Clement Scott, Jr., Biography
July 4, 1914 – January 12, 1985

Clement Scott, Jr., was the son of Clement Scott and Henrietta Howe Scott. He was born at his parents' house at 23 Atwood St. in Hartford, Connecticut in 1914, just a month before the outbreak of World War I. His elementary schooling was at Kingswood School, and then he went on to Milton Academy in Milton, Massachusetts. He lived in Dunster House when he studied at Harvard University. He graduated from Harvard in the Class of 1936. In the fall of 1936, he entered Harvard Business School, but left after one semester of studies. He was not inclined to the world of business.

In January of 1937, he entered a graduate program in International Relations at the University of California, Berkeley. He continued his studies there for three semesters. He wrote more than fifty letters home to his parents when at Berkeley that included many reflections on both the education he was receiving and the deteriorating world geo-political scene. Although stimulated by the courses, he at times lost focus; he missed several semester exams in December of 1937 due to illness. He had difficulty getting his program back on track in the winter months of 1938. As a result, Clement left Berkeley at the end of his third semester and returned to his home in Hartford. Finding his life’s direction was not easy in these early adult years. In several letters to his parents, there was brief reference to a possible career direction in the ministry, but no substantive action was taken.

As World War II brought disaster to Europe, North Africa and Asia, Clement's life encountered its own deep challenges. In September 1941, his father died unexpectedly of heart disease at the age of sixty after becoming ill on a trip returning from his daughter’s home in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Clement was teaching social studies at Hamden Hall, a private school in Hamden, Connecticut, at that time. Then came the attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 and America was at war. His mother was a pacifist and did not want him to join the armed forces. However, Clement wanted to serve his country in the war effort. Almost immediately, he was drafted and in January 1942, he entered the army with a clear sense of patriotic duty. Not only had the family just lost their father three months earlier, but his sister Retty had just learned that she would be giving birth to the first Scott grandchild in August. Also, his youngest sister, Marjorie was engaged to be married in August. The Scott family was clearly in a time of major changes.

Clem was sent to Camp Croft, South Carolina for basic training. His letters home express his patriotism and his desire to serve his country as he prepared to enter the war effort. A life-changing accident befell Clement Scott in April 1942. It was common for soldiers at Camp Croft to “hop a train” (a carryover of Great Depression era informal and free travel practices) to the nearby city of Spartanburg when on weekend leave. Somehow, Clem’s effort to jump on the moving train was unsuccessful and he fell off. His right arm was severed below the elbow. Doctors fitted him with a primitive artificial arm and hand at that time. Clement lived the remainder of his life with this simple prosthesis – never upgrading it to some more medically advanced version as medical technology improved. Although he wanted to stay in the army and serve his country in the war effort, this was not possible. Returning to Hartford, he worked for several years in industry including personnel work at the United Aircraft Corporation. However, after the end of World War II, he felt he wanted to serve humanity in some way; he felt strongly about personal service for those less fortunate than himself. He entered the Hartford Theological Seminary in Connecticut in the fall of 1946. Through his seminary studies, he learned of the specific work of the Presbyterian Church Mission which had a hundred-and-ten year presence in Iran. Clem could be described as someone with deep Christian religious beliefs coming from his parents’ faith. Although brought up in the New England Congregationalist tradition, his family on the Scott side had deep historic roots in the Presbyterian tradition emanating from the Scotch-Irish emigration out of Northern Ireland in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

Presbyterian Mission Service would be the new way for Clement Scott to serve. At some point in either his training or during his thirty years of service, Clem joined the Presbyterian Church. This was the church that surrounded his life and spiritual journey as he worked abroad. He was trained for missionary work and felt strongly that he could help people of the world in this way. Building on his previous experience as a teacher, he went to work with Presbyterian Mission schools in Iran. His recently widowed mother did not like his decision to work abroad, but he was determined to follow this path. He spent much of his time in Iran working in missionary schools. During his career, he also served as hospital administrator for the Presbyterian Church Mission in the city of Mashhad, (“Meshed” in Clem’s letters) near the Russian border. He also led three years of church efforts to help reconstruct the town of
Esmatabad after the very destructive earthquake of September 1962. In 1965 and 1966, Clem was called on by the Mission to oversee the financial matters and general administration tasks of the rapidly changing Presbyterian Mission in Iran. At this time the Mission was transitioning out of the century-long traditional Mission structure and this was a very challenging time financially and administratively for both the church and for Clem.

In the following twelve years, Clem’s work for the Presbyterian Mission returned to the teaching of English to Iranian young adults and college students, first at the Mehr-Jordan School and later at the Armaghan Foundation. This all took place in Tehran except for one year, 1970, when Clem taught in Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan.

In December 1978, he retired from active Presbyterian Mission Service at age sixty-four - just months before the Shah was deposed. Entering retirement, he returned to the States and took courses at Princeton – perhaps in the area of Religious Studies - for a semester. Due to the tumult taking place in the Islamic Republic, he could not return to Iran. Rather than living out his retirement in America, he chose to return to the Middle East – an area of the world he loved - and to his Presbyterian Church. He spent the final years of his life working for the Presbyterian Mission in Cairo, Egypt in the Volunteers in Mission Program as a retirement volunteer. He lived the entire second half of his life abroad – returning from time to time to visit family in Connecticut and Colorado. His letters speak often of wanting to return home more frequently but not being able to do so due to the very heavy work load that he encountered in his various missionary assignments.

Clement Scott's letters to his mother (and father until 1941) and his younger sisters, Henrietta (“Retty”) and Marjorie, continued from the mid-1930s to 1985. Fortunately, close to six hundred and fifty of Clement’s letters were saved by his two sisters. The most prolific of his letter writing was the period from 1948 to 1967 when he was in Iran. His letters give us insight into the daily life of a young and dedicated American working abroad in another culture – a culture very different from that of his deep family roots in New England. Throughout his years of letter writing from Iran, one can see an ebb and flow of optimism, but his words typically reflected his enduring sense of hope that life could improve for Iran and the developing world. This attitude sustained him in his life-long dedication and commitment to a job that presented him with constant challenges. He died at the age of seventy while in Egypt – working to serve his fellow man in a foreign country right up to the end. His abrupt death in January of 1985, at his apartment in Cairo, was unexpected by his family. He had spent Christmas visiting his sisters, Marjorie and Retty, in Connecticut just several weeks earlier. During that visit he appeared healthy and in good spirits. It is thought that he may have succumbed to a heart attack shortly after his return to Egypt. His remains are buried in Cairo, in the American Cemetery.