

The Japanese Language School Archival Project

In the Spring of 2000, the Archives continued the original efforts of Captain Roger Pineau and William Hudson, and the Archives first attempts in 1992, to gather the papers, correspondence, photographs, and records of graduates of the US Navy Japanese Language School, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1942-1946. We assemble these papers in recognition of the contributions made by JLS graduates to the War effort in the Pacific, the successful occupation of Japan, the creation of Japanese language programs across the country, and the development of cultural reconciliation programs after World War II.

Miya Sano: an Alternative View

While collecting information about Sensei, I conducted an interview with Miya Sano, wife of Joe Sano, one of the first group of Sensei brought to Boulder. Ms. Sano has resided in Boulder since World War II.

In 1942, she, her husband, and his mother were being held at Tanforan Race Track, a temporary Japanese Internment Camp in California. Joe Sano's parents had founded a Japanese School in the San Francisco area. It was likely for this reason, as well as for his birth order and university degree, that he received orders to report to the US Navy Japanese Language School at the University of Colorado. Concern for his mother's health led Mr. Sano request that she accompany him and his wife to Boulder. However, only his wife joined him, as Boulder restricted the Sensei to having only their immediate family members with them.

Becoming a Japanese Language School Sensei was difficult for Joe Sano, at first. But getting to know the students and the awareness of their respect made the process easier. "We got to know them personally and it became a joy rather than an agony," Ms. Sano explained. "As far as the students were concerned, they were just very much gentlemen and the women too [were ladies]. They were always so tickled to come over and they would say, 'I hope you have Japanese food.' And I would say, 'No. It's Thanksgiving, we're having turkey.'" They were so disappointed."

Ms. Sano was always struck by how the students expected her to make Japanese dishes and to speak Japanese, when she was an American, spoke English, and had only some knowledge of Japanese cuisine.

Miya Sano has fond memories of later visits. Before Sano Sensei passed away in 1980, he had his former students over for breakfast with him and his wife and spent the afternoon reflecting on their days at the school. She also remembered the visits of female graduates during the WAVE anniversary in 1993.

Jessica Arntson

[Ed. Note: Ms. Arntson is seeking to interview JLS Sensei & wives.]

Slesnicks Return For Another Round of Research

Professor Irwin and Carole Slesnick came back in April to the Archives for another round of research for his overarching book on all of the JL Schools. They are finishing up the research on the pre-Boulder schools and transfers. Their next step will be the Boulderites.

They have stayed at the University Club so often that by the time they finish their research they will have had a longer stay than many JLS grads.

**In Memoriam
Halsey Wilbur, JLS 1943
(1912-2000)**

Halsey Wilbur, a former JLS officer, passed away on December 31, 2000. Wilbur was born on January 23, 1912 in Kobe, Japan. His family later moved to Shanghai, where he attended the Shanghai American School. Wilbur attended Oberlin College, graduating with his BA in Economics in 1934 and his MA in Political Science in 1935. Wilbur was employed by the First National Bank of Japan in Kobe until 1941, when he was interned with 300 Americans in the Stanley Prison area. He was later repatriated, and studied to become a Japanese Language Officer. He served with the American Foreign Service until his retirement in 1975. His wife, Helen, passed away in 1978, and Wilbur lived in Wooster, Ohio until he moved to the Kendal retirement home in Oberlin, Ohio in 1996. Halsey Wilbur is survived by a daughter, Betsy Kodat and a son, Peter Wilbur.

OOOOklahoma...

In *The Interpreter* for March 15, I noted Professor Slesnick's remark that "Admiral Nimitz demanded more graduates for the occupation of Japan." When I was interviewed by Commander Hindmarsh at Cornell in November 1944, I detected no urgency about expanding the JLS program, but only his assurance that I would graduate in time to participate in the invasion of the main islands of Japan (i.e. early 1946). However, the picture at Boulder began to change in about early May 1945, when new [JLS] students were appearing in increased numbers, which I assume now was a response to the Nimitz requirement. Simultaneously, scuttlebut arose that the school was to be transferred to another location, and among such locations, Oklahoma was mentioned. Then,

near the end of May, at lunch in the dorm dining room, the sensei in the sound booth asked us excitedly to stand by for an important announcement....it came in music: "O-O-O-O-KLAHOMA WHERE THE WIND....et.al. Our response was a loud, corporate groan.

Soon, section by section, JLS students were summoned to the office of the CO, to be informed of their transfer dates. Ours, entry of February 6th, were told that we would remain in Boulder, to be the last class to graduate there. Then...came the middle of June, and we were informed that we were rather to be the senior class of the new school in Stillwater. In total frustration, my classmate Doug Elliott and I hiked up the Flatirons below Bear Peak and worked off our pique by climbing straight up to the top of Bear, where no trail had existed. We reported in Stillwater on 12 July.

After VJ Day, our class was summoned to the CO's office, and we were given the options of requesting change of duty, or of remaining until graduation after which we would be committed to one year of Pacific duty. Most of us stayed on, and we were later told that we were the only class to have a "graduation" (early April '46), with all the trimmings: Japanese speech by our "swordman", Ed Sherman, etc. Friends who remained in Stillwater later told us that the entire student body were "released" in June of 1946. As for that "year of Pacific duty", only one of our class, a Marine major, made it to Pearl; the rest of us translated materials from the South Manchuria Railroad Library, in Washington. Then, when I arrived in Japan in October 1947 as a college teacher, I learned why so few of us were needed in Japan: scores of our Nisei teachers were doing the work, under Defense and State Department contracts!!

Robert Bruns, JLS 1946

Kwajalein Bodies Sought (Over)

War Crimes Trials Interpreters' Assistance Needed: Kwajalein Bodies Sought

During the War Crimes trials held on Kwajalein in 1945, it was discovered from native Marshallese that Americans had been beheaded on Kwajalein.

Lt William P. Mahoney, interpreter Lt David Osborne, and reporter Y1c William A. Bell flew to Tokyo and obtained confessions from Admiral Koso Abe and Captain Hiyahsi concerning the execution of Americans.

These men confessed to the execution of 9 Makin Marine Raiders on October of 1942 on the southwestern end of Kwajalein. Abe was found guilty in the Guam trials and executed for the crimes on Guam. Due to the bomb damage on Kwajalein, attempts to recover the bodies were not made at that time.

Existing court records give a vague description of where the site was located on the island however; it is believed that the US knew the location of the site at the time. In fact, war crimes prisoner Admiral Masahi Koyabashi stated in 1948 that a

corporal at the Guam stockade showed him a diagram that refreshed his memory of the execution site. In addition to the marines, several US Army Air corps pilots had disappeared on Kwajalein.

The U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii (CILHI) is investigating the possibility of locating, recovering and identifying US remains on Kwajalein. **Anyone with any knowledge of US POWs executed on Kwajalin, please contact Tripp Wiles at 808-449-5260 x 221 or wilesm@cilhi.army.mil**

\$Donations Accepted

There are those of you who may not have papers to donate to the Archives, but who may wish to support the Japanese/Oriental Language School Archival Project in other ways. We are setting up a cash account to fund Archives activities regarding the JLS/OLS Project. To date, the Archives has spent in excess of \$10,000 of its own funds on the project. If you wish to donate, make your check out to The University of Colorado and mail it to: David Hays, Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Campus Box 184, Boulder, Colorado, 80309-0184