



HOME FROM A JAP CONCENTRATION CAMP, AMERICAN NEWSPAPERMAN J. B. POWELL OF SHANGHAI SHOWS WHAT JAP JAILERS' MISTREATMENT AND NEGLECT LEFT OF HIS FEET

## AMERICANS RETURN FROM JAP PRISON CAMPS

For eleven years the Japs had hated John Benjamin Powell, American editor-publisher of the *China Weekly Review* in Shanghai. In 1931 they put him high up on their secret police list of dangerous newspapermen. Jap detectives began following him around the Shanghai International Settlement. He was forbidden to enter Japan or Manchukuo for writing "anti-Japanese propaganda." The puppet government of China ordered him arrested and deported from China in 1940, but Powell did not budge. Threats poured in over the telephone and in anonymous letters. The Japs tried to bribe him. Finally, a hand grenade bounced off his shoulder but failed to explode. The Japs expressed "regret." And all this was because Powell's periodical steadily attacked the Japs as brutal aggressors against China. And Powell himself declined even to talk to Japs in Shanghai.

Like five other doughty American publishers and editors in Shanghai, Powell had his unofficial war on Japan taken out of his hands on Dec. 7. The Japs promptly arrested him and charged him with espionage. He was put in a filthy concentration camp in the Japs' Shanghai gendarmery headquarters. His shoes

were taken away. In the unheated cell his feet froze. Gangrene set in. The Jap doctor looked at his feet and laughed. A Jap nurse offered him aspirin and mercurochrome. Finally his ten toes were amputated. In what condition Powell's feet arrived in New York Aug. 25 on the diplomatic exchange ship, S.S. *Gripsholm*, is shown above. Powell, who had weighed

160 lb. in the picture below, had dropped to 75 lb., then gained back 25 lb. on the voyage home.

"Well," said Editor Powell. "I wouldn't say it was terrible. We got off with our lives. The Japs didn't do this to me deliberately, you know. It was just their sheer, utter stupidity. There are 1,500 American prisoners of war in Shanghai. They're waiting for us to set them free. So now the thing to do is to win the war."

The North and South Americans who arrived on the *Gripsholm* brought the first complete picture of how American civilians in the Far East were treated by the Japs. Since the U. S. holds far more Japs than the Japs hold Americans, cases of Jap brutality seemed remarkably ill-advised. Worst stories came from Malaya and Hong Kong where whites were massacred. Best Jap internment camp seemed to be in Manila. (See page 82 for an article on the *Santo Tomás* camp there, by one of the two persons so far released.)

Even more serious under international law was Japan's failure to give the U. S. diplomatic staff in Tokyo full hospitality. On following pages are pictures of the strange life lived for six months in the U. S. Embassy compound by Ambassador Grew and staff.



JOHN POWELL IN GOOD HEALTH (RIGHT) BEFORE DEC. 7



# JOHN B. POWELL, 60, IS FATALLY STRICKEN

**Editor Dies of Heart Attack—Lost  
Both Feet After Imprison-  
ment by Japanese.**

Washington, Feb. 23.—(AP)—John B. Powell, 60, American editor who lost both feet from lack of medical treatment in a Japanese prison camp, died of a heart seizure today immediately after a speech before the University of Missouri alumni.

Powell had just returned to a seat beside his wife, Martha, and his longtime friend, Morris J. Harris of the Associated Press Washington staff, when he collapsed. He died without regaining consciousness.

In his talk, he had predicted increasing importance for Asia in world affairs.

"If the United States has trouble with Russia," he said, "it will be fought in Russian Siberia and not in Europe. That is because Siberia is just across the straits from Alaska—the closest approach from Russia to the United States."

## **Captured in 1941.**

Former managing editor of the China Weekly Review in Shanghai, Powell was captured by the Japanese in December, 1941, and was thrown into a dungeon in the now infamous "Bridge House" prison in Shanghai.

Both feet were amputated as a result of gangrene which developed from malnutrition, vermin and disease in the damp prison hole where he spent six months. Harris, former chief of the Shanghai AP bureau, was also a prisoner there.

Powell's address to his fellow Missouri U. alumni marked his first formal appearance since leaving the hospital. A few minutes before he rose to make his talk he had joked with friends that he was "a fugitive from Walter Reed hospital," where he was learning to walk on artificial feet.

On his return to this country, Powell established the Powell scholarship at the University of Missouri school of journalism for students specializing in the study of the Far East.

## **Native of Hannibal**

A native of Hannibal, Mo., he is survived by his widow; a son, John William Powell, who is carrying on his father's old work as editor of the China Weekly Review in Shanghai; and a daughter, Mrs. Stuart Hensley, of Washington.

Also surviving are a brother, Robert W. Powell, St. Petersburg, Fla., and two sisters, Mrs. J. G. Bistock, Quincy, Ill., and Mrs. Parks Woods, Joplin, Mo.

Funeral arrangements were not completed, but it was expected that the body would be sent to his native Hannibal for burial.

## **Editor Had Visited Here.**

John B. Powell, who died yesterday in Washington, was a brother of Mrs. Margaret Woods, wife of Dr. V. Parks Woods, a Joplin dentist, and had visited in this city where he was known by many persons.

Mr. Powell was in Joplin in October, 1945, following his return from imprisonment by the Japanese during the war, lecturing here under auspices of the Woman's Club.

Dr. and Mrs. Woods lived in Shanghai during the time Mr. Powell operated his newspaper there, prior to the war, but they returned here in 1935.

Mrs. Woods plans to go east for her brother's funeral and burial.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28.—(UP) —John B. Powell, U. S. newspaperman who suffered Japanese torture in a prison camp during the war, dropped dead today at the close of an address to the University of Missouri Alumni Assn. He was 61.

At the close of his speech he sat down at the speaker's table and a moment later collapsed of a heart attack.

He was dead when an ambulance arrived.

As managing editor of the China Press in Shanghai, he incurred the wrath of the Japanese by writing stories and editorials exposing their aggressive intentions.

When war broke out between this country and Japan, Powell was seized with many other Americans and imprisoned. He was returned to the United States in August, 1942, in a serious condition.

As a result of Japanese ill treatment during his six months in their custody he lost portions of both feet. He was hospitalized for a long time after his repatriation.

After his return to the United States he lectured widely and wrote his book, "My 25 Years in China."

#### Biographical Note:

John Benjamin Powell, an influential newspaperman in Asia, was born 18 Apr 1887 in Missouri. After graduating from Gem City Business College at Quincy, Illinois, he completed a degree in journalism at the University of Missouri in 1910. He was subsequently married to Martha Hinton. During his professional career, spent mainly in China; Mr. Powell filled many posts, including advertising manager at the Courier Post Newspaper in Hannibal, Missouri, 1910-1913; instructor at the University of Missouri, 1913-1917;

and managing editor for the China Weekly Review at Shanghai, China, 1917-1941. He was also special representative of American commercial interests in China at Washington from 1920 to 1922 (obtaining congressional enactment of the China Trade Act); editor, China Press, 1923-1925; Chicago Tribune special correspondent, 1918-1938; and correspondent, Manchester Guardian and Daily Herald, London, 1925-1936. As a reporter he covered the Conference on Limitation of Armament and Pacific Problems, 1921-1922; Nationalist Revolution in China, 1926-1927; Sino-Russian conflict, 1929; Sino-Japanese conflict, 1931-1932; Russo-Japanese crisis, 1934-1935; Far Eastern preparations for war; and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1941. As an author he published Building a Circulation: Methods and Ideals for Small Town Newspapers (1914), Getting Subscribers for the Country Newspaper (1915), Newspaper Efficiency in the Small Town (1915), Who's Who in China (1926), and My Twenty-Five Years in China (1945). Due to what the Japanese considered his editorial hostility to Japanese aggression, Mr. Powell was imprisoned in Shanghai from Dec 1941 to May 1942. His physical condition deteriorated severely while imprisoned.

Mr. Powell was included in a diplomatic exchange of civilian internees with Japan in 1942. The exchange was conducted at Lourenco Marques, a Portuguese-controlled port now known as Maputo, the capital of Mozambique. He returned on the MS Gripsholm to New York on 23 Aug 1942. He subsequently participated in the war effort by denouncing the Japanese in print and through personal appearances. He became a widely known symbol of Japanese brutality. Mr. Powell never fully recovered from his ordeal and died 28 Feb 1947 at Washington, D.C. He was buried at the Riverside Cemetery in Hannibal, Missouri.