



WAML Memorial

Vlad Shkurkin

1930 - 2013

Vladimir Vladimirovich Shkurkin passed away on August 13, 2013, in San Pablo, California, from complications of colon cancer. Vlad was an expert on Sanborn fire insurance maps and owned the publishing company Precise Maps of Old Western Towns. He published Sanborn and Dakin maps of towns in western United States on microfilm and in facsimile editions. At the WAML meeting in Bellingham, Washington, in September, 1991, he sponsored Dr. Vladimir Svyatoslavovich Kusov, who was Docent of Cartography in the Geography Department of Moscow State University, to attend the meeting and present a paper “Count Nikolai Rumiantsev and Russian Exploration of Alaska and North America”. He translated the paper phonetically from Russian so the professor could present it in English. The paper was also published in the WAML *Information Bulletin* in volume 25, number 1 (November 1993). Vlad also enjoyed exposing the professor to the culture of the United States by ordering typical American food for him. Vlad Shkurkin also wrote *Precise Maps of Old Western Towns: Fire Insurance Maps as Primary Historic Records* (1984), and “Sanborn Maps: Some Personal Notes and Comments”, which was published in volume 24, number 2 (1993) of the WAML *Information Bulletin*. Vlad was also a member of the advisory committee for the online *Union List of Sanborn and Other Fire Insurance Maps*. Vlad was also a member of the California Map Society.

Vlad came from a line of interesting people. He was born in Seattle, Washington, on April 8, 1930, to Irene Petrovna (Lapiken) (1906-1996) and Vladimir Pavlovich Shkurkin (1899-1990). Vladimir Pavlovich Shkurkin was born in northern China. He was an artist who painted murals in public buildings in Seattle, moved to San Francisco and painted murals for the Golden Gate International Exposition of 1939, then settled in Vallejo and worked as a commercial artist at Mare Island Naval Shipyard until he retired in 1963. He continued to paint, and he painted over 3,000 works during his lifetime. After Vlad was born, he and his parents lived with his paternal grandparents, East Asian scholar Pavel Vasilievich Shkurkin (1868-1943), and school teacher Helen Vasilievna Shkurkin (1872-1968). Vlad’s grandfather studied the Chinese and Manchurian languages, participated in the quelling of the Boxer Rebellion, worked for the Vladivostok police force, and was wounded during the Russo-Japanese war. He worked as a translator. When he immigrated to Seattle, he brought his collection, which may be one of the premiere private Far East archive and library collections in the world. Vlad curated it and donated a scarce 1909 Russian language plan of Harbin, China, from his grandfather’s archive to the University of California, Berkeley Library along with many of Vlad’s publications.

Vlad graduated from Vallejo High School and attended Vallejo Junior College. He volunteered for the US Army and served in the Signal Corps from 1948 through 1952. Vlad was awarded the Bronze Star during the Korean War for repairs to critical communications equipment under fire.

Vlad graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1955 with majors in Engineering and Slavic Languages. He met his future wife, Olga Ivanova (Lisenko) at Berkeley, and they were married in 1954. Vlad worked as a nuclear engineer at Mare Island Naval Shipyard for twenty years helping build nuclear submarines. Before that, he worked at several electronics, nuclear energy, and research and design organizations. Vlad retired in 1994. He was also a ham radio operator.

Vlad is survived by his wife Olga; brother, Berkeley paleontologist George V. Shkurkin; three children; and four grandchildren. His memorial service was held on August 22, 2013, at Saint John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Church in Berkeley, and he was buried in the Serbian Cemetery in Colma, California, on August 23, 2013.

The family asked that donations in Vlad's memory be made to either St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Berkeley (<http://stjohnthebaptistberkeley.org/stjohn/Home.html>) or to the Monastery of St. John of Shanghai in Manton, California (<http://www.monasteryofstjohn.org/>).

--Kathy Rankin

