

and universities of North America. His professional writings will continue to be read. The world will be better as a result. Arthur H. Robinson, Robbie, also exhibited characteristics that many of the citizens of the world would do well to emulate: open mindedness, self discipline, setting long term goals and plans, operating and responding non-presumptively, non-emotionally, unpretentiously. Too few of us had the opportunity to observe and learn from Robbie. Those that have are better world citizens for the experience.

Contemplating the Challenges . . . and Some Recollections

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Ph.D. 1969, University of Wisconsin, Madison
The Dasymetric Method in Thematic Cartography

QUESTION [R. Klove]: ... the purpose of a statistical map is to give a relatively true impression and not an absolutely correct one, and whether New York is 150 times the smallest or 250 times doesn't matter, does it?

RESPONSE [AHR]: To give a relatively true impression it *does* matter "whether New York is – appears – 150 times the smallest or 250 times." This is basic; without it we have no standards at all with which to judge the quality of this kind of thematic map. ... The only way to test the quality of such maps is to have the map reader match up the graphic presentation with what is to be communicated.

"...true and absolute values" ... are true and absolute to a planimeter, but we don't make maps to be "seen" by planimeters; we make them for people. ... If one accepts the philosophy that maps are made for people to look at, and if one accepts that to see normally is not necessarily to see the way mechanical devices or our non-relative system of arithmetic "see" ... then it seems to me one is bound to proceed according to the results of proper research. If we ignore its results then we are saying either a) "it is not correct," or b) "it may be so, but I just don't like it that way." Both are indefensible when we are making maps for others to look at.

[From an exchange of letters between Arthur Robinson and the Bureau of the Census, 1964]

PRACTICAL MATTERS 1 [AHR]: We buy meat at Krogers, produce at Safeway ... and everything else at Piggly Wiggly.

CHALLENGE [AHR]: "I shall be out of town next week ... would you cover the introductory cartography class for me?" [GMc]: "Sure ... what's involved?" [AHR]: "It's map projections and the indicatrix ... here are my notes [nine lines]."

Eleven completely filled five-by-eight note cards later, I had taught my first class. (Now I'm into dimples on golf balls.)

CHALLENGE: It is undoubtedly all too apparent ... that structural elements in the cartographic technique are not only extremely complex, but

poorly understood as well. The reason that visual communication is so subjective and devoid of objective testing is probably, or at least partially, due to the assumption that, because of the infinite number of possibilities, any testing of isolated components would be of little actual worth. It seems likely, however, that a number of cartographic procedures could be evaluated by testing. ... It should be possible by testing to arrive at a reasonably accurate area departure factor which when applied to different shapes would bring them to comparable size. On the other hand, many of the aspects of harmony, movement, balance, and proportion, seem likely to remain essentially subjective insofar as their evaluation is concerned. This does not mean to imply that the principles governing their use are purely a matter of individual caprice; it does mean that *exact* standards probably cannot be devised.

[*The Look of Maps: An Examination of Cartographic Design*, 1952]

AHR on foreign languages (for the Ph. D.): Spanish? No ... French and German ... or Russian.

AHR, an aside, in the library: "About the [recently completed doctoral comprehensive, written, eight-hour] exam ... you passed."

THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE [GMc]: It isn't a good exam if it isn't a good learning experience. I'm still trying to figure out the right answers for some of the questions.

In the fall of 1968, an AHR note ... a real catalyst: "If you expect to finish your dissertation before 1975, you'd better do it now ... I'll be out of town for the next couple of years."

TECHNOLOGY AND THE HISTORY OF CARTOGRAPHY: In these days of modern cartography, with its advantages of computers, plastics, remote sensing, instant communication, and so on, it is nevertheless worthwhile to look back. Often the basic truths and concepts of a field are made clearer by observing how the innovators coped with problems no one else had ever faced.

[*Early Thematic Mapping in the History of Cartography*, 1982]

PRACTICAL MATTERS 2 [AHR]: We enjoy wine with dinner ... would you like a glass ...?

PRIME TIME ISSUE [AHR]: Every day, in some way, spend time with a globe.

STIMULUS [AHR]: I ... urge the development of a year-length course in "map appreciation" ... without prerequisite ... a course that looks upon the map as one of the oldest methods of communication with a fascinating history; one that makes clear the roles of art, science, and technique in map-making; one that develops a modicum of critical judgment concerning the handling of the graphic elements of a map ...

["The Potential Contribution of Cartography in Liberal Education," 1965]

RESPONSE [GMc]: How do people find their way from here to there or just around? Simple – they use maps. Maybe not maps on pieces of paper but maps in their heads: mental maps. Different people have different maps, even of the same place. Mapping is an ancient form of communication and maps have created ideas and opinions, promoted understanding and confusion. A non-technical approach to the transformation of space

onto maps, to their content and structure, and their role and impact in human activity, past and present. Neither background in geography nor artistic skills are required.

[Description of GEOG 111: Maps and Mapping, University of Kansas Undergraduate Catalog 1975-2005]

Remembering Arthur Robinson

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*The Effects of Class Interval Systems on the Visual
Correlation of Choropleth Maps*

Arthur H. Robinson, “Robbie,” was my PhD advisor at the University of Wisconsin. That is far from a unique honor; he advised no fewer than 14 Phd students during his career, and I was one of the last he took on. Perhaps it was all the advising experience before I came along that made him such an expert guide, and that he was. My tribute to Robbie here will start with my experiences as a graduate student and then move on to *The American Cartographer* and to more recent personal memories of this wonderful man.

My first memory of Robbie when I was a graduate student is somewhat vague, but I do remember how I felt—in awe that I was glimpsing the author of that textbook I had been reading as an undergraduate. He looked—so human. Since my master’s work was not in cartography, and since Joel Morrison was teaching several of the cartography courses by the time I matriculated at UW, the only lecture course I took from Robbie was the History of Cartography. Even though I was not a specialist in the history of the field and was not particularly enamored of history courses in general at that time, I found Robbie’s class extremely enlightening, and to this day I remember many of the things he talked about. His lectures were well organized and, if not particularly dynamic, very easy to listen to, and my fellow graduate students and I absorbed the content and often discussed it out of class. Like all UW geography courses that included both graduate and undergraduates, History of Cartography had a “grad section,” an extra meeting at regular intervals (every other week perhaps) of just the graduate students and professor. A term assignment went along with it. I chose to look at the press coverage of the controversy stirred up by *The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation*, the first (1965) edition of which had been released on or just before Columbus Day (or perhaps it was just the news of it, but I distinctly remember the involvement of Columbus Day). After giving my report, Robbie asked if I thought they chose that day on purpose, and green young graduate student that I was I said oh, no, I didn’t think they would have done that. He very matter-of-factly said “Oh, I think they did” and went on to the next report. He offered no further argumentation and had not stated it as a put-down; it was just an understated hint that opened my eyes to the whole phenomenon of rivalry in the world of publishing and in academics.

The comment is one of many that stuck with me through the years. A small phrase would open up a whole new understanding. Sometimes