# D. F. MYERS – A Friend to China

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***Introduction***

China in the 1920s was a divided country. In the wake of the 1911 revolution and overthrow of the Qing dynasty, “modern” warlords vied with each other to unite China and bring it into the 20th century through education of the people, social reforms, and industrialization.

Albert Feuerwerker, in a paper for the Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies, gives a general overview of the Chinese economy of the period 1912-1949. He- lists broad characteristics of the small industrial sector of the economy (2.2% of the net domestic product in 1930), citing as its fundamental problems the lack of demand for industry and the low priority given to industry by the government in overall planning.[[1]](#endnote-1) Some have thought that the Chinese industrial development stagnated after the abatement of the industrial stimulation of World War I. [[2]](#endnote-2) John K. Chang, however, in a quantitative overall analysis of Chinese industry, describes a rapid industrial growth during the decade before the Sino-Japanese War and was optimistic for the future of Chinese industry.[[3]](#endnote-3) These and other surveys were written in the face of little reliable statistical material and do not cover in depth any of the specific Chinese attempts to industrialize the nation.

In order to truly see the patterns of development historians must begin with the specifics, the data, the individual histories of the hundreds of small efforts made at industrializing China. The purpose of this paper is to introduce primary source material that can allow historians to understand in detail the story of one such effort and its legacy. Daniel F. Myers was present at each of the significant historical turning points of Chinese history from 1929 to 1944. He interacted with many of those people who shaped China, both famous and unknown. Through his letters, speeches, photos, and other artifacts, the researcher can track Myers’ experience and response to the events that shaped a nation.

This endeavor began in Dongbei. Very little is said historically about Chinese efforts in that part of the country in the years before the Japanese invasion or about the ongoing attempts following the incursion to develop local industrial resources for supplying needed vehicles and materials for the Chinese war effort. The information in the documents introduced herein shed singular light on the subject.

It is known that cars and trucks appeared in China in the 1910s and 1920s, first in the “concessions,” those parts of the country occupied by foreigners. Automobiles started to become common, mostly owned by foreigners, especially in Shanghai, which housed the French, English and International concessions. Local dealers emerged, and, as was quite common at that time, cars were assembled locally.

Between the big cities on China’s east coast, however, there was hardly any connection – no roads, just tracks, quite different from Europe or the United States at that time. Trucks, needed for transport between these cities, had to be sturdy and didn’t need to go fast. This influenced their construction because they had to be different from European or U.S trucks.

In that light, the idea of constructing a truck factory in China was logical and several Chinese politicians were thinking in that way. Finally, it was Mercedes-Benz who managed to build trucks in significant quantities in China in 1936. They were not the first to try, however. That fell to an American, Daniel F. Myers.

***The American Engineer***

Daniel F. Myers was born on June 17, 1889, on a farm in Knox County, Indiana, near Vincennes. When he was seven years old, his mother left his father taking with her little Daniel’s siblings but leaving him with his father, grandmother, and other relatives. Dan dropped out of school after the eighth grade to support himself and his invalid father by farming. In 1914, when he was 25 years old, he married Mattie Nugent, also from Vincennes. In 1916, a bad farming year, Myers left the farm to take his chances in automotive factory work. He moved to Wabash, Indiana, and found a job with the Service Motor Truck Company, where he was paid 18½ cents per hour. He had a willingness to work hard, an inherent talent for designing, and he soon obtained an education in mechanical engineering by means of International Correspondence School courses. Within ten years, he had become Chief Engineer.

By 1927, the Service Company had merged with two other automotive companies to form Relay Motors Corporation. Myers moved with the company to Lima, Ohio. A year later he became Relay’s factory representative to their western territory and moved to Omaha, Nebraska. He became dissatisfied with this work by 1929 and decided to resign from Relay.

When he returned to Lima to make his final report, he discovered that the factory refused to accept his resignation. He agreed to continue in his job for a short while longer; and, while on a trip for the company to St. Louis, he received a telegram from Relay’s assistant sales manager asking if he would be interested in going to China. He wasn’t. However, he was urged to return immediately to Lima. When he arrived, he found Mr. Walter Mitchell from China waiting for him. Mitchell had been authorized by Marshal Zhang Xueliang to obtain the services of an American engineer to set up and engineer a truck-manufacturing factory in Dongbei, Liaoning Province, Mukden (Shenyang). He saw Myers as just the man for the project. A man with some fifteen years’ experience in the truck-building industry, Myers had been recommended to him by the Society of Automotive Engineers, the Timken Axle Company, and the Ross Steering Gear Company.

Myers made conditions he thought Mitchell could not meet, but two days later, Mitchell phoned asking that he come that night to sign a contract, which satisfied all the conditions, to spend a year in China. Myers had committed himself so he signed the contract.

***A Truck for China***

Since June 1928, Manchuria had been ruled by the 27-year-old Zhang Xueliang (张学良), known as the “Young Marshal,” who had succeeded his father, Zhang Zuolin, after the latter’s assassination. Between 1925 and 1930, Manchuria was seen as China’s best hope for modernization; it was the richest section of China at that time. Immediately after his succession, the Young Marshal had publicized the aims for his regime as the development of the people’s education, the unification of China, and the industrial development of Dongbei (Manchuria).

One project was the building of trucks. The Young Marshal set aside a section of the Fengtian Trench Mortar Arsenal for this purpose and renamed this arsenal Liaoning Trench Mortar Arsenal. The Shenyang complex was China’s largest weapons factory. Zhang placed the Director of the Liaoning Arsenal, General Y.C. Lee (Li Yichun, 李宜春), in charge of building up the truck factory. In 1929, General Li sent Mr. Mitchell, the American advisor and chief-engineer of the gun section of the Arsenal who spoke perfect Chinese, to the United States to find a reliable automotive expert who could act in an advisory capacity to develop a truck suitable for use in China. It was on this trip that Mitchell found Dan Myers.

Myers embarked from Los Angeles on October 19, 1929, and arrived in Shenyang (Mukden) on November 17. He began work that day. Before leaving the United States, he had ordered five American trucks to be shipped to Shenyang for testing purposes: a Relay Model S11B, a Relay Model 40A; a Diamond T Model 290, a Diamond T Model 302 and a Moreland Ace. His first task was to supervise the uncrating and assembly of those trucks. By the end of January 1930, assembly of the test trucks was completed. Myers made drawings for the cabs and bodies. Chinese woodworkers employed by the factory built them out of wood by hand, so it was not until April that the cabs and bodies were completed.

***Designing for the Market***

The project, as Mitchell initially described it to Myers, was to buy an American truck design, adapt it to the specific requirements of China, and then assemble the units sent from American producers. As the project evolved, however, Myers learned that the Chinese desired a completely new Chinese-designed truck. The main reason for this change was the vast difference between the roads in the United States and the lack of them in China at that time. China needed strongly built, powerful trucks with low gear ratios. The major components were to be purchased from American manufacturers; but the design, assembly, and many of the materials were to be totally Chinese-made.

During this period, Myers designed two new truck models. The larger Model 100 was a heavy truck intended for long-distance hauling on the poorest roads. The smaller Model 75 was a light truck. Myers figured every aspect of construction, made the layouts, sketched every detail of the parts, wrote the parts lists, trained six draftsmen to assist him, checked their work, designed the dies, helped install and set new equipment, organized a filing system, wrote out each purchase order, and acted as receiving inspector for the parts and other materials.

By mid-February 1930, he was ready to build the prototype models. The budget called for Mex $750,000 for the initial year’s production of 165 trucks[[4]](#endnote-4).

***Zhongshan or Minsheng?***

Several names were given to the trucks, and even now it is not clear which name was finally used. The original name was Magna Lux (*Guanghua*) but that was rejected by the Young Marshal in favor of *Fengtian*, the Chinese name for Mukden. By September 1931, the truck was called variously *Zhongshan* (中山, *Chung Shan*, in memory of Sun Yatsen, China’s first president) and *Minsheng* (民生, people’s livelihood), the two names by which it is known today.

In July 1930, General Li authorized the first set of specifications to be sent to various American manufacturers for price quotations. Half a year later, orders for parts had been filled and shipments were en route from the United States. Myers had ordered the American-made engines, transmissions and other components with the request that a small number of each be shipped immediately so that the Arsenal might build one or two experimental vehicles. The manufacture of many of the parts they were to make in China had begun. In the meantime, the whole Arsenal was being converted into an extremely well equipped factory on the pattern of modern American automobile factories of the period. A sales program was incorporated in the project, a parts repair and service station was in the developmental stage, and a modest parts catalog had been compiled and published.

By early 1931, the project had fallen six to eight months behind schedule because of delayed shipment of parts. At the end of Myers’ first year in China, the Arsenal was only just ready to assemble the first truck, so he agreed to extend his contract indefinitely. Myers had another order for automotive parts placed with the American manufacturers. Because business was bad in the United States as the Depression deepened, all were seeking foreign orders wherever possible. Myers wrote to assure them that the Arsenal hoped to place additional orders during the year. Without exception, Myers received from his vendors the same consideration and prices that he would have received had the Arsenal been an American truck builder. One interesting sidelight on these transactions is that there was not one cent of “squeeze” (kickback) paid by any company supplying the Arsenal with units.

Early on, the Arsenal truck factory started a kind of “factory museum.” The very first edition of each part made in the factory, large or small, was highly polished or painted and placed in this museum. Later, they were to be moved to a planned Shenyang Industrial Museum in a building that Myers and a Russian-born German designed. When completed in the winter of 1930-31, the building was the most modern in Shenyang. It had poured concrete pillars and interior pilasters that were cast hollow to contain the drains for the saw-tooth style roof.

Actual assembly of the first prototype of the Model 75 began in May 1931. At that time, Myers was also investigating the use of alcohol and vegetable oil in internal combustion engines because gasoline was very expensive in China. The Young Marshal intended to present this first truck at the National Conference in Nanjing, organized by the Kuomintang (National People’s Party). However, delays in production and the failure of the conference prevented the Young Marshal from doing so.

***Test and Production***

Assembly of the first prototype truck was completed on May 21, 1931. On June 1, the truck was subjected to its first long-distance test. It ran perfectly in a test drive of over 160 km. Loaded with a two-ton cargo plus all the men who could pile on, the Model 75 averaged one liter of petrol for 4.5 km. (about 11.25 U.S. mpg). This was extremely good, considering the condition of the road. By the end of the week, regular production of the Model 75 began. Production of the larger Model 100 was awaiting further testing. There is no evidence that it was ever built.

Extremely proud of their accomplishment, the Arsenal employees prepared a grand celebration for the truck. They painted the prototype fire engine red and presented it on June 19, 1931, with a slogan on the front bumper in Chinese and English: “Powerful enough for the worst roads, fast enough for the best.” Speeches were made by General Li and other factory officers to the assembled government officials and the more than 1,500 staff and workmen of the Arsenal. Cheers filled the air for the Republic of China, the factory, the Young Marshal, the truck, and Dan Myers. This first truck was to be preserved in the planned Shenyang Industrial Museum, but was stored temporarily in the Arsenal compound. The truck was suitably decorated with inscriptions stating that it was the first Chinese-built motor truck.

The first production truck (this time painted brown) was ready in August and sent to a large exhibition in Shanghai, the First National Good Roads Show, and was placed in the central exhibition hall. On the first day of the exhibition, September 12, the booth was visited by Republic of China Minister of Foreign Affairs C. T. Wang (王侦听, Wang Zhengting, also known as Wang Cheng-t’ing) and Minister of Industry and Commerce H. H. Kung (孔祥熙, Kong Xiangxi, also known as Kung Hsiang-hsi).

By September 13, a second production truck was made and the factory was running 10 trucks down the assembly line, with several others to follow. As the assembly continued, Myers planned to move toward making more and more parts at the Arsenal. There were 666 kinds of parts in the first trucks, of which 464 were made at the Arsenal and 202 imported. The local content was 70 percent, a very high rate. It was Myers’ hope that the factory would be making everything except the engines and the rear axles within two years.

***The Japanese Intervene***

On September 18, 1931, the Japanese Army began open aggression against the Chinese in Manchuria. Soon after 1:00 AM on the 19th, a bomb was thrown into the guardhouse of the Liaoning Trench Mortar Arsenal, killing three men. The Japanese soldiers bombed the office building and bayoneted 21 sleeping workmen in the dormitory. By evening 40 to 60 workmen had been murdered. Five nearly completed Model 75 trucks and the parts for 40 more were taken. Although the Chinese kept voluminous records of the project, these records were in the office building and so were burned when it was bombed. All blueprints and design work were destroyed or taken.

The next day, Myers saw the five nearly completed Model 75 trucks being driven around town full of Japanese soldiers. The five imported American trucks and 30 Chevrolet trucks for which the Arsenal factory was making the bodies were taken. All moveable machinery, including the leather belts, was also removed. The trucks were later used in the Japanese campaigns for the subjugation of Manchuria and Jehol (Rehe).

The one Model 75 truck that had been sent to the Good Roads Show was still in Shanghai. Shocked by the news of the invasion, people in Shanghai held a protest motor vehicle rally with that truck in front, clearly marked with a sign “Truck Made in China!” After the rally, the truck was taken to the Chiao Tung University (Jiaotong University) in Shanghai for safekeeping.

Back in Shenyang, the Japanese occupied the factory, which was, in fact, an up-to-date auto­motive factory capable of turning out 165 heavy-duty trucks per year. The factory was equal in many ways to any American motor truck assembly factory. It was possible to actually make more of the components in this factory than usually were made in American assembly plants at that time. In 1934 the Japanese Dōwa Jidōsha Kōgyō KK (Dōwa Automobile Company), producing military armored cars, was established in the factory.

For Dan Myers the story wasn’t over. In the first days after the attack he hid 28 Chinese from the Japanese, including C. F. Wang (Wang Cheng-fu), Director of the Fengtian Mining Administration, his wife, and four of their five children. In 1932, the Japanese authorities in Shenyang approached Myers three times through representatives of the Japan Air Transportation Company, asking him to resume his work at the truck factory, only for them and not for the Chinese. Although he had no intention of accepting that job offer, Myers met with the Japanese authorities in late February 1932. He reported what he learned of their plans for the factory in a covert message to his Chinese associates in Beijing. On May 26, 1932, Myers sent a report about the Japanese attack on the truck factory to the Inquiry Commission of the League of Nations (the Lytton Commission).

***Biding Time in Beijing***

Though Myers was certain that truck making in Shenyang was now impossible, he felt sure that sooner or later he would be making trucks again in some other town in China. At the end of 1932, Myers moved to Beijing. He was still an employee of, and being paid by, the Young Marshal, who was in Beijing when the Japanese attacked Manchuria. He pursued the idea of organizing a Sino-American manufacturing company to build trucks in China, which he thought could be registered as a “Federal Incorporated” concern under one of the treaties with the United States. He thought that with foreign capital in the organization, the company would be protected from seizure by the Japanese. The American partner could be an existing American truck manufacturer who could control 51 percent or more of the stock of the company.

The second shipment of parts for the 45 trucks that were to have been built next by the Arsenal factory reached Newchwang (now Yingkou) after September 19, so the National City Bank of New York, through whom it had been ordered, was able to hold it there and have it shipped later to Tientsin (now Tianjin). In this way, the parts were prevented from reaching Shenyang and the Japanese invaders. The Young Marshal agreed to build those 45 trucks: 30 of the Model 75 and 15 of the Model 100. General Li, now in Tianjin, located a plant there where the trucks might be built, and on December 30, 1932, Myers prepared for him an estimate of the cost of finishing those trucks – about Mex $100,000 to finish the 30 small trucks and perhaps another Mex $50,000 for the 15 large ones. It was decided to order the parts that were to have been made in Shenyang by the Chinese themselves c from American vendors. Myers approached his former employer, Relay, knowing that they had a large surplus of such parts. He also knew that the Model 75 exhibited at the Good Roads Show in Shanghai which had escaped the Japanese take-over could be used as the model for building the trucks.

On March 12, 1933, the Young Marshal, resigned his post as Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese Northern Armies; in April he left China for an extended stay in Europe. The plans to build those 45 trucks were set aside. Although frustrated by this delay and uncertain of his future, Myers continued to receive his salary according to his original contract with Zhang, so he spent his time producing periodic revisions of his engineer’s estimate of the cost to build the 45 trucks, and exploring factory location options.

When the Japanese reached Jehol (Rehe) and threatened Beijing and Tianjin, Shanghai seemed a better option. In early March 1933, Myers met with the head of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Shanghai and six of the big Chinese bankers. He found that the Chamber was willing to undertake the organization of a very large company of Shanghai bankers for the purpose of manufacturing trucks, motor cars, and farm implements. Most of these bankers had a financial stake in the large vacant Lunghua Arsenal, which had been abandoned some years before, and they thought this could be a proper location for such an undertaking. However, by October Myers learned that the Chinese Chamber of Commerce had decided it would not be profitable to open this factory in that arsenal. By this time he had produced about ten revisions of his engineer’s estimate with no discernible effect. His contract had expired, and he decided to return to the United States.

***A Change of Direction***

In December, however, he changed his mind. In his spare time during 1933, Myers had started work on the design of a small cycle car. He believed that there was a big market in China for a light, cheap, Chinese-built car, something that the people could afford and that was light enough and small enough to go where imported motor cars could not go. Some of Myers’ Chinese friends, including C. F. Wang, became interested in this car and offered him financial backing. By January 1934, he had completed the design and was ready to construct a prototype. His intention was to have all of the car parts, except the tires, made in China. He contracted to have the parts made in a small Chinese machine shop in Beijing under his supervision. He was anxious to get the little car running so that it might be seen as an example of what could be done in China.

In May 1934, Myers started assembling the prototype, but made very slow progress because the parts being produced for him in the Beijing machine shop were of poor quality and had to be remade repeatedly. In July, Myers moved to Shanghai and took a job as technical advisor and service manager of Cathay Motors, a Studebaker/Pierce-Arrow dealership there. According to his contract with Cathay Motors, he was to be permitted to make use of the shop facilities to complete and experiment with his small motor car. In addition, Cathay Motors wanted him to design and produce a small experimental four-wheel, four-cylinder motor car that might form the basis of a future agreement between Cathay Motors and Myers. As it turned out, Myers spent all his time getting their service department straightened out and had no time to work on his own cycle car. In December, the directors of Cathay told Myers that they did not intend to pursue their manufacturing plan. When Myers’ six-month contract with Cathay expired at the end of December he resigned.

In November 1934, while still working for Cathay Motors, Myers was asked by the Republic of China’s Ministry of Finance to help inspect some government-owned Reo trucks in Nanjing. On January 4, 1935, he was appointed to the position of Technical Advisor to the Trust Department of the Central Bank of China, under the authority of now Minister of Finance Dr. H. H. Kung, regarding the development of automotive and other industries, and the purchase of motor vehicles and certain goods used in government factories. The Executive Council had just approved a plan to establish a new motor truck factory to manufacture motor vehicles for the army and other purposes, and Myers hoped to be involved in that project.

One of Myers’ first proposals to Dr. Kung was for a small motor car – an assembled unit for which parts and sub-assemblies would be imported – to be designed and constructed in Shanghai for general sale and distribution in China. This car was to be bigger than the cycle car on which Myers had been working. It was to be approximately the size of such existing British vehicles as the Standard, the Austin Ten, and the 10-hp Ford.

Myers also proposed a line of two-ton army transport trucks of sturdy construction but lighter than the Minsheng Model 75 built in Shenyang in 1931. He investigated the possibility of using diesel engines in these trucks out of concern for the rising cost of gasoline in China.

In April 1935, Myers addressed a class of automotive engineering students at Chiao Tung University in Shanghai, where the one surviving Model 75 was stored. That same month, Myers rented a building across the street from his home on Avenue Joffre (now Huaihai Zhong Lu) in which to assemble his cycle car. In this building, he set up a small machine shop equipped with a lathe, drill press, grinder, and all the small tools needed to run the shop. He furnished a small room above the shop in which to do the drafting. He hired a lathe man to run the shop and a part-time helper for the lathe man.

By the second half of 1935, Myers was building the prototype of the car, which he hoped to have ready before the first of the year 1936. However, by October several factors made Myers rethink the feasibility of his car-building venture. One was the steep drop in the value of the Chinese currency which Myers thought would decrease the Chinese market even for his relatively inexpensive car. Another was that Myers had spent most of his savings on the development of the car and was having difficulty covering his living expenses on the salary he received from the Central Bank of China, which was more honorary than lucrative. Myers does not mention his development of his cycle car in his letters after 1935. He may never have finished even one prototype. There is no photo or drawing of it among his surviving papers.

***The Road Home***

As a result, Myers began to consider returning to the United States. He wrote to his acquaintances in the US automotive industry for advice on securing a job there. In these letters he expressed his disappointment that, so far, nothing had come of his efforts of the past three years to help the Chinese government establish another automotive assembly plant. When his contract with the Central Bank of China was about to expire at the end of December, however, he was asked to stay on for another six months at a higher salary, and he agreed.

Myers thought that his lack of success in persuading the Chinese to establish another automotive assembly plant was due to opposition from somewhere within the Nationalist Chinese Army. In January 1936, however, he learned that the Army was beginning to show interest in such a plant, and that Dr. S. C. Wang (Wang Shou Chin), a technical advisor to the Army, was to be sent to the United States to find and purchase for importation to China a plant equipped to manufacture every component of automotive vehicles. This was on the assumption that China would be able to produce vehicles entirely with parts made using the equipment of that plant. Myers advised against that plan on the grounds that few, if any, American plants actually manufactured all the components of the vehicles they produced; and that what China needed was the kind of industrial development that would put her unemployed to work, not a high production plant with automatic machines that would replace her po­tential skilled workers. Nevertheless, Myers arranged for his associates in the U.S. automotive industry to help Dr. Wang in his search.

As it turned out, the Chinese government cancelled Dr. Wang’s trip to the United States so that he could attend to other more pressing matters. During 1936, Myers also advised on the purchase of trucks and tanks, on alternative fuels, and on the establishment of courses in automotive maintenance and repair, and began teaching automotive engineering at Chiao Tung University (Jiaotong University). He is listed as a member of the faculty of the University's School of Mechanical Engineering (机械工程学院) in 1937.[[5]](#endnote-5)

In December 1936, Myers was authorized by Dr. H.H. Kung to take a temporary leave of absence from his advisory position in order to supervise the Motor Transport Service of the Central Aviation School, Shien Chiao, Hangchow, China. He began that new assignment in January 1937.

Myers left Shanghai for the United States in early August 1937 to escort a daughter to her university and to bring himself up to date on the U.S. automotive industry, so he was not in Shanghai when the Japanese invaded that city on August 13 (his son’s seventh birthday). However, his wife and son were there and Myers spent many frantic days trying to determine their fate. They were evacuated to the Philippines but Myers was not reunited with them until November 14, when they were able to sail to Los Angeles.

While waiting for them, once he knew they were safe, he continued his advisory work by visiting U.S. automotive plants to learn of the latest developments in the automotive industry. In January 1938, after settling his family in the U.S., Myers returned to work, first in Hong Kong, where the Central Bank of China had relocated. His wife and son soon joined him there. In 1939, he was sent to Chongqing to assist with the building of the Burma Road.

In 1940, while he was “upcountry” in Kiangsu (Jiangsu), his wife Mattie died in Hong Kong. Devastated by her unexpected passing, he took his 10-year-old son back to the United States and seriously considered staying and not returning to work for the Chinese. However, by 1941, he was working in Washington, D.C., for the China Defense Supplies Corporation, helping the Chinese appeal to the Lend-Lease Administration for road-building equipment and trucks needed to maintain the Burma Road. Although this appeal was successful, few of the goods thus obtained reached China for various reasons, including the Japanese conquest of North Burma early in 1942.

Two years after the death of his first wife, in August 1942, he remarried, this time to a family friend, Marian Walker from Wabash, Indiana.

Myers returned to Chongqing in the last few months of 1943, staying until early 1944. During this time, he continued to review and revise detailed lists of parts required to maintain trucks on the Burma Road. At the end of June 1944, the Chinese Defense Supplies Corporation closed their office in Washington, D.C. Myers was offered a job with the Chinese Embassy but instead decided to take a job with the Studebaker Corporation and, later, the General Tire and Rubber Company. He retired in 1955.

Prior to his death in 1973, Myers wrote in his memoirs of this decision as follows: “So I ended my work with the Chinese after almost fifteen years of rather hard and perhaps, ineffective effort to promote industrialism in a country not yet ready for it.” Despite this indication that Myers may have considered his work in China a failure, his memoirs, written for his children and grandchildren, inspired them to preserve his records of that work. Those records contribute to an understanding of what occurred at the dawn of the Chinese automotive industry and the ongoing efforts to industrialize amidst a war.

***List of D. F. Myers Documents***

Throughout his years in China, Myers (and his wife) assiduously kept copies of every letter they ever wrote from China. The Myers family archive contains copies of the nine volumes of these carbon copies, plus many unbound file folders of letters, speeches, articles, and photos, in addition to Myers’ unpublished autobiography, titled “As I Saw It.” The artifacts are held by various family members. Below is an initial list of documents. Many items still require copying, scanning and indexing.

### Held by Elizabeth Myers Macinata

* *As I Saw It* – autobiography of D. F. Myers
* File folder labeled “China Experience” containing original transcripts of speeches delivered at various time and to various organizations and letters written by D. F. Myers (approx. 150 pages of documents)
* File folder labeled “Letters 1941-1944” containing original carbon copies of letters written by D. F. Myers between those dates, plus two handwritten letters – one from An-Lin [Wang?] dated Wellesley College, March 18, 1942, and one from C.F. [Wang] dated Peking, 3 Ta-Fo-Ssu Tung-chih, November 13, 1941.
* File folder labeled “MPM <-->DFM” containing original letters from Myers’ second wife [Marian Pauline Walker Myers] along with original carbon copies of Myers’ replies.
* File folder labeled “Letter s to Children 1968-1969” containing original carbon copies of letters written from D. F. Myers to his four children during those years.
* File folder labeled “Letters to Children 1970” containing original carbon copies of letters written from D. F. Myers to his four children during that year.
* File folder labeled “Letters to Children 1971” containing original carbon copies of letters written from D. F. Myers to his four children during that year.
* File folder labeled “Letters 1972” containing original carbon copies of letters written from D. F. Myers to his four children during that year.
* Two file folders labeled “Myers Family” containing original carbon copies of a history of the Myers family written by D. F. Myers. [One folder was Myers’ copies; the second folder is his daughters’, Marian Elizabeth Myers Macinata].
* File folder labeled “Official Papers” containing the following:
  + Small envelope addressed to Marian Pauline Myers, 406 East Ewing Ave., South Bend, 14, Ind., containing the following:
    - Official U.S. Passport #781541for Daniel F. Myers, dated August 18, 1943, with extra picture.
    - “Information for Bearers of Passports” dated September 18, 1945
    - “Notice” regarding official conditions in Shanghai [no date].
    - “Immunization Precautions, dated December 6, 1945
  + Official U.S. Passport #42486 for Marian Pauline Myers, dated February 27, 1946, with extra picture.
  + Various documents including the following:
    - certificates of membership in churches,
    - demit from the Masonic Temple,
    - death certificate for D. F. Myers, dated August 9, 1973
    - social security cards for D. F. Myers and for Marian P. [Walker] Myers
    - real estate listing for former residence, 265 Falls Ave., Wabash, IN 46992
    - doctor’s statement regarding cause of death for D. F. Myers
    - various letters and original carbon copy responses from D. F. Myers 1960, 1964, 1967, 1969, 1972, regarding sale of farm in Wabash, IN.
    - letter from Marian P. Myers dated regarding the gift from an inheritance
* Guest Book containing signatures of individuals who visited the Myers household dating from December 28, 1930, to January 13, 1940.
* Original letters written by D. F. Myers to William E. Walker family covering many years (1929-1944) while he was in China [needs to be organized]
* Photo album titled: “A Souvenir of Your Visit to The Studebaker Corporation, South Bend, Indiana, Saturday, May 27, 1944
* Hardcover box for 35mm slides containing slide of India taken by Myers sometime in the late 1930s or early 1940s
* Box approximately 5”x7” containing unsorted negatives (35mm and larger)
* Large (25”x30”) map, white on blue, labeled: Transportation Routes of Central and South-West China, C.D.S. H.H.K. 1-26-42; with route from Chuching to Mengtzen, near Kunming, and railway under construction from Siangyun to Nanta, highlighted with pink pen.
* Original photo (8’x10”) of Myers with unknown Caucasian discussing a roll of what looks like plastic; this has been scanned electronically
* Original photo (8’x10”) of Myers with unknown Caucasians and unknown Chinese officers; this is been scanned electronically

### Held by Josephine B. Howe

* Letters written by D. F. Myers and his first wife Mattie Myers 1929-1941
* 1929-1930: Original book-bound carbon copies
* 1931: Photocopies of book-bound original carbon copies
* 1932: Photocopies of book-bound original carbon copies
* 1933: Photocopies of book-bound original carbon copies
* 1934: Photocopies of book-bound original carbon copies
* 1935: Photocopies of book-bound original carbon copies
* 1936: Photocopies of book-bound original carbon copies
* 1937: Photocopies of book-bound original carbon copies
* 1938: Photocopies of book-bound original carbon copies
* 1939: Photocopies of book-bound original carbon copies
* 1940: Photocopies of book-bound original carbon copies
* 1941: Photocopies of loose original carbon copies
* Documents and correspondence of China Defense Supplies, Inc. regarding China's applications for Lend/Lease purchases of road building equipment, repair shop supplies, and vehicles for use on the Burma Road 1940-1941: Photocopies of original carbon copies in D. F. Myers' personal office file
* D. F. Myers' handwritten notes in black notebook made during Burma Road inspection trip to and from Kweiyang and Kunming, May 21-28 1940: photocopies of notebook pages
* Last Will and Testament of D. F. Myers, filed September 5, 9:30 AM, 1973 with County Comptroller, Orange County, Florida USA, copy
* Diary of Mattie Myers, 1934-1938, not including September to October 1937: Photocopies of diary pages
* Diary of Mattie Myers, September to October 1937: Photocopies of diary pages
* Map of Communication of South-Western and North-Western China, hand-colored showing war zones, Shensi-Kansu Road, Szechuen-Shensi Road, and Kweichow-Kwangsi Road, undated but found among D. F. Myers documents of 1941, colored photocopy of original
* 1941 lectures of D. F. Myers: "Men and Beasts" to Wabash Presbyterian Men's Club [re: experience under bombardment in Chungking] & "Rotary's Western Outpost" [re: Rotary Club meetings in Chungking, China]
* Photo of Daniel F. Myers and two other men with a Cathay Motors Ltd. Service Truck in Shanghai. Undated but probably taken during the period of Myers' employment as Technical Advisor to Cathay Motors, Ltd. of Shanghai from May to December 1934.
* Photo of a Chinese man in a white suit and hat in front of men clearing or building by hand a mountain road. Printed from an undated negative found with the papers of D. F. Myers in an envelope labeled "SELO, D. A Ahuja, The Leading Photographers and the Largest Distributors of Photo Supplies in Burma, 123, Sule-Pagoda Road, Rangoon," and marked "Name: Mr. F. D. Meyer."
* Photo of a convoy of trucks on a mountain road. Printed from an undated negative found with the papers of D. F. Myers in an envelope labeled "SELO, D. A Ahuja, The Leading Photographers and the Largest Distributors of Photo Supplies in Burma, 123, Sule-Pagoda Road, Rangoon," and marked "Name: Mr. F. D. Meyer."
* Article in *Plain Dealer,* Wabash, Ind. August 3, 1970, pg. 2: "Service Motor Employes [sic.] Reminisce During Reunion" with photo of Dan Myers and article about his work in Manchuria, misstating that he "built the first Service Motor Truck in China....": Photocopy

### Held by Other Family Members

* Letters written by D. F. Myers and his first wife Mattie Myers 1929-1941
* 1931: Book-bound original carbon copies
* 1932: Book-bound original carbon copies
* 1933: Book-bound original carbon copies
* 1934: Book-bound original carbon copies
* 1935: Book-bound original carbon copies
* 1936: Book-bound original carbon copies
* 1937: Book-bound original carbon copies
* 1938: Book-bound original carbon copies
* 1939: Book-bound original carbon copies
* 1940: Book-bound original carbon copies
* 1941: Book-bound original carbon copies

***Authors’ Bios***

*Elizabeth Myers Macinata is the daughter of Daniel F. Myers. She began work on this project in 1972, while working toward a Master’s Degree in East Asian History at Indiana University, using her father’s unpublished letters as primary sources. Currently she teaches English to non-English speaking adults at the College of Western Idaho.*

*Josephine B. Howe, a retired Japanese-English translator, is a granddaughter of Daniel F. Myers. She began indexing his letters while house-sitting for him prior to his death in 1973; in her retirement she continues to do so, with second copies she made to facilitate the use of these letters by Chinese automotive history researchers.*

*SAH member* Erik van Ingen Schenau *is Director of the China Motor Vehicle Documentation Centre, located in Ortaffa, France. Having researched automotive developments in the People’s Republic of China since 1966, he founded the Centre in 1972, following a career in social work and the travel industry. The Centre presently has a large library of Chinese auto reference material and photographs. Erik contributed to the award-winning Beaulieu Encyclopaedia of the Automobile and writes regularly for European and Chinese car magazines, as well as publications on the Chinese auto industry offered by the Centre.*

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Myers, Daniel F., Business and other letters from 1929 to 1945 (carbon copies in Myers family archives)

Myers, Daniel F., Lectures to Engineering Students at Chiao Tung University, 1936 (carbon copies in Myers family archives)

Myers, Daniel F., Reports to the Inquiry Commission of the League of Nations (the Lytton Commission) (1) “The Min Sheng Industrial Works,” and (2) “Japanese Occupation of Manchuria from a Foreigner’s Point of View”; delivered to Myrl S. Myers, U.S. Consul General in Mukden, on May 26, 1932 (carbon copies in Myers family archives)

Myers, Daniel F., Memoires: (1) “Christmas Letter” dated December 8th, 1967 and (2) “As I saw it. (Written for my Children and Grandchildren)” in three sections dated December 21, 1969 January 16, 1970, and March 3, 1970 (copies in Myers family archives)

Myers (Macinata), M. Elizabeth, “Industrial Development in China: A Case Study of Manchuria, 1929-1931,” Paper for Seminar on the Modernization of East Asia, Indiana University, M.A. in East Asian History Program, September 1972.

***Newspapers and magazine articles***

*Canberra Times*, July 5, 1927.

*The Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 14, 1931.

*Time* magazine, June 22, 1931.

*Automotive Industries*, August 8, 1931.

*Republic Daily* (Minguo Ribao) , September 13, 1931.

*Shenbao Daily*, September 23, 1931.

*The Goods Road Monthly* (Daolu Yuekan), October 1931.

*Beijing Qiche Bao*, 25-11-1994.

Most of these articles, and more articles and photos, were gathered by Erik van Ingen Schenau at the public libraries of Beijing, Changchun, Shanghai and Shenyang.

***Internet articles***

There are some (but not many) Chinese and English language articles on the truck project circulating on the web.

***Notes***

1. Albert Feuerwerker, The Chinese Economy, 1912-1949 (Ann Arbor: Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies, No. 1, 1968. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cheng Yu-kwei, Foreign Trade and Industrial Development in China: An Historical and Integrated Analysis through 1948 (Washington, D.C.: University Press of Washington, 1956). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. John K. Chang, Industrial Development in Pre-Communist China (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. This budget figure calls for some explanation. The “Mexican dollar,” correctly known as the peso, has a long history in regional and international commerce. In the 1700s, it was widely used in the United States, and approximated the U.S. dollar in value, since both were based on the weight of silver in their respective coins. In fact, the Spanish dollar, similar to the peso, was the first world currency. The Chinese unit “yuan” refers to Spanish dollars, Mexican pesos and other eight-real silver coins (pieces of eight) used in the 19th and early 20th Centuries, particularly in Dongbei (Manchuria). The Mexican dollar, or peso, was equivalent to about 34 U.S. cents in 1930. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. A document in the archives of Xi'an Jiaotong University, 南洋公学—交通大学年谱》—1937年—丁丑年（民国二十六年, http://archives.xjtu.edu.cn/News/Show.asp?id=1606. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)