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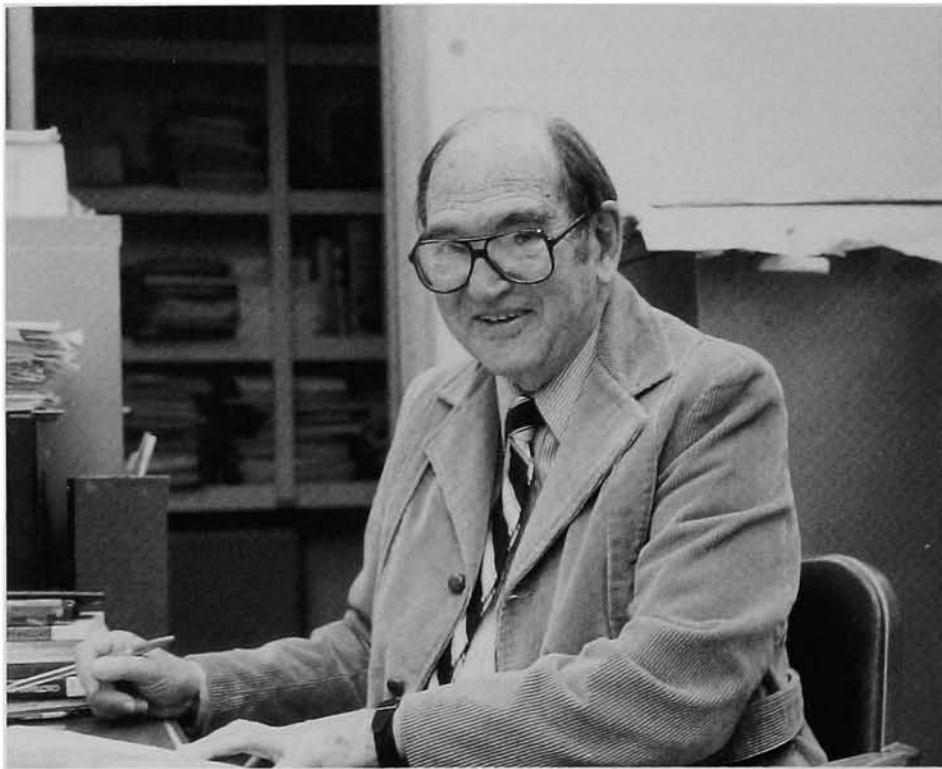
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## Memorial to Demitri Boris Shimkin

(1916 - 1992)



Demitri Shimkin in 1983 (photo by Univ. of Illinois News Bureau).

**DEMITRI BORIS SHIMKIN**, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and Geography at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Professor of Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago, died Tuesday, December 22, 1992, at Carle Hospital in Urbana-Champaign from cancer. He was 76 and is survived by his second wife, Tauby Heller, daughter, Eleanor Shimkin-Sorock, of Farmingham, Massachusetts, and stepchildren Rae Spooner of Urbana, Joel Weichsel of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Jeremy Weichsel of Montreal, Canada. Professor Shimkin's first wife, Edith Manning, died in 1984, and his son, Alexander, was lost (MIA) in Vietnam.

Born on July 4, 1916, in Omsk, Siberia, Shimkin and his family immigrated to Indonesia

and then to the United States. His childhood was spent in San Francisco, and he began his anthropological career as an undergraduate at the University of California at Berkeley (UCB). He graduated with highest honors in anthropology from UCB in 1936. Under the tutelage of Robert H. Lowie and Alfred Kroeber, Shimkin was awarded a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the same institution in 1939.

Professor Shimkin's anthropological career was interrupted by World War II. While at Berkeley, he was enrolled in the R.O.T.C. program, and in 1941 he was commissioned and attained the rank of Lt. Colonel in the Military Intelligence Division, U. S. Army.

Shimkin was appointed a fellow and staff member of the Institute for Advanced Study at

Princeton in 1947. Between 1948 and 1953, Shimkin worked at Harvard as a Research Associate of the Russian Research Center, as a Lecturer in Social Anthropology, and as Assistant Curator of Siberian Ethnology. He published a number of articles about Russia (or the Soviet Union) during that time.

From 1953 to 1960, Shimkin was employed by the U. S. Census Bureau as a social science analyst. During this period, he continued to publish papers on Russia and Alaska. In 1960, he was appointed Professor of Anthropology and Geography at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. As well as writing on Russia, he began writing on such varied subjects as human ecology, Wind River, the southern black community (Holmes County, Mississippi), Mayan culture, health and medicine, alcohol studies, and applied anthropology.

Professor Shimkin retired in 1985, but continued to actively pursue his anthropological interests. In 1986, he published two chapters in the Great Basin volume of the Handbook of North American Indians. In 1990, Professor Shimkin participated in a symposium on Numic Myth at the Great Basin Anthropological Conference (GBAC) in Reno. At that session, he noted the lack of Native American participation at the conference and the need for a formal partnership between the various Numic (or Shoshonean) communities and anthropology (Shimkin 1990). He worked behind the scenes for the establishment of this partnership, contacting members of the Wind River Shoshone community and initiating a round-table discussion at the 1992 GBAC in Boise. He was a discussant in the session entitled "Numic Ritual" at the same conference. In late October of 1992, he presented a guest lecture before the Sociology-Anthropology Department at Gettysburg College. In this speech (Shimkin MS), he laid the basis for the partnership with Native Americans, stressing their histories, conditions, and achievements, as well as the role that an-

thropologists should play in fostering the self-identify and self-worth of the Native American community.

Professor Shimkin was a consummate researcher, an excellent teacher, and a humanitarian. His understanding and compassion for people led Shimkin to make strides in educating the anthropological community about its responsibility to have a positive impact on the conditions under which contemporary Native Americans live. Shimkin's ashes were put to rest at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors befitting his military rank and accomplishments. In January 1993, the University of Illinois held a memorial service in his honor.

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