

# William Penn Brooks and Eva Brooks in Sapporo, 1877 - 1889

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## 1.0 Introduction and Background

In January 1877, a graduate of Massachusetts Agricultural College (MAC) traveled north from Tokyo following in the footsteps of his mentor, Professor William Smith Clark (1826 - 1886), to take up a teaching position at Sapporo Agricultural College (SAC). William Penn Brooks (1851 - 1938) was to stay at SAC until 1888 (Maki says 1891), teaching, directing the college farm, and acting as head teacher (or president) for four years. He introduced onions, corn, beans, and forage plants to Hokkaido and was one of the people responsible for the introduction of soybeans from Japan to the United States. (Maki, 160)

Kuroda Kiyotaka was sent to Hokkaido to crush resistance to the Meiji emperor. He succeeded and became involved in the establishment of the Kaitakushi. In 1871 he visited the U.S., traveling with the Secretary of Agriculture, Horace Capron. At the same time, Clark, who was to become the first president of Sapporo Agricultural College (SAC), and Capron were corresponding on a separate but related matter. In 1871 Capron wrote to Clark and asked that he admit Naitou Seitarou, a young (19) associate of Mori Arinori, the Japanese *charge d'affaires* in Washington. Mori (1847 - 1889) himself was only 26 when he was appointed to the position. Two other Japanese students, Katsuyoshi Uesugi and Masanojyo Nakashima, joined MAC in 1872. (Maki, 121 - 124)

Brooks entered MAC in 1871, after teaching in public schools for several years, at the age of 20. (Fujita, 114) MAC had a small number of foreign students from countries including Brazil, Chile, Japan and the Kingdom of Hawaii. Brooks must have known some of these students since MAC was such a small school. At that time the number of students in each class was under thirty. Brooks' graduating class only had 18 members. (Maki, 114 - 115)

He graduated in 1875 but continued at the college doing research. (Fujita, 114) It was

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during this time that Clark and two of his students, William Wheeler (1851 - 1931) and David P. Penhallow (1854 - 1910), engaged in a contract with the Japanese government to teach in Hokkaido. The Kaitakushi school, which had been established in Tokyo, was to be moved to Sapporo. SAC was created from this start. Clark was to become the head teacher of the new school and Dzusho Hirotake was to be the director. However, in the English version of the contract, Clark's title was changed to "president." Perhaps Clark requested this because going from a position as president of MAC to a position of only being head teacher at SAC would be a reduction in status.

They were not the first foreigners to work for the Kaitakushi. While foreign advisors were a great help in the colonization of Hokkaido and the establishment of the Meiji national government, there were also some problems with foreign workers. Clark's contract, which must have been similar to the one that Brooks signed a year later, included the following:

The Japanese Government reserves the right to dismiss immediately the said Clark, should he neglect to perform his duties, disobey the instructions of the Kaitakushi authorities, or commit any act unsatisfactory to the said Government, and in that event, to pay the compensation, to the date only of such dismissal, and the return passage shall not be paid by the said Government." (Contract between W. S. Clark and the Japanese Government, March 3, 1876 in Maki, 130)

After arriving in Sapporo Clark requested that the government establish a model experimental farm and allow him to "send for a professor of agriculture and so buy in America corn and grass seed enough to plant and sow 50 acres of each next spring." (Maki, 164) Brooks was the professor that Clark sent for. He took up duties as a professor at Sapporo Agricultural College in 1877, two years after graduation from MAC. (Maki, 114)

Brooks arrived in Sapporo, which at that time was a small town with a population under 3,000, a few months after Clark had returned to the U.S. William Wheeler was acting president of SAC at that time. Brooks taught classes in agricultural science and became the director of the experimental farm. Altogether, he would spend eleven years working at SAC, four of them as president.

## 2.0 Evidence of men's, women's and family social networks in the Brooks Papers

During this time he wrote frequently to his sisters in Massachusetts, especially to his sister, Rebecca Brooks. His letters tell of his impressions of life in Sapporo, SAC business and family matters. In 2004 some of these letters were donated to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (formerly MAC). The letters, which make up the bulk of William Penn Brooks Papers, are especially interesting in how they describe the social and work world of foreign teachers and missionaries in Sapporo during the Kaitaku period.

Brooks seemed to enjoy his stay in Hokkaido despite some problems involving the

college. Fujita (1994) compares the attitudes of several of the early foreign advisers to the Kaitakushi. Clark and Brooks maintained good relations with government and school officials. Wheeler and Penhallow did not. She attributes Brooks' positive attitude towards Japan and the Japanese way of doing things as a reason for his success. In his later years he reflected on his experience in Japan:

From the standpoint of more personal relations or support in Japan, I had everything to be grateful for. It was everything that I could wish. But it is when I think of the material with which I worked, the student material particularly in Japan, that I feel blessed, for the young men who came under us were carefully selected, most earnest, exemplary from every point of view, and the success which these men have attained in life was due more to the quality of the men than to my humble efforts. ("Report...", 36 - 37)

Brooks' reflections on the high quality of his students were accurate. The first class of SAC graduated in 1880, and included Satou Shousuke, who became Brooks teaching assistant as well as assistant superintendent and interpreter for the college farm. Satou was to go on to become a professor and later president of the school. The second class, which was Brooks' first class to teach, included Uchimura Kanzou, Miyabe Kingo, and Nitobe Inazou. (Maki, 161)

Occasionally, however, there were problems such as the protest by SAC students over the amount of unskilled, manual labor they were required to perform as part of the curriculum. In April 1888, the SAC junior class wrote to Brooks protesting the requirement that they do manual labor on the experimental farm:

The chief obstruction which prevents us from making the most free and perfect examinations in the field about the matter we proposed to determine is the excessive labor expended in the common and less important farm operations such as hoing [sic], thinning etc. (Students of Junior Class to Prof. W. P. Brooks, 1888.04.09)

Manual labor had also been required at MAC. Clark's educational philosophy was to combine academic and practical training to produce students who could function as scientists as well as farmers. It is interesting to note that in 1870, the year before Brooks, himself, entered college, the students of MAC had called a strike to protest MAC's program of required manual labor. They objected that they were forced to do purely menial labor such as ditch digging and felling trees when the school catalogue had stated that all manual labor would be "in the nature of manual progressive training." During this dispute, William Wheeler had challenged Clark with the reference to the school catalogue mentioned above. (Maki, 100)

Besides teaching and directing the farm, in 1878 Brooks and Penhallow started a sugar beet project that Clark had planned. It was discontinued after three years because the sugar content of Hokkaido beets was not high enough to make extraction profitable. (Maki, 186 - 187) In 1878 Edwin Dun reported that he and Brooks had been asked by the Kaitakushi to develop the project without mentioning Penhallow. It seems that there was some rivalry

and conflict between the foreign advisors connected with SAC.

In 1877 Wheeler succeeded Clark as head teacher. Maki states that Wheeler "failed to leave his mark on the institution." He had difficulties with the Japanese officials, feeling that they were unable to "conduct their affairs with Yankee-like efficiency." This was in direct contrast to the attitude that Brooks took to working in Japan and towards his Japanese students and acquaintances. Maki also attributes his difficulties in part to Wheeler's young age and to the fact that although he succeeded Clark, he was not Clark. (160)

One of the problems that Brooks mentions occasionally in letters to his sister was between Brooks and the Penhallows, especially Mrs. Penhallow.

I have never written you anything about my relations with Prof. and Mrs. Penhallow, and do not care to enter into any long explanations now: but will only say that Mrs. Penhallow is a contemptible character, much as I wrote you when she first arrived here only worse. (Brooks to "Dear Sister," 1880.03.21)

Originally Brooks had decided to board with the Penhallows but had cancelled the plan. In December 1879 Wheeler left SAC and Penhallow became president. (Fujita, 115) The bad feelings that had either preceded or followed the earlier incident deepened.

In 1882 Brooks returned to Massachusetts to marry Eva Bancroft Hall. They lived in Sapporo for seven years and had two children, Rachel and Sumner Cushing. Most of Brooks' letters to his sisters discuss school or family news. From this time, however, he mentions other foreigners in Sapporo who were not connected with SAC more frequently.

There have been many visitors in Sapporo since I last wrote. First came a missionary family - Thompson by name - father, mother and three little girls; then, eight and five and very pretty. With this family came Miss Smith and Miss Hampton, missionary teachers in girls' schools respectively in Tokio and Hakodate.

...

There have been twenty or more foreigners here this summer and we have been quite lively, having entertained nearly all of them more or less. (Brooks to "Dear Sister", 1883.09.15)

There were a number of other Christian missionaries in Hokkaido with whom he had contact such as, Walter Denning (1846-1913) or John Batchelor (1854 - 1944).

Smith (1851 - 1947) moved to Sapporo in 1887 to establish Smith Jo-Gakko, which later became Hokusei Gakuen. She had come to Japan in 1880 and at first worked in Tokyo. In 1883 she moved to Hakodate to set up a school for girls. Smith and the Brooks became friends. He reports in a letter to his sister that she stayed with them for ten days and was considering asking government permission to work in Sapporo.

The latter was our guest and she remained with us about ten days. Eva enjoyed her visit much as also did I. We had many very pleasant rides, Dr. Cutter usually coming in to balance the party. Miss Smith has hired a horse, and when she came purposed remaining here a month for her health. She has already been here nearly that length of time; but is so much better and likes so well that she may remain longer. She even

thinks seriously of trying to get permission from the Government to establish a school up here. (Brooks to "Dear Sister", 1883.09.15)

Government permission for the school may have been needed because until 1888, foreigners were not allowed to travel outside of the treaty ports without special permission unless they were government employees. Smith was able to work at Hakodate, at that time the largest town north of Tokyo with a population of about 20,000, because Hakodate was a treaty port.

The friendship between Smith and the Brooks was long lasting. Smith's personal records at the Board of Foreign Missions (1918) list the Brooks in the section for "Names and addresses of two or three intimate friends in the U.S."

From the evidence in William Brooks' letters it seems that most of the Brooks' friends were foreigners. Perhaps this was, in part, due to the language barrier and to the expectation that their time in Sapporo would be short. However, it must have been particularly hard on Eva Brooks to be the only, or one of the few English-speaking women in Sapporo. The Penhallows had left in 1880. In 1885, when Belle Stockbridge arrived at SAC she received a warm welcome. "Mrs. Brooks, the only other American or even foreign woman in Sapporo, welcomed me rapturously." (Stockbridge, 12)

Eva Brooks arrived in Sapporo in April 1883. She gave birth to her first child, her daughter Rachel, on January 8, 1884. It was an easy birth but it must have been difficult to go through without the support of female friends and relatives. In light of this, the Brooks hired a nurse from Tokyo.

We are to have a professional nurse from Tokio, an English lady, formerly in a missionary hospital. She is to reach here about the first of December, but the new comer is not expected before the 12<sup>th</sup> *proximo*. We think it better to make sure however to have the nurse in season. A new room has been made in the second story of our house wh. will be fine unfinished. E. is very well. I think she would say never better in her life. (Brooks to "Dear Sister" 1883.11.18)

Three days before Rachel's birth, the Brooks' home was burned to the ground and in the middle of a cold Hokkaido winter, they had to move temporarily to Dr. Cutter's residence, all of their possessions having been lost in the fire.

But I now must write you something which will make you sorry. I have been burned out again and this time everything was destroyed. We did not have time even to get out a trunk....

The fire broke out at about eleven in the evening just after we had retired and as the wind was very strong and in the right direction the flames were swept in an incredibly short time all over the house....

Of course the loss of everything just three days previous to the birth of our child (the fire was on the 5<sup>th</sup>) was particularly unfortunate but Eva was very brave and as I was fortunate enough to find her some very good flannel in town. She with the assistance of Miss Shaw (her nurse) and several Japanese who volunteered managed to make

enough things so that the little creature was perfectly comfortable though not fine. We at once telegraphed to Hakodate and the ladies there sent on every thing necessary so that we are getting on nicely. Miss Shaw is a splendid nurse and woman, and I don't know what we should do without her. (Brooks to "Dear Sister" 1883.01.16)

There seems to be a contrast in feeling between Brooks' reference to "several Japanese who volunteered" and "We at once telegraphed to Hakodate and the ladies there sent every-thing necessary". Both groups are nameless. However *some* Japanese seems colder and more distant than *the ladies* of Hakodate. The use of the word *volunteered* also seems to imply more social distance than the assumption of Brooks that he could simply telegraph the ladies at Hakodate and they would naturally respond with assistance.

From this, one can hazard that to some extent, although cut off from Japanese women by language and custom, Eva Brooks could call on the more distant network of foreign, English-speaking women in Hokkaido. Even though Hakodate was quite distant, this network had been reinforced by occasional visiting between families or between individual women friends, such as Sarah Smith, who could be called on in times of need.

William Brooks' letters to his sisters offer a glimpse into the social and family networks that helped to sustain expatriate missionaries and professional workers in the Meiji era on the Hokkaido frontier. Moreover, they also contain some glimpses into the lives of foreign women connected with the Kaitakusi. This is especially true when he is writing to his sister for advice about Eva's health or matters related to her pregnancy.

Only two letters written by Eva Brooks, herself, are in the Brooks Papers. One, written in 1887, was towards the end of her stay in Sapporo. In it she covers various topics about her life and family. It seems that by 1887 her circle of female friends had widened. Belle Stockbridge was living in Sapporo at that time. She also mentions, for example, sewing a comforter with the help of Mrs. Mori, possibly the wife of the director of SAC. But it seems that the American and Japanese customs of socializing between families were different enough that she felt a gap. In the same letter she describes her enjoyment of a trip "to the South":

It was so long since I had seen many of my own race, or gone into other persons' houses, or been shopping that I fully appreciated the opportunity. It was so delightful to go into families where there were children of all ages, to see elderly people, to hear them talk, and sing etc. etc. I was present at several evening entertainments at one of which there were several very good singers, and we were treated to solos, duets etc. It was a treat to me. (Eva Brooks to Martha and Rebecca Brooks, 1877.03.05)

In October 1888 William and Eva Brooks returned to America. In 1889 he was appointed Professor of Agriculture at MAC. He continued teaching and working at the experimental farm for several years. In 1896, however, the family traveled to Germany for a year in order for him to study for a doctorate. Returning to MAC, he remained there until retirement. The Brooks' continued to live in Amherst. Eva Brooks passed away in 1924. She was followed by her husband in 1938.

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[Abstract]

## William Penn Brooks and Eva Brooks in Sapporo, 1877 - 1889

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This paper explores some of the evidence in the William Penn Brooks Papers, donated to the University of Massachusetts Amherst (formerly Massachusetts Agricultural College) in 2004, related to men's, women's and family social networks during the Katakushi period of Hokkaido's development. The bulk of the letters in the collection were written by William Brooks, who arrived in Japan to teach at Sapporo Agricultural College in 1877, to his sister Rebecca. Eva Brooks, his wife, joined him there in 1883. It seems that although William established good relations with his Japanese coworkers and students, social ties between the Brooks family and other families were mostly established with foreign families, even though the families were physically separated by quite long distances. This also seemed to be the case with Eva Brooks' network of female friends, mostly foreigners, among them Sarah Smith, an American missionary who founded a girls' school in Sapporo in 1887.

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