experience in which he reached the center of this large and previously little-studied island and climbed the Five Finger Mountains, only the second time this was achieved by a Westerner. The Hainan trip was complicated by dense, untracked forests, biting insects, and leeches, and the 1936 China trip ended with Lin suffering from amoebic dysentery and infected feet. Nonetheless, both trips were very productive scientifically.

Lin visited Lingnan University in Canton³ on both of these last trips, and in 1937 he was hired by the Lingnan Natural History Survey and Museum to identify beetles and publish the results of his Chinese research while completing his B.S. and M.S. degrees in Berkeley. Also in the academic year 1938–1939, while doing the M.S. degree (on the hispine beetles of China) and continuing work for Lingnan, he was principal assistant to S.F. Light, Professor of Zoology at Berkeley, in a research project on caste determination in termites. Just after finishing his master's degree, he left for Canton to assume the post of Instructor at Lingnan University and, concurrently, Acting Director of the Lingnan Natural History Museum.

At that time, in May of 1939 and not yet 25 years old, Linsley Gressitt had 39 papers published or in press: 20 on Cerambycidae, 9 on other Coleoptera (especially Chrysomelidae, beginning in 1938), 3 compilations of notes from collecting expeditions, and 7 on reptiles and amphibians. These last seven papers and two others published in 1941 were his full but significant output of specifically herpetological works, although he later published field notes on birds and treated vertebrates in some detail in a number of biogeographic and ecological publications. When I asked him about this phase of his research, early in 1982, he commented that an associate had advised him to choose between entomology and herpetology, since he could not expect to do full justice to both. His published works include descriptions of new species among the snakes, lizards, and frogs that he collected in China, including Hainan Island.

Canton was part of Japanese-occupied China when Lin arrived there. Most of the faculty and student body of Lingnan University were in Hong Kong, under British control. As the only staff member who spoke Japanese, he played an additional and important role as translator in dealing with the Japanese army. His other duties, in the absence of a student body, primarily concerned care of the museum collections, supervising construction of a new permanent insectary building, and research. During 1940, he was able to make three collecting trips into unoccupied China. The second of these was a two-month journey from Hong Kong to Indo-China and southwestern China where, besides extensive collecting in the provinces of Yunnan, Kwei-

^{3.} Now Guangzhou. The earlier names and spellings in the Roman alphabet are used rather than those recently made official in the People's Republic of China, because the former can be related more directly to Dr Gressitt's work in China.

chow, and Szechuan, he visited many of the Chinese universities, particularly those that had been moved from occupied China, and met their faculty members. During this trip, well documented in a letter to friends, he was travelling in a country at war and air attacks were frequent. The following, characteristically matter-of-fact passage expresses a sense of the time and place: "... our bus was stopped by an air alarm and [we] spent the night in a small town. The next morning we found [that] the road, some hamlets, and Chi-Kiang had been severely bombed, the China travel hotel and bus station, where I would have stayed, having received a direct hit."

In 1941, Linsley Gressitt married Margaret Kriete, also of an American missionary family, in Sendai, Japan. They had been acquainted since childhood, attending the same school. Miss Kriete had obtained her baccalaureate degree and taken graduate courses at Oberlin College in Ohio; she then returned to Japan where she taught music. Throughout her life, music remained Peg Gressitt's primary interest, and she played the piano, lectured, taught children, and prepared program notes, including those for the Honolulu Symphony over a number of years. Her early love of nature and interest in natural history translated into another concentrated activity after her marriage, and she published several papers with her husband and consistently supported his professional activities. Husband and wife shared a deep religious faith and both had a strong sense of self-direction that helped them to overcome difficulties. This was evident in Peg's continued musical career, despite a hearing impairment, which became serious following a scarlet fever attack shortly before her marriage.

It had been difficult for Lin to get leave to be married in Japan. His special position at Lingnan, resulting from his fluency in Japanese, and the increasing restrictions on travel also dictated that the newlyweds leave immediately on the return to Canton. After various delays and uncertainties, they were able to reach Hong Kong, then get a boat up the Pearl River and arrive in Canton on April 8. That evening they heard that the river had been closed to further travel, and Peg later wrote that this was probably the last boat on which she might have reached Canton. She also noted that the honeymoon trip they had talked about and planned had to be delayed for seven years.

Soon after the return to Canton, Lin was successful in carrying out a mission requested by the Division of Biological Control at the University of California Riverside campus (then Citrus Experiment Station). This was the collection and air-shipment of viable parasites of the citrus red scale. He carried out the work in the Orient on a leave of absence from Lingnan and with a temporary appointment from California. It was a major contribution to the citrus industry and was widely reported in U.S. scientific journals and in the general press.

On December 8, 1941 (December 7 in the Western Hemisphere, the day of the attack on Pearl Harbor), the Gressitts and other Americans in Canton were officially placed in internment status by the Japanese. During most of a year, this was a modified house arrest, with Lin extremely active in moving and protecting the museum

collections and in acting as interpreter. In a letter of March 29, 1942, he wrote that, working at home, he had been able to complete and publish in Canton three papers on local long-horned beetles; he managed to complete and publish 11 more papers during that year. Canton had been occupied by the Japanese for more than three years and was not close to the war areas. But the Gressitts and the handful of other Westerners in the city were cut off from the outside world, news of family and friends and progress of the war, and they were acutely sensible of the suffering—including starvation—of the Chinese population. In November of 1942, Lin was interned in a camp in the city. In December, Peg gave birth to the first of their four daughters. Later, in early 1943, Peg was interned in a camp for women, and the family was reunited in May. In September, the Gressitts were repatriated, returning to the United States by the circuitous route of Hong Kong, the Philippines, Saigon, Singapore, Goa, South Africa, and Brazil, and arriving in December 1943.

Lin worked on new insecticides under a fellowship at the Berkeley campus during 1944 and part of 1945. He also completed and received his Ph.D. degree from the University of California in 1945, with a dissertation on the tortoise beetles (Chryso-melidae: Cassidinae) of China. In 1945–1946 he was a U.S. Navy officer attached to Medical Research Unit No. 2, with service in Washington (D.C.), Guam, Philippines, Ryukyu Islands, and Japan.

The Gressitts returned to Lingnan University at the first opportunity in 1946, and Lin resumed what he expected, or at least hoped, would be a long career of teaching and research there. He was Assistant Professor and Associate Curator in the museum, and in 1948 he was promoted to Associate Professor. Beginning in 1947, he held a concurrent appointment as Assistant Entomologist in the University of California Division of Biological Control, concerned with finding, rearing, and shipping parasites to the U.S. for biological control. Of the fieldwork he conducted in this period, including work in various parts of mainland China, Hainan Island (derris research), and Formosa (biological control studies), his leadership of the California Academy of Sciences-Lingnan University Dawn Redwood Expedition is notable (see Gressitt, 1953, Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., 4th ser. 28(2): 25-58). The expedition was planned soon after the first reports of a "living fossil" tree in west central China (Szechuan and Hupeh provinces), subsequently named Metasequoia glyptostroboides. It was carried out by Lingnan University staff under Lin's direction in the summer of 1948. The principal objective was to collect insects and other animals, with the hope of finding faunal elements with North American affinities in conjunction with Metasequoia. The expedition made extensive faunal collections and also brought back a number of seedlings of Metasequoia and determined the abundance and geographic range of the tree. This part of China was largely sheltered from outside influences at the time, and the people lived very much as they had for centuries. As usual, there was much exploration on foot, and Lin made several extensive trips with a single assistant; the last of these journeys covered 265 km in a little over five days. Lin had been suffering during

much of the trip from sores on his feet, resulting primarily from infected bites of bed bugs, which were ubiquitous in human-occupied buildings. Unable to walk any longer, he sent out his assistants to collect and processed the biological materials himself. Finally he arranged to be carried out of the area in a makeshift sedan chair.

In following the research side of his career, it should not be overlooked that Dr Gressitt was an effective teacher. He was, of course, fluent in Cantonese at this time, and he was one of the major influences in the developing careers of a generation of Chinese entomologists, both in and outside the classroom. He also made significant contributions to the collections at the University in Canton. On a recent trip there, I had time to examine only a limited portion of the entomological collections, but I was struck by the large number of specimens bearing "J.L. Gressitt" on the collection labels.

The political upheavals and civil war in China eventually engulfed Canton. The People's Republic of China was emerging, and in 1949 the communist forces were in control of the city. At first, the university was able to continue to operate on a nearly normal basis, but as this changed and the activities of foreigners were restricted, Peg and their (then three) children left the country while Lin stayed on at the request of the university. Anti-American feeling became increasingly evident, especially after the beginning of the Korean War in the summer of 1950. Lin was once again interned, in the form of a house arrest. He was subjected to political accusations and his status and fate were uncertain from day to day. At last, in January 1951, he was allowed to leave.

Characteristically, Lin was almost immediately back at work. He continued his activities in biological control in 1951, as an Associate Specialist in this subject with the University of California, and carried out field investigations in Japan, Formosa, and Hong Kong. In that same year and in 1952, he was employed by the Pacific Science Board (U.S. National Research Council) to work on the ecology of the coconut rhinoceros beetle and to coordinate the Insects of Micronesia project. This brought him into much wider contact with oceanic Pacific islands, and he visited Guam, Yap, Palau (where the whole family stayed for six months), Samoa, and Fiji, as well as Hawaii and the mainland United States. One result was the definitive ecological study "The coconut rhinoceros beetle (*Oryctes rhinoceros*), with particular reference to the Palau Islands" (Gressitt, 1953, *Bull. Bernice P. Bishop Mus.* **212:** 1–157).

During most of 1952, the Gressitt family lived in Honolulu, and the Bishop Museum was the official base for Lin's activities, as an associate of the museum. In January 1953, he was appointed Entomologist on the staff of the museum, following the award of a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to support the Insects of Micronesia project. In 1955, he was officially placed in charge of entomology at the museum and he remained Chairman, Department of Entomology, until 1972, when he relinquished that post to spend more time on overseas work, specifically in New Guinea. In 1964, his accomplishments were recognized by the museum through the award of the Linus Allen Bishop Distinguished Chair of Zoology, a concurrent title that he held until his death. He voluntarily took on emeritus status in July of 1981, with the title of Senior Entomologist and activation of his retirement income. In fact, however, none of these titles changed the level of his activity and productivity or the overall significance of his role at the museum. In the 1950s and 1960s, J. Linsley Gressitt transformed entomology at the Bishop Museum from a collection that had been significant but relatively inactive into one of the largest and most utilized entomological centers, with unparalleled Pacific Basin collections: from one staff member to 20–35, and from about 250,000 specimens to over 12.5 million.

The collecting phase of the Insects of Micronesia project had been underway for several years, with support from the Office of Naval Research and under the aegis of the Pacific Science Board, and with a number of museums and entomologists on their staffs cooperating. The completion of preparation of specimens for study, arrangements for systematists to work on various groups, editing and publication of the results, and distribution of identified materials made up the task that Lin now took on. There were still some collecting gaps to be filled, and this was done in early 1953. About 400,000 specimens were sent to more than 120 entomologists in more than 15 countries. Lin wrote the introductory volume (257 pages), published in 1954, as well as sections on some groups of Coleoptera. Seventy-two parts have appeared and the series is not yet completed.

The editing and publication arrangements for the parts of *Insects of Micronesia* were done within the department and with Lin's continuing efforts and stimulus. As his other research programs developed and a need for further outlets for the results became apparent, he founded additional publication series. *Pacific Insects* (retitled *International Journal of Entomology* in 1983) appeared as a quarterly journal starting in 1959. *Pacific Insects Monographs* was started in 1961, and 40 issues have been published. The *Journal of Medical Entomology* was begun as a quarterly publication in 1964 and made bimonthly in 1969, with a *Supplements* series starting in 1976. Lin was senior editor of all of them until 1970 and continued editing some of them, along with other publications, throughout his remaining years. One colleague has remarked on his memory of Lin editing manuscripts and proof aboard a storm-tossed ship in Antarctic waters, apparently at least largely able to ignore the chaos surrounding him.

In 1955, Lin received a Guggenheim Fellowship for field studies in New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago, where he spent four months. He also proposed a comprehensive study of the origin and distribution of the insect fauna of the whole of Oceania as well as source areas for this fauna, and a grant ("Zoogeography and Evolution of Pacific Insects") was received from NSF. A grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), U.S. Public Health Service, was received in 1957 for study of "Pacific Insects of Public Health Importance." Also in 1957, a program of shiptrapping insects, later extended to airplane-trapping, was initiated "... to determine the importance of air currents as a means of transporting insects in the Pacific area." This last project was supported by the Office of Naval Research (ONR), NSF, and a number of other agencies. In 1959, as a member of the U.S. Antarctic Research Program, Lin began his field research in Antarctic entomology, later to encompass the subantarctic islands and some Arctic exploration. Funding for all of these programs was renewed and continued into the 1960s along with other projects that were started. For example, in 1962 there were departmental projects, all requiring some of Lin's attention, concerning medically important insects of SE Asia and New Guinea (U.S. Army Research and Development Command), Antarctic entomology (NSF), zoogeography of New Guinea (NSF), the U.S.–Japan Binational Program on systematics of Pacific area insects (NSF), research on man-biting *Phlebotomus* in the Sudan (ONR), insect dispersal (ship-trapping) (ONR), and South Pacific insects of public health importance (NIH). In that year, Lin participated in panels and meetings on the U.S. mainland and in New Zealand, Netherlands, England, and France, and he conducted fieldwork and conferred with associates in Japan, Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Okinawa, Borneo, Malaya, New Guinea, and the Auckland Islands.

With the intense field activity generated by these projects, huge numbers of specimens were acquired and a high proportion processed for study. Numbers accessioned annually frequently were in the 200,000 to 500,000 range, and in 1963, an astonishing 845,934 arthropods were accessioned, while another 200,000 were collected but not yet accessioned at year end. The NSF recognized the major importance of this rapidly developing resource and approved Lin's request for funds to construct a new entomology facility at the museum; Pauahi Hall, with three floors devoted to entomology, was completed and occupied in 1964.

Lin had hoped for some time to visit New Guinea, and the opportunity finally came in 1955. He was aware of the relatively undisturbed and unexplored nature of the island and its rich insect fauna, and he recognized its zoogeographic importance and possible significance as a source area for Oceanic biotic elements. New Guinea more than met his expectations, and he spent part of every subsequent year there. On the trip in 1955, he climbed Mt Wilhelm, collected on the north and south coasts of Papua New Guinea and extensively in entomologically new areas of the highlands, and made a major journey through the Wissel Lakes area of western (then Netherlands) New Guinea. Some 150,000 insects were collected, and he was aware as he worked in the field of the high proportion of undescribed taxa in this material. Over the years, he visited essentially all parts of New Guinea and the rest of Melanesia, and in the early years he was sometimes in areas that were not only entomologically unexplored but where he was the first Caucasian to be seen by the indigenous population.

Bishop Museum New Guinea Field Station was established by Dr Gressitt in 1961, at about 1100 meters elevation in the Wau-Bulolo Valley. The site was well chosen in terms of accessibility, contact with the main road system in the northeastern quadrant of the island, and the wide range of elevations and habitat types that occur nearby. In 1971, with support from the Bishop Museum as Founding Sponsor, Lin carried through the change of the field station into Wau Ecology Institute (WEI) as an independent nonprofit company under Papua New Guinea laws. This was viewed

as an appropriate and necessary step to ensure continuity of the station, in view of the coming transition of the country to the status of an independent nation (1975). The goals of the new institute were clearly defined, and education and conservation were given emphasis parallel with research. WEI became a dominant theme in Lin's life, although he was generally able to continue a high level of research and publication. He gave not only his time and energy to directing the institute but also invested his own money and borrowed and obtained gifts from family and friends for the support of WEI. The demands of the institute increased and in some years in the late 1970s he was spending as much as 10 months in Papua New Guinea. The organization and finances at WEI had improved sufficiently in 1979 so that he could begin to spend half or more of the year away from Wau and to devote more time to research. He once again founded a significant publication series with the WEI Handbooks, eight of which he saw to completion. At this writing, WEI is functioning as an important biological institution along the lines established by its founder.

Lin was accompanied on various later trips to Papua New Guinea by his wife, and occasionally some of their four daughters (Sylvia, Rebecca, Carolyn, and Ellyn). In the 1970s, Wau became the Gressitts' second home, and Peg also spent much of the year there.

J. Linsley Gressitt published more than 300 works, of which many are large monographs or syntheses. He also organized, chaired, and edited the proceedings of a number of important conferences and symposia and organized and edited other topical volumes. (Three assemblages of contributions that he initiated were at various stages at the time of his death and are being published as memorial volumes.) The bulk of his publications can be categorized under systematics and evolution, especially treating Coleoptera in the families Cerambycidae, Chrysomelidae, and Curculionidae; biogeography, including studies on insect dispersal mechanisms; ecology, including the biology of particular groups and community ecology; Antarctic and subantarctic entomology; applied entomology and biological control; and conservation. It is notable that he settled on some of the largest families of organisms as his areas of specialization, especially long-horned beetles and leaf beetles.

Conservation was a particular concern to which Lin devoted much time during the last decades of his life. In Hawaii, his effective dedication to preserving the native biota culminated in his appointment as head of the Governor's Commission on the Preservation of Scientific Sites (1969–1970) and as the first Chairman of the Hawaii Natural Area Reserves System Commission (1970–1973). In Papua New Guinea, one of the few tropical countries that still has the possibility of preserving a major part of its forests in a relatively undisturbed condition, he spoke and wrote to achieve public awareness of the practical values of conservation and to preserve significant areas. He worked for years to obtain protected reserve status for Mt Kaindi, at the base of which WEI is located and which is consequently the type-locality for numerous species of animals and plants; such status is being considered by the government of PNG.

Lin received a number of honors, some already mentioned. Another was the naming of Gressitt Glacier in Antarctica. But the award of the Herbert Gregory Medal at the Pacific Science Congress in Vancouver in 1975 was particularly meaningful to him. The expressed basis for awarding this medal concerns contributions to scientific institutions in addition to research. The fitness of the award to Dr Gressitt is especially evident in this dual sense. Some of his institutional contributions are reflected in the strength of the collections at Zhongshan (Sun Yatsen) University (formerly Lingnan) in Canton, the entomology collections and department at Bishop Museum, the founding and nurturing of Wau Ecology Institute, and the founding and editing of the several publication series that have been mentioned. His contribution to the Pacific Science Congresses was in itself outstanding, as official delegate on five occasions, member of the Entomology Committee, organizer of symposia, and a stimulating influence by his presence. One recognizes the sincerity in Lin's words at the presentation of the Gregory Medal, when he accepted "with a feeling of further challenge, a reminder of much unfinished work" and when he referred to "our obligation to help preserve our environment, the unique assets of all the different islands, all the different countries of this remarkable Pacific world and to work together to save the best attributes and the beauty-natural beauty-the fauna and flora for future generations."

He was a retiring man and he disliked and avoided confrontations. Yet he was not infrequently involved in controversy as a result of following his beliefs. Indeed, he had unusual moral as well as physical courage. If he backed away from an issue, as he sometimes did, it seemed that he was either uncertain of the right course or felt that the issue was not important enough to pursue. He had a quiet but pronounced sense of humor that became more frequently evident as he relaxed in his later years. He was, particularly, a man of dedication—to carrying out the tasks he assigned himself and to doing what he believed was right.

The last return of the Gressitts to China was very meaningful to them. Other American entomologists had travelled to the People's Republic of China to evaluate the science and collection resources there, but none had Lin's knowledge of the past history of Chinese entomology and collections. The invitation from Zhongshan University to give a series of lectures, and the other arrangements for lecturing and travelling in China that followed, excited him. The visit to Zhongshan went well. For both of the Gressitts it was a kind of homecoming. This was the place where they lived and worked during their first years of marriage and where two of their children had been born. The flight from Canton was to have taken them to scenic Guilin, where he was again scheduled to lecture.

J. Linsley Gressitt was one of the outstanding entomologists and field scientists of our era. The gap left by his death will be felt for a long time and, as with few others, his achievements will continue to stand clearly as his memorial.

-Frank J. Radovsky, Bishop Museum, Honolulu