ゲイル・プロジェクト：一人の米兵による写真を通じた1950年代沖縄の再考

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The Gail Project: Revisiting 1950s Okinawa Through an American Serviceman's Photographs

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Around 2009, I was approached by an employee of the University of California, Santa Cruz, with a query about Okinawa. Her father, Dr. Charles Eugene Gail, had been stationed in Okinawa for one year in 1952. He was an army captain and a dentist, and his posting was at a U.S. Army hospital on the island. He was, at the same time, an avid and talented amateur photographer, and according to his daughter, Geri[1)] Gail, the photos he took during that year on the island remained his most treasured for the rest of his life. He had passed away a few years earlier, and Geri had approached the director of a gallery on campus, Shelby Graham, to see if it would be possible to do an exhibition of the photos in honor of her father. Graham thought the photos had artistic merit but wanted to see what someone who knew something about Okinawan history might think of them. Eventually, they found me.

To my eye, the photos[2)] suggest a photographer who was motivated to make images of certain scenes of daily life. He was interested in portraits of people—people at work, at leisure, and at play—images of traditional technology and landscapes. His subjects tended to be in rural areas or towns, not Naha or Shuri. The collection includes photographs of items that would typify Okinawa to those with some acquaintance with the place—turtleback tombs, *gusuku* walls, *shiisa,* and hand tattoos—and many others that were likely to evoke images of an older Okinawa that was in the process of disappearing. The photos show no scenes of urban Okinawa, contemporary events, or the scenes of his own daily life: the U.S. bases. I told Geri that I thought there was historical merit in the photos, and while I looked forward to an exhibition in Santa Cruz, I advised that we should seek an opportunity to do an exhibition of the photos in Okinawa. Showing the photos in Okinawa would transform them from scenes of "Okinawa-ness" to photos rich with stories of identifiable places, people with names, and narratable lives and landscapes with histories both before and after 1952. Geri had questions about the photos she could no longer ask her father—questions about what had drawn him to the place so powerfully and indelibly—and the people of Okinawa, I thought, might have answers.

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As a historian, I had my own questions upon seeing the photographs. They do not have historical value by virtue of giving us visual access to historical events or famous people, nor was the photographer himself famous. Rather, their historical value comes largely from the moment in time when they were taken, augmented by the clarity of their presentation of people and places. 1952 was a momentous time in Okinawa. Of course, the Battle of Okinawa had ended only seven years earlier, and Okinawa was still very much in the process of recovery. The U.S.-Japan Peace Treaty took effect that year, formally severing Okinawa from Japan for the next twenty years. Over the next four years, the American military forcibly expanded its base structure in Okinawa 1,000% through land appropriations. In response, Okinawan landowners launched increasing protests and the Reversion Movement gained mass support. None of this history is directly visible in the photographs. What the photographs do provide a historian is a record of two things. First, they show us something about how Americans looked at Okinawa, from the perspective of a soldier without significant command responsibility.[3)] How did American servicemen perceive the people of Okinawa? What features of the island and its people stood out and became, therefore, part of the American military's collective memory of life on the islands? At the same time, the photographs show us Okinawans living their lives—working, caring for family members and celebrating community festivals—in ways that would soon disappear amidst a landscape that was undergoing radical change by forces both human and natural. Looking at the faces of Dr. Gail's photographic subjects, it is hard not to wonder how they were experiencing the momentous changes. As we remember the eventfulness of the 1950s for Okinawans, how do those who lived through those times remember the uneventful elements of their lives? What did they think of being the object of Americans' policies as well as photographs?

The idea at the core of what we have come to call "The Gail Project" is, therefore, a collaborative exploration of those early years of the American occupation of Okinawa using photos taken by an American just before the massive base expansions of 1953–54. The two key questions of the project—what were Americans seeing and doing in Okinawa, and what, in turn, were Okinawans seeing and doing as they were subject to this American gaze—are represented in the logo designed by UC Santa Cruz undergraduate Art major Madeline Thompson. The logo is designed on the model of a camera lens. We look at the lens from the position of one whose picture is being taken, facing toward an unseen cameraman behind the lens. From our position, the cameraman and his process are objects of our questions. At the same time, we see reflected in the lens itself an image of an Okinawan whose picture is being taken. We are drawn by that ghostly reflection in the lens to also ask questions about the person whose daily life has just been frozen in an image. The logo invites us to contemplate the moment of encounter and to ponder the lives that have intersected in the moment of the shot.

The dual questions about the photographer and his photographic subjects also reflect another fundamental approach of the Gail Project. In the fall of 2013, we formally launched the project by inviting the students enrolled in my seminar on Okinawan history

to participate. Students were asked to develop research topics from questions they had about the photographs and to produce work that could become part of an exhibition. Students were also asked to help develop an oral history dimension of the project that included locating people in the United States who had lived in Okinawa in the 1950s and who could speak of their experiences. They were also invited to work with Shelby Graham on the technical aspects of planning an exhibition and with staff in University Relations and me to raise funds for research travel and a traveling exhibition. Finally, we felt it would be crucial for the project, especially for the student involvement, that we be able to develop a collaboration with researchers and students in Okinawa. Just as the photographs raise questions for us about the experiences of both Americans and Okinawans in the 1950s—questions that we hope to answer in part by compiling parallel and even dialogic oral histories from both sides—we feel it is important that the pursuit of those answers be done in cooperation and in dialogue with colleagues in Okinawa.

In sum, The Gail Project began with a set of 154 photographs taken in Okinawa in 1952 by an American serviceman and asked larger questions about the postwar relationship between Okinawans and Americans. In the present moment in Okinawa, when the American bases are such a grave social, economic, and political problem, The Gail Project asks us to take a step back in time to the early years of the relationship, when the base structure of today was in its earliest form, and reflect again on the history that has brought us to this present.

In the remainder of this essay, I would like to present further thoughts on the peda-

gogical goals of the project.

Pedagogy: Teaching Okinawa in the United States

Periodically over the past decade, I have taught a senior seminar in Okinawan history at the University of California, Santa Cruz. This is unusual, I think, because sub-national regions outside the United States are rarely the focus of an entire history class, where national or regional designations are the norm. Indeed, in most American universities, Okinawa comes up, if at all, in the context of early modern or modern Japanese history classes.[4] Over the years of teaching this seminar, all but a handful of students who have taken my Okinawan seminars have done so because of an interest in Japan, not Okinawa. Most of these have entered the seminar puzzled by the specific focus on such a small place, confessing near total ignorance of the subject they are about to study.[5] The small remainder of students who have taken the class has tended to do so because they can claim a degree of Okinawan heritage. Whatever has brought them to the class, they all wrestle with the question of how to justify this particular focus for which they have almost no preparation. Why study Okinawa, after all?

The first two times I taught the seminar, my approach was to treat this as a case study for applied historical methodology. My reasoning was that most history majors were not destined to become historians, but that, ideally, most would be equipped by their training in the history major to use their understanding of historical processes and research methods to be able to evaluate information about the world that they would encounter either in their jobs or as citizens of the world. Even if their focus, for example, was on the United States, by virtue of their experiences learning about change over time or the variability of perspectives in complex societies, they would be able to critically evaluate information presented to them in the contemporary moment about a part of the world about which they knew little. They would hopefully be able to encounter descriptions of contemporary problems in places such as Liberia and recognize when those descriptions were lacking useful historical perspectives or founded upon problematic assumptions about the relationship of past to present. In short, I embraced the students' ignorance of Okinawa as the raison d'être of the class. The goal of the class, I told them on the first day, was to ask, "How do we learn about a place for which we have little prior knowledge and for which there is a paucity of materials in English?" This approach had the virtue of helping students to see that their training in the history major was not just about learning a lot about specific places, but also about learning how to learn about new places, with an approach that was especially attuned to showing why and how historical thinking is crucial to critical thinking. It also had the virtue of introducing students to Okinawa, a place I care about deeply, but to which it is otherwise difficult to justify devoting an entire class.

At the same time, I was ultimately unsatisfied with the particular aspects of Okinawan history with which we grappled. As we worked to evaluate the ways that Okinawan history was deployed in a variety of settings, we inevitably found ourselves dwelling for

most of the class on pre-modern and early modern periods. Statements about the deep historical roots of Okinawan pacifism, or statements about the deep historical connections of Okinawa to the broader East and Southeast Asian regions, or statements about Okinawan cultural differences from Japan seemed, inevitably, to keep us reading in earlier periods or in the field of anthropology. I do not want to claim that these questions are not important, but in the end, we devoted too little attention to the modern period, particularly the postwar, when Okinawan and American histories intersected most intensely. What I was missing was an opportunity to have American students make a stronger connection between the history of a distant place (to them) and the history of the place where they live.

The third time I taught the class, I changed the approach to try to bring Okinawan history more directly into focus in a way that might also help us place a stronger emphasis on the modern era. At the same time, I also wanted to address Okinawan history in relation to broader questions that students wrestle with throughout their undergraduate training. At my university, the history major requires students to learn not only about specific places but also about world historical processes and forces. This reflects the way that the teaching of world history has been making a comeback in the United States over the past decade or more. Rejecting an older model of World History that was essentially a story of the rise of "the West" and the inevitability of the modernization (understood as a form of Westernization) of the "rest of the world," the recent trends in world history in American higher education have drawn attention to global circulations of peoples, commodities, and ideologies. Attempting to resist narratives of historical inevitability (which particularly plagued "the rise of the West" approach), this new world history also tries to take seriously the simultaneity of alternative systems and examine the way that global forces that bring change everywhere do not necessarily lead to a single, homogeneous world culture. Nevertheless, the pragmatics of teaching an alternative to "the rise of the West" in the limited time of an American university term (10 to 15 weeks) has meant an understandable reliance on "civilizational" perspectives. This has meant that the replacement of the "rise of the West" form of world history, in which the only civilization that mattered (or even had "history" properly understood) was the West, has taken the form of adding major civilizations to that of the West. In other words, to put the problem from the perspective of someone interested in Okinawa, what counts in the new world history is still size and broader regional impact. To "the West" has been added "China," "India," and "Islam."

Is there room for Okinawa in this approach? My goal in this third iteration of the Okinawan history seminar was to flip the approach of world history from one in which we look at the big places and think about how they impacted everyone else to one in which we look at a small place like Okinawa and think about how its history has been formed in relation to global forces and, perhaps, had its own impacts on the bigger world. In short, we looked at Okinawa as a place that was always a part of the world, existing in conditions not necessarily of its own making but making its own way in that world.[6)]

This approach had the virtue of enabling a greater devotion of time to the postwar history of Okinawa while also allowing for substantial time for the early modern and modern eras. Students explored the history of Ryukyuan entrepôt trade and of Ryukyuan participation in the Chinese and Tokugawa tribute systems while also having considerable time to study the histories of the Battle of Okinawa and the postwar reversion and peace movements. I was particularly satisfied to see that the students developed an appreciation for the ways that Okinawans' collective memories of the pre and early modern pasts have been deployed in the political struggles of the contemporary era. Yet, I confess, I was still beset with nagging doubts. My approaches to teaching Okinawan history in the U.S. had continued to present it as a "case study" for working on other skills for critical historical thinking. I was asking students to recognize that Okinawa is a good place to think *from*, but I was not yet really challenging them to recognize Okinawa as a good place to think *about*. Or more precisely, I wanted to push myself and my students to recognize that, as small and marginal as Okinawa may appear, it is necessary to think about Okinawa, especially as Americans. In other words, Okinawa is not just a place to think about other things; it is a place that demands our attention. It is too important to ignore. Why must Americans know Okinawa? The answer is the elephant that has been in the room all along: the U.S. bases.

Describing the prison industrial complex in central California as a "public secret," Sharon Daniel writes, "There are secrets that are kept from the public and then there are 'public secrets'—secrets that the public chooses to keep safe from itself . . . ."[7] The California penal system, containing about 140,000 prisoners, has become notorious for problems such as overcrowding. Yet the numbers of those processed through the system and the uncalculated numbers of friends and families of prisoners have not resulted in a high public awareness of prison facts or issues. Instead, there is little public outcry when the California Department of Corrections imposes a range of gag rules to obstruct the dissemination of information about conditions in the prisons.

The American military bases in Okinawa—indeed, the entire overseas base network—might be said to be another of these public secrets in the United States. This, at least, is the impression I keep getting from students who enroll in my seminars on modern Okinawan history. If most students express a degree of puzzlement about Okinawa at the beginning of the class, as the course progresses and they accumulate readings on the subject, they become concerned at the fact of their prior ignorance. They also frequently report conversations with their cohort in which their friends express utter ignorance of the islands and their bases, now in a tone of distress. In other words, there is a perceptible shift in my students' attitudes from bafflement that there could be an entire course on such a small place that no one they know seems to know anything about, to a sense of anxiety, bordering on horror, that Americans could know so little. This shift comes about, in part, through a process of learning that they experience not so much "discovery" of entirely new information but "recovery" of information they feel they should have known all along. Their sense of "recovery" relates to historical events, policy formations, and cul-

tural consciousness, but it also entails a growing recognition that connections to Okinawa have always been around them, in family relations, in their broader social networks, and in their home cities and towns. In a sense, their earlier lack of knowledge about Okinawa comes to feel like the result of the public secrets Sharon Daniel describes: information that they should know, but that they, the media, and the public have chosen to keep safe from themselves.

In previous versions of the class, this shocking discovery of their own (now intolerable) ignorance of the history of the bases comes too late in the class and as one more, albeit terribly important, surprise. In the Gail Project version of the seminar, however, the bases loom over everything, perhaps even more forcefully because while they know that the photographer was an American soldier, they see almost no evidence of the bases themselves in the collection.[8)] The absence of the bases in their visual evidence stands in stark contrast to their inescapable visibility in the historical texts they read. This leads to recognition of the bases as a shared problem, one for both Okinawans and Americans. As a result, the students begin to see Okinawan history in the postwar era as necessarily and inextricably tied to American history. As they feel mounting frustration and empathy for Okinawans struggling to have their voices heard and their will actually reflected in the political process, they also begin to reflect on their own sense of powerlessness in the face of an American military-industrial complex that seems as unresponsive to Americans as to Okinawans. I try to make sure the students are careful to maintain the distinctions between Okinawan encounters with the U.S. military and their own, but the awareness of the ways that their concerns intersect is fundamental to their recognition of the study of Okinawan history as not merely interesting but necessary.

In pursuit of this connection, students have gathered and read a wide range of materials, from scholarly essays and books to short stories, films, music, pamphlets, and original government reports and documents. The range of sources is very broad, but there are certain consistent patterns throughout. In some ways, the often cringe-inducing film Teahouse of the August Moon (1956) illuminates the pattern well.[9)] The story satirizes American efforts to change the world without sufficient knowledge of the places they controlled after WWII. It tells the story of bumbling American army captain Jeff Fisby—and his even more deluded superior officers—charged with bringing "democracy" to an Okinawan village. In this fictional story—based on the real experiences of Vernon J. Sneider, an army officer who participated in the Battle of Okinawa as part of the military government team and governed the village of Tobaru immediately after the war—American ignorance is matched by Okinawan good-natured cunning, exemplified in the character Sakini, played notoriously in "yellowface" by Marlon Brando. Filled to the brim with American conceits about how American naiveté, laced with good intentions, matches well with Okinawan good-natured simplicity, the story can also be understood as a comedic tale of American anxiety about the hidden knowledge and ulterior motives of those now subject to American power. Dating back at least to the first Office of Strategic Services report on Okinawa as a potential site for invasion, released on June 1, 1944, we can

see the production of knowledge-making operations in Okinawa that seek out not just understanding but also sympathy.[10] So much of the knowledge produced by Americans about Okinawa from the mid-1940s to at least the early 1950s is marked by a basic presumption, repeated constantly, that Okinawa is a little-known place, but that a little learning will be rewarded with sympathy by a kind, even "docile," people. Undertones of hostility that run through much of the writing in the same period about Japanese, erstwhile enemies now turned close allies, are rare in the various "guidebooks" produced for American consumption in Okinawa.

Even after the relationship began to reveal more obviously hostile expressions from the American side as the land appropriation protests and reversion movement picked up steam, individual Americans, such as Dr. Gail, continued to express a deep affection for their time in Okinawa and the people they met. One of the main tasks for my students (and myself) in the Gail Project is to understand the roots and functions of this American affection and even nostalgia for Okinawa, expressed within an unforgiving exercise of American power. Our goal is neither to deny the goodwill as mere hypocrisy nor to justify the raw exercise of power at Okinawan expense because of American good intentions. Rather, we need to explore how these two attitudes could coexist so smoothly. To do so, we need to pair oral histories and the documentation of private memories with the record (public and only recently declassified) of American officials.

At the same time, however, the photos do not only appeal to us to ponder the interests of the photographer. They also beckon us to consider the lives of those people whose moments were captured by the photographer. Here we see one example of a way in which photography offers possibilities that a purely document-based research project does not. The problem with a study of the relationship between Americans and Okinawans in the early years of the Occupation that relies too heavily on documents is inevitably relying too heavily on American perspectives. Given the restrictions on public expression, both formal and informal, that the occupation authorities could bring to bear, documents from "the Okinawan side" do not necessarily provide a true counterpart to the American documents (which both outnumber the Okinawan and set the very terms of discourse). But even though these photographs were taken by an American—who chose the subjects and the framing—the things that are visible in them give us a path, via oral histories, to open up a range of materials that might set new discursive boundaries.

Conclusion

As of this moment, the Gail Project is still in an early stage. There is much work to do, particularly in developing partnerships with colleagues in Okinawa. I am very much encouraged, however, by the responses of students in the U.S. and a small slice of the general public on both sides of the Pacific to whom I have been privileged to speak a bit about our efforts. Charles Gail's photographs, amateur though they may be, have shown a magnetic ability to draw both Okinawans and Americans into them. Okinawans who

have seen them have already shared much information and enthusiasm. Americans who have seen them have been eager to learn more about that time or share their own connections to the islands. Most encouraging to me is the way the photographs have helped me make the case to students, the public, and my university administrators that the study of history can have a powerful connection to the present and that the study of Okinawa is an important undertaking on its own terms. I hope to receive both criticism and support from people around the world who share a concern for Okinawa's past, present, and future. To see the photographs, and possibly contribute your own thoughts on the images and that moment in time, or to join us in our effort to better understand the early years of the American occupation of Okinawa, please visit our webpage: thegailproject.routes.ucsc.edu

Notes

1) To avoid embarrassing misunderstandings among Japanese readers, Geri's name is pronounced with a soft g sound, like "Jerry."
2) There are 154 photos in the collection. Geri Gail donated the physical copies of the photos to Special Collections and Archives at McHenry Library at the University of California, Santa Cruz, while retaining copyright for herself. The photos now reside there as collection number MS470. For further details, consult the Online Archive of California.
3) As chief of a base hospital, Dr. Gail was an officer but not a significant participant in the administration of civil affairs in Okinawa. At the time of this writing, we are not yet sure where he was stationed, although we have reasons to believe he was at the hospital at Torii Station in Yomitan. His daughter requested his service record from the U.S. military in 2013, but unfortunately, she was informed that they were largely destroyed in a fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO, on the night of July 12, 1973. For a description of the fire and the records affected, see http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/fire-1973.html (accessed October 1, 2014).
4) In fact, in my own undergraduate training in East Asian history at Carleton College in the 1980s, I have no recollection of Okinawa ever being mentioned.
5) This lack of basic knowledge is troubling for them because the basic expectation of undergraduate training is that having passed through broad regional introductory surveys to national history surveys to thematically-focused classes, the students expect senior seminars to be relatively tightly focused but on a subject for which they have received a fair amount of prior training. In other words, the senior seminar represents a moment when they have an opportunity to do advanced research on a topic that is familiar due to prior training in the necessary foundational knowledge.
6) In part, I was inspired by Gregory Smits' descriptions in his book *Visions of Ryukyu: Identity and Ideology in Early Modern Thought and Politics* (University of Hawaii Press, 1999) of the dilemmas addressed in eighteenth century Ryukyu by Sai On. Cognizant of Ryukyuan dual submission to its more powerful neighbors in China and Japan, Sai also argued for a distinctive and necessary role for Ryukyu in the world.
7) Sharon Daniel, "The public secret: Information and social knowledge," *Intelligent Agent*, v. 6, no. 2
8) Out of 154 photographs, one appears to have Quonset huts in the distance, three or four have Americans visible, and one appears to be of an army cot with a mosquito net.
9) *Teahouse of the August Moon* was originally published as a novel by Vernon J. Sneider in 1951 (G.P. Putnam's Sons). It was adapted for stage by John Patrick and enjoyed a three-year run on Broadway from 1953 to 1956, winning three Tony awards and a Pulitzer Prize for best play in 1954. The film was released by MGM studios in December 1956 and proved to be the biggest hit for the studio in the following year. Not only did it earn good profits, it was also nominated for a Golden Globe award for "Motion Picture Promoting International Understanding." It was less successful in its return to Broadway in 1971 as a

musical called *Lovely Ladies, Kind Gentlemen*, but references to the story can be seen throughout American popular culture, including an episode of the television show *The Beverley Hillbillies* called "The Teahouse of Jed Clampett." It is also part of my family history: I have been told it was the movie my parents saw on their first date.

10) Office of Strategic Services Research and Analysis Branch, "Okinawan Studies No. 3: The Okinawas of the Loo Choo Islands, A Japanese Minority Group" (June 1, 1944, Honolulu, HI).

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アラン・クリスティ

ゲイル・プロジェクトとは、米国陸軍大尉チャールズ・ユージン・ゲイルによって 1952 年に撮影された一連の写真を通し、アメリカによる初期の沖縄占領（1945 年から 1960 年）の実態についての理解を深めようとする日米共同の歴史学的な取り組みであり、今後、アメリカと日本で写真やそれに関連する資料の巡回展を開催することが予定されている。本プロジェクトでは、沖縄における米軍のプレゼンスが形成された時代について、口述歴史調査と文献資料調査という二つの調査方法で、広範囲な歴史調査も行う。本稿では、歴史的証拠としての写真の重要性について述べると同時に、アメリカで行う沖縄の歴史の教育実践において、筆者が写真資料をどのように活用しているのかについて論じる。
