



Pauline Schilberg Guild and Joseph Guild, Passport Photos, c.1922.

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## Guild, Pauline (Schilberg) (1882–1952) and Joseph A. (1881–1949)

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Pauline Schilberg Guild was an American missionary to China from 1908 to 1914 and from 1923 to 1927, and a professor of languages and missions at Washington Missionary College from 1915 to 1922 and from 1927 to 1934.

## Early Life, Education, and Marriage

Pauline Olena Schilberg was born to Julia and Andrew Schilberg, probably in an area north of Warsaw, Poland, in a town that may have been located in Prussia at the time of her birth. It was territory that changed hands multiple times in the few decades after her birth on October 25, 1882.<sup>1</sup> Pauline's various travel documents and decennial United States' census records indicate she was born in Prussia, Russia, and Germany. Whatever her nationality at birth, in 1890, when Pauline was eight years old, the Schilberg family immigrated to the United States. The family settled in Helmetta, New Jersey.

It seems unlikely that Pauline spoke English when she arrived in New Jersey, and she was homeschooled for two years, until she was the age of ten, before enrolling at the local public school in Helmetta, where she studied until 1900.<sup>2</sup> With few Americans attending college in 1900 and still fewer women, Pauline enrolled in a course at the Stewart Business College in Trenton, New Jersey.<sup>3</sup> The religious leanings or beliefs of the Schilberg family, if any at all, are unknown prior to 1900, but it was after arriving in Trenton that Pauline seems to have discovered the Seventh-day Adventist Church; sometime before Christmas in her first semester at the business college, Pauline began attending evangelistic meetings held by Seventh-day Adventist evangelist E. E. Franke. On Christmas Day, 1900, Pauline converted to Christianity and became a charter member of the church organized from converts of that evangelistic series.<sup>4</sup> Although converted by a Seventh-day Adventist pastor and attending as a charter member of an Adventist Church, the following August, 1901, at age 19, Pauline was baptized by a Baptist minister.<sup>5</sup> Whether Pauline was a practicing Baptist or whether she was simply moved to be baptized – no matter the denomination – is unknown.

Also unknown is whether she completed her course at Trenton Business College, but in 1904 at age 22, and four years after enrolling at Trenton, Pauline traveled to South Lancaster, Massachusetts, and registered for classes at South Lancaster Academy (SLA). There are no records of what she studied in South Lancaster, but the only post-secondary program offered at SLA in 1904 was a normal school course; this teacher training program operated as the J. T. Browning Missionary and Industrial School. Unless she planned to repeat secondary school, it seems almost certain that Pauline was enrolled in the missionary and industrial school's teacher training. Pauline studied at South Lancaster from 1904 to 1907, and it was at South Lancaster that she affirmed a desire to serve the Church, writing in 1907 that the academy had "strengthened the desire in my heart to give my life-service to God, and to spend all of my time and energy in doing my part in giving the everlasting gospel to the world in this generation."<sup>6</sup>

Schilberg's words echoed those of D. L. Moody's Student Volunteer Movement (SVM), whose "watchword" was "the evangelization of the world in this generation." This SVM watchword was a direct response to the Old Testament call in Isaiah 6:8, "Whom shall I send? Whom shall go for us? And I said, 'Here am I. Send me.'" Clearly the SVM had inspired Pauline's articulation of her missiology.

## Career

In January 1907, Pauline was re-baptized as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and that summer, after completing her studies at South Lancaster Academy at the age of 25, Pauline began her work as a tent Bible worker in the Central New England Conference in Ayer, Massachusetts.<sup>7</sup> With four years at Trenton Business college and three years of teacher training at SLA, Schilberg was probably better prepared than most other twenty-somethings who boarded a ship and sailed for the mission field. Yet in the fall semester of 1907, Pauline enrolled in yet another one- or two-semester post-secondary program; this time she matriculated at the Foreign Mission Seminary at Washington Missionary College, in Takoma Park, Maryland.<sup>8</sup> With her education and foreign missions training now complete, Pauline began making plans to travel as a foreign missionary. In March 1908, she set sail for China from Seattle on board the *Minnesota*.<sup>9</sup> Sailing with Pauline were Dr. Harry W. Miller, his wife, and several other China-bound missionaries.

It was standard practice across denominations for newly landed missionaries to spend anywhere from several months to more than two years studying Chinese, and Schilberg was no exception. The *General Conference Bulletin* reported in 1909 that all large missions asked incoming missionaries to study Chinese for three years, the first two of which were devoted solely to language study.<sup>10</sup> That was fine policy, but in practice, few China missionaries spent two years "solely" studying Chinese or the local dialect. Pauline arrived in China on March 28, 1908, and immediately began studying the language.<sup>11</sup> In February 1909, after 11 months of study – during which time she gained "excellent command of the language" – Pauline departed for her first mission station in Honan Province (Henan Province, today).<sup>12</sup>

Because the mission work in Henan Province was spread over a considerable distance, it was determined they needed a location that was somewhat more central where the foreign workers could reside "and from which they could conveniently visit the outlying stations. The city of Chowkiakow (aka. Zhoujiakou, 周家口). Today the city is known as Zhoukou, 周口), with a population of 200,000 was chosen, and in time became the center from which numerous outstations could be carried on under the charge of evangelists or colporteurs. As an outgrowth of an institute, the first training school in Mandarin was started at Chowkiakow..."<sup>13</sup> There were eight outstations in 1909 that were served by mission workers in Chowkiakow. Although a fairly large city, Chowkiakow was a day's travel by cart from the nearest railroad station. It was not a convenient journey to her new home.<sup>14</sup> In February 1909, Schilberg took charge of the Chinese Girls' School in Chowkiakow. This was her first official mission posting and, although she had no classroom teaching experience, sources differ on whether she was a teacher or the

principal, with one source noting an O. A. Hall as principal and Schilberg as “one of the teachers,” while later in the same source, Dr. Miller is noted as principal and Schilberg as assistant principal with two additional Chinese teachers.<sup>15</sup> In her own service record, written by her own hand, she said that she arrived in China and “took charge of Chinese girls school” in February 1909.<sup>16</sup>

Among the missionary groups in China during this period, there was considerable tension, and some groups were protective of those in the Chinese territory they perceived to have a monopoly over. Schilberg observed, “one great difficulty that confronts us in these fields, is other missionaries,” and related a story of a group of non-Adventist missionaries who by chance were traveling on the same ship as another Adventist missionary. The non-Adventists stated that “Adventists ought to be crushed.”<sup>17</sup> However, they were not crushed, and although the mission work was difficult and growth was slow, mission school enrollment steadily improved. During this early period of mission efforts, many schools that began as separate boys’ or girls’ schools later joined onto a single campus as co-educational organizations. Although some of these schools briefly and awkwardly remained separately administered single gender schools on the same campus, most became full co-educational schools within a few years. By the fall semester of 1910, the girls’ school was sharing a campus with a new boys’ school with Dr. Harry Miller as principal and Schilberg as preceptress of the girls’ school. These two schools were called the China Union Mission Training School.<sup>18</sup> Schilberg and Miller’s schools seem to have remained separate schools on the same campus, at least until 1911, when it appears they become a single school under a single administration.<sup>19</sup>

Like most missionaries, Schilberg took on many roles and was kept busy. While assistant principal of the China Union Mission Training School, she managed the girls’ school and taught history, geography, Bible doctrine, and other religion courses there. Her mission work outside of the school consisted of translating English religious literature into Chinese, managing outreach programs to local women and working with the *Signs of the Times* editorial office.<sup>20</sup> She also found time to start a family--Schilberg adopted An Hsi Li (Thelma Evelyn Schilberg), a Chinese girl born in August of 1910. There is no record of the circumstances surrounding Pauline’s adoption of Hsi Li, but Schilberg had taken “little Thelma” under her care no later than January 1913, according to the *Asiatic Division News*.<sup>21</sup> The official adoption likely took place after January 1913 but before mid-1914; General Conference Committee minutes advised Schilberg that “under no circumstances should she attempt to bring the child to America without a consular certificate guaranteeing her permission to bring the child into the United States.”<sup>22</sup> Schilberg returned to the United States on furlough in September 1914, and her daughter’s passport indicates Hsi Li was her adopted daughter.<sup>23</sup>

In 1914, after almost seven years of service at the mission school and office in Chowkiakow, Pauline Schilberg returned home on furlough. Although a furlough suggests a scheduled return to the mission field, and Schilberg’s own “on furlough at present,” description of her status in November 1914 church records suggests she was planning a return, she did not immediately go back to China. Instead, Schilberg began teaching German and religion courses at Washington Missionary College (WMC) in Takoma Park, Maryland.<sup>24</sup>

Yet it's clear that the long-term plan was for her to return to mission work. Minutes from the General Conference Committee in May 1916 record a vote to continue her furlough salary.<sup>25</sup> It is not known why Schilberg did not immediately return to mission work, although in context, the church did prefer to send married missionaries to China whenever possible. And with World War I raging and China dangerously unstable after its own revolution in 1912, church authorities may have resisted sending an unmarried Schilberg and her young daughter back overseas. For four years, Schilberg's status was seemingly in limbo, and in June 1919, the General Conference Committee voted yet again to maintain Schilberg on a furlough salary of \$13 a week, adding that she could return to China in the fall, health permitting.<sup>26</sup> But by May of 1920, she had still not departed for China, and the General Conference voted to end her furlough allowance and that "she be placed on the Sustenance Fund at proper allowance for her and adopted child."<sup>27</sup> But by May 1920, Schilberg had been teaching at WMC for about five years, and there was no indication she was planning an immediate return.

It was during her tenure at WMC that Pauline met her future spouse. Joseph Alexander Guild was born in 1881 and was a student at WMC while Pauline served on the faculty.<sup>28</sup> The 1921 *Sligonian* college yearbook lists "Joe" Guild as a senior bachelor's level student and literary editor of the yearbook. Exactly how or when Pauline and Joe became acquainted is not known, but the 1920 census – enumerated in January of that year – lists both Schilberg and Guild as living at the same address. They were both listed as unmarried. Schilberg is "head" of the house and Guild is a "lodger," renting a room in Schilberg's home.<sup>29</sup> Guild was the only lodger at her home, and only three people lived at her address: Pauline Schilberg, her adopted nine-year-old Chinese daughter Hsi Li (Thelma), and Joe Guild. In 1920, a 38-year-old female professor rented a single room in her home to a 39-year-old male student. This would have been a questionable arrangement in 1920.

As a boarding house manager – if that can be an accurate description – Schilberg likely provided housekeeping and prepared meals for Guild. It is not difficult to imagine that the small family dynamics created by this trio at the Schilberg home may have lent itself to the practicality of marriage. And on Sunday, May 30, 1920, Schilberg and Guild were married.<sup>30</sup> It is worth noting that some documents erroneously record a marriage date of Friday, May 30, 1919.<sup>31</sup> Multiple other documents preclude that possibility, not the least of which was Joe Guild's obituary which notes a wedding date of 1920.<sup>32</sup>

Soon after Joe's graduation from college in 1921, the Guilds began preparing to go to China. Joseph may also have enrolled in a post-graduate course; although he graduated in 1921, his occupation was listed as "student" when he applied for a passport in July 1922.<sup>33</sup> By late 1922, the Guilds were in China, and Pauline was at least a couple of months pregnant with the only biological child she and Joe would parent. Daughter Jeanette "Nettie" Pauline Schilberg-Guild was born on January 19, 1923, in Nanjing.<sup>34</sup> For several months, the Guilds remained in Nanjing where Joe may have been studying Chinese, but on September 6, 1923, just 12 days before the start of the new academic year, they arrived in Shanghai for their first official posting. Joe took charge of the industrial work at Shanghai Missionary College, and Pauline joined the teaching faculty. Although what courses she taught is unknown, with her teacher training and language skills and her prior experience at WMC teaching religion

courses, Pauline could have taught at any level and in any of the school's departments. With her teaching experience, she may have taught in the college's normal school, which had only 23 students enrolled in the 1923 academic year. Only in its fifth year of operation, the school opened that new academic year with 185 students across all departments.<sup>35</sup>

Little is known of the Guilds' work at Shanghai Missionary College. But this was their last foreign missions post, and they had seen the last of China by early 1928. China was entering another period of civil unrest, and Shanghai was one of the epicenters of that unrest. It would not have been safe to remain, so Pauline and children returned to the United States in April 1927.<sup>36</sup> Joe Guild did not return to the United States with Pauline, and in October was temporarily transferred to a mission in Malaysia "to serve as teacher of these trades [manufacture of school desks, tables, and steel-frame spring beds], [and] has been preparing the essential machinery and equipment for the manufacture of some of these articles of furniture that should find ready sale, and writes that the prospects are excellent for finding a market."<sup>37</sup> But by early 1928, Joe Guild had also returned to the United States.

The General Conference Committee voted in September 1928 to financially support Joe Guild "subject to further counsel with the Far Eastern Division representatives... as to Brother Guild's future."<sup>38</sup> The word "furlough" is not mentioned, and it is unclear whether the Guilds planned to return to mission work. Whatever their long-term plans, their immediate course of action was to settle into life in the United States; Pauline again began teaching languages at WMC almost immediately after returning in 1927, and Joe appeared on the WMC faculty in 1928. The Guilds' foreign mission service was over. They spent the rest of their careers at Washington Missionary College.

## Later Life

In 1934, having spent more than 25 years as a Bible worker, missionary teacher, and languages professor, Pauline and Joseph retired from church work and moved to a 230-acre farm near Trenton, New Jersey.<sup>39</sup> Together the Guilds lived in New Jersey, working as farmers until 1947 when Mr. Guild fell ill. Unable to manage the farm on her own, Pauline posted an advertisement in the *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, noting her husband's illness and seeking help working the farm and its 24 head of cattle.<sup>40</sup> In 1949, Joseph Guild died from a heart attack at his home in Arneytown, New Jersey.<sup>41</sup> Pauline Schilberg Guild passed away in Trenton, New Jersey, at the age of 69, on February 14, 1952.<sup>42</sup>

## Summary of Service

Location	Position	Dates
Ayer, Mass (Central NE Conf.)	Bible worker	1907



Location	Position	Dates
Hanzhou and Shanghai, China	Missionary studying Chinese language	1908-1909
Zhoukou, Henan, North China Mission	Principal, Chowkiakow Girls' School	1909-1910
Zhoukou, Henan, North China Mission	Religion faculty, China Missions Training School	1910-1914
Washington Missionary College	Bible and Languages Faculty (German)	1915 – c.1922
Shanghai Missionary College	Faculty	1923 - 1927
China Missionary Junior College, Chiao Tou Chien , Jiangsu Province, China	Faculty	1927
Washington Missionary College	Languages Faculty	1927 – c.1934

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## NOTES

1. Although the exact location of Pauline's birth is unknown, her sister Juliana was born in Nowogród in 1880 in what is now Poland. Official records that Schilberg completed in her own hand indicate a birthplace and nationality of both Russian and German, but in her passport application of 1914, she listed "Russian" as both her ethnicity and nationality and then crossed out her entry and re-wrote "German." In another 1914 document, Schilberg indicates she was Prussian, and in 1922, she reported that she was Russian. Her city of birth cannot be verified but may have been Nowogród.
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18. Mahlon Ellsworth Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 667.
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21. Allum, "Honon, China," 8-11.
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42. "Recent Deaths," *Allentown Messenger*, February 14, 1952, 4, accessed April 4, 2022, please see [here](#).

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