The US Navy Japanese/Oriental Language School Archival Project

The Interpreter

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

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Our Mission

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, letters, photographs, and records of graduates of the US Navy Japanese/ Oriental Language School, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1942-1946. We assemble these papers in recognition of the contributions made by JLS/OLS instructors and graduates to the War effort in the Pacific and the Cold War, to the creation of East Asian language programs across the country, and to the development of Japanese-American cultural reconciliation programs after World War II.

Memorial Resolution - Nobutaka Ike

(1916- 2005) SenD#5903

Professor Sheppard noted, "We now go to the first of the standing reports. I welcome Dr. Kenneth McElwain to come forward, please, to present a brief statement in honor of his colleague, Nobutaka Ike, Professor Emeritus of Political Science.

Dr. McElwain began. *"Nobutaka Ike, a member of the department of Political Science from 1958 until 1984, when he became professor emeritus, passed away on December 15, 2005 in Jacksonville, Florida following a brief illness, at the age of 89. Nobutaka Ike was a pioneering scholar of Japanese politics, authoring several books, including A Theory of Japanese Democracy, published in 1978. Unjustly interned as a second-generation Japanese American in Camp Harmony following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, Nobutaka Ike was released from camp after several months of incarceration in order to teach the Japanese language to select Navy recruits at the U.S. Navy language school in Boulder, Colorado. From the Naval Language program graduated a small but elite core of Japanese language specialists known as the "Boulder Boys," who served an indispensable role as translators, code breakers and interrogators during the Pacific War and as interpreters during the Allied Occupation of Japan from 1945 to 1952. Several of the "Boulder Boys" went on to earn their doctoral degrees in such disciplines as history, political science and economics. Along with children of the missionary parents in Japan, the "Boulder Boys" trained by Nobutaka Ike and others became pioneers in the post-war development of interdisciplinary Japanese studies at such centers as Harvard, Columbia, Michigan, Yale, and Stanford.*

At Stanford, Nobutaka Ike published, taught, and trained a second generation of specialists in Japanese politics. Thanks in part to his research, publication and teachings, Stanford was able to maintain its time-honored tradition as one of the country's leading centers for interdisciplinary study of Japan. Madam Chairman, I have the honor on behalf of a committee consisting of Terry Moe, Jean Oi, Daniel Okimoto and myself to lay before the Senate of academic council this statement in memory of the labor of Nobutaka Ike, Professor Emeritus of political science in the School of Humanities and Sciences."

Professor Sheppard said "I ask all of us to stand for the traditional moment of silence." Then she thanked Dr. McElwain for his presentation and noted that "…the full text of the resolution will be available in the *Stanford Report*."

Stanford Report
January 31, 2007
Faculty Senate minutes
January 25, 2007 meeting

CONVERSATION BETWEEN MARINES

Dear Aubrey *[Farb]:*

In Moscow, we stayed at the Savoy Hotel, rated the best but needing a refurbishing after the war years. The dining room would have struggled to get a half a Michelin star. I went into the cavernous Gum department store where there was little to buy but found a small carved wooden box as a souvenir for my wife. The hotel was a short walk to Red Square and Lenin's tomb. When Chick and I got our initial briefing at the State Dept mail room one of the men there told us to pick up Texaco credit cards with the big red star logo. He said the card could ease the way with Russians who were impressed with the red star but rarely could or would read the text. There were two armed soldiers guarding the tomb and some visitors were allowed in after showing a pass of some sort. Others were turned away (n.b. a friend last year was not allowed to go in. Perhaps Lenin was being detailed?). I showed my Texaco credential to the guards and was immediately waved in. Lenin lay on a plain flat catafalque covered in red. A dark coverlet was pulled up to his waist under his folded hands. The discordant note, to me, was that where his feet should have been sticking up, the area was completely flat *[Didn't have a leg to stand on? Sorry]*. His face looked like the pictures one has seen but was waxen, like a Tussauds product. We flew back to Berlin without incident.

The old-hand couriers were generous with advice about what to do where. In Madrid, buy suits and jackets at Gonzalez y Garcia. I did. If you want to eat economically order the onion soup in the Hotel Madrid dining room where we stayed - big enough for a meal, cheap - and delicious. Also, eat at an excellent German restaurant called Edelweiss. I went there for lunch and spoke to the receptionist in German. He asked me to follow him, but we went around the large central dining room to a smaller room in the rear. He opened the door to a babel of German from about a dozen men around a table. When they saw me there was silence and one of them barked something at my guide. He apologized and took me back to the main dining room. The food was indeed good. An Embassy officer told me that I had no doubt burst in on a Nazi luncheon club. Many Nazis, fearing war criminal charges in the de-Nazification program going on it Germany had slipped into Spain, where the political climate under Franco was salubrious. Some of them made their way on to South America and elsewhere. One of the couriers said that on the train between Hungary and Roumania a man usually showed up offering to sell pistols, left behind by the Nazis, probably. He had picked up a P38. The guy did show up and I was delighted to buy a beautiful 9mm Luger. Later, during a trip to Stockholm the mail room fellow asked me about my earlier trips. I mentioned the Luger and he said that they had on a shelf a little 6.5mm Browning pistol. He said that the pistol had been taken from someone years before and he didn't know the circumstances. He asked if I wanted it, dusted it off, and gave it to me. All this was before the beginning of airport inspections. frisking, xrays, etc *[Amazing, You could bring on assorted firearms then and can't bring on skin lotion now]*.

Semper Fi
Glenn Nelson [RIP Glenn]
JLS 1944

Boller Reprise

Boller is only partially correct on R: Mandarin has a terminal R that is pronounced as in English "for". It also has a beginning r that has no equivalent sound in English (to linguists it is a retroflex r). My three semesters of Mandarin at Ann Arbor 47-49 have made me super critical.

Forrest R. "Woody Pitts
OLS 3/45

Samuel S. Stratton 73, [JLS 1943]

Former Congressman Dies

Samuel S. Stratton, a former Congressman who represented the Albany and Schenectady area for 30 years and was a longtime member of the House Armed Services Committee, died yesterday at Shady Grove Hospital in Gaithersburg, Md. He was 73 years old and had lived for the last year in the Manor Care nursing home in Potomac, Md.

Mr. Stratton, who suffered a stroke a year ago, died of a heart attack shortly after arriving at the hospital, said Robert Mott, his son-in-law.

A Democrat whose hawkish views often put him at odds with his party, Mr. Stratton devoted his Congressional career to strengthening the nation's defense system. He strongly supported the American war effort in Vietnam and proposed increased spending for new weapons systems like the B-1 bomber, the MX missile and the neutron bomb.

First elected in 1958, he was the third-most senior Democrat on the Armed Services Committee when he announced in 1988 that his failing health prevented him from running for a 16th term.

He was first elected to the House in 1958, becoming the only Democrat in 42 years to be sent to Congress from what was then the 32d Congressional District in the Albany-Schenectady-Troy area.

Despite several redistrictings in a predominantly Republican area, he was returned to Congress with ease every two years and became dean of the New York delegation in January 1979. At his retirement, Mr. Stratton represented the 23d District.

He began his political career as a city councilman in Schenectady, and was elected mayor by 282 votes in 1955. He fulfilled a campaign promise to clean up the city by leading a police raid on a gambling den in the shadow of City Hall.

Mr. Stratton supplemented his meager mayoral income as an announcer and newscaster for several local radio and television stations. He also appeared on early television as the character "Sagebrush Sam," who dressed as a cowboy and played a harmonica.

In 1962, he tried to shift his focus to statewide politics by seeking the gubernatorial nomination. But party leaders gave the nod to Robert M. Morgenthau, then the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York and now the Manhattan District Attorney.
In 1964, Mr. Stratton sought to become a Democratic candidate for the United States Senate. But his effort failed when Robert F. Kennedy entered the fray and defeated him on the first ballot at the Democratic State Convention.

"When Bobby Kennedy decided he was a New Yorker, that was the end of my campaign," Mr. Stratton said years later.

Mr. Stratton was born in Yonkers and attended school in Rochester and Schenectady. He graduated from the University of Rochester and held master's degrees in philosophy from Haverford College and Harvard University.

He was commissioned as an ensign in the Naval Reserve in 1942 and served in the South Pacific during World War II as a naval combat intelligence officer on the staff of Gen. Douglas MacArthur. He was twice awarded the Bronze Star and retired from the Naval Reserve at the rank of captain.

He is survived by his wife, Joan; three daughters, Lisa Gonzalez of San Mateo, Calif., Debra Stratton Mott of Springfield, Va., and Kim Petrie of Aspen, Colo., and two sons, Kevin, of Vienna, Va., and Brian, of Clifton Park, N.Y

John T. Mcquiston
New York Times
September 14, 1990

[Ed. Note: JLS/OLSer Stratton was recalled often in this newsletter by fellow JLS/OLSers. So I thought it fitting that we include his obituary, written so long ago.]

My Columbia Moscow and the Hudson

A Varsity Show writer enters the world's stage — behind the Iron Curtain.

Gene Sosin JLS 1943

How exciting and a little scary it was, having just turned 16, to be a freshman at Columbia College. Looking at the names of the immortal writers and philosophers on the facade of South Hall (later renamed Butler Library), I had mixed feelings knowing that I was supposed to read and understand most of them in my Humanities course. It was September 1937. I couldn't have known it then, but as the world's stage was being set for a hot war followed by a cold war, my role in that drama would be shaped by Columbia.

But first I had to graduate. In addition to my studies, leading to honors in French and election to Phi Beta Kappa, I took part in Varsity Shows as a bit player in the musical comedies of my talented classmate I. A. L. Diamond, who wrote the book and lyrics each of our four years. He was snapped up by Hollywood and became Billy Wilder's collaborator on such films as The Apartment and Some Like It Hot. I tried to compete with Diamond while we were undergraduates by submitting a script of my own, and failed. However, I continued at Columbia doing graduate work toward my master's degree, and coauthored the book and lyrics for Saints Alive, the Varsity Show of 1942. (The star, Gerald Greenberg '42CC, became famous as Gerald Green, a novelist and award-winning TV writer.)

Another highlight at the College was joining one of the three Jewish fraternities, Beta Sigma Rho, which was located in a brownstone on 114th Street. I would walk there from morning classes to have lunch and enjoy the camaraderie of my fellow students. With social contacts difficult for those like me, who commuted by train from Long Island and missed dormitory life, the frat house was a home away from home. We would gather around the upright to sing the latest pop tunes and Columbia fight songs and recite our favorite limericks, some of which are unprintable. One that can be quoted here concerned a Romanian monarch and his mistress: "Said the beautiful Magda Lupescu/When King Carol came to her rescue:/'Vot a vunderful thing to be under a king/Is democracy better? I esk you.'"

In 1940, when the fast-food chain Chock Full o'Nuts opened a small café on the southwest corner of 116th Street and Broadway, it ran an ad in Spectator announcing a limerick contest over the next six weeks. The first two lines of contest no. 1 were provided, and the challenge was to complete the poem, with a prize of $5 for the cleverest entry. I gave it a try. Their lines began: "At Chock Full o'Nuts 'cross the street/Where sophs and their profs often meet..." My last three lines were: "You can take it from me/That they always agree/It's a treat the elite couldn't beat." A week later, Spectator printed the winning limerick and the name of the writer — it was me! I submitted entries each week and won three of them. Full disclosure: the contest rules stipulated that a winner could not enter again. So I persuaded my closest frat brothers, Eddie and Charlie, to let me use their names. They both won five bucks, and the grand prize of $100 went to Charlie. He handed me the check, and I gave him the agent's fee. His psychology prof hailed his triumph, suggesting that he buy beer for the class, so Charlie's net gain was pretty small.

Less than six months after graduation, Pearl Harbor was attacked and we were suddenly at war. Eddie was in graduate school with me, and his father, who was in the import business and had visited Japan, advised me to study Japanese because America would soon need translators and interpreters. A crash course was offered in the spring semester, and I seized the opportunity. Professors Hugh Borton and Harold Henderson, along with two Japanese assistants, taught us, and by June our class was reading, writing, and speaking rather well. When recruiters from the U.S. Army and Navy came to Columbia in search of smart students who could learn Japanese quickly, they were impressed that our group already had a head start and persuaded most of us to enlist. I chose the Navy, and in June 1942, I entered the Japanese Language School at the University of Colorado in Boulder. My wartime service was spent in Washington at a top-secret Naval Communications unit, where we used our Japanese in code breaking and translation.

In 1946, after I was honorably discharged, I returned to New York and got a job at the Voice of America (VOA) writing news and features, and considered resuming research at Columbia in 18th-century French literature. By 1947, the Cold War had started and the VOA launched broadcasts in Russian to the Soviet Union, so I decided to return to my alma mater — but not for French. Instead, I applied for admission to the newly established Russian Institute on the GI Bill. A two-year curriculum in five disciplines covered history, government and law, economics, international relations, and Russian language and literature. In 1949, I received the Certificate of the Institute as a member of the second graduating class, along with the MA from the Department of Slavic Languages.

While taking a course on Dostoevsky in Philosophy Hall, taught by Professor Ernest J. Simmons, I met my future wife, Gloria Donen, who was a WAC veteran studying for her MA in the same department. We were married in June 1950, and a few weeks later, we both were hired by Columbia's Bureau of Applied Social Research to take part in the Harvard Refugee Interview Project in Munich, in the American occupied zone of Germany. Professor Philip E. Mosely had strongly recommended us for the team that was responsible for interviewing displaced persons from the Soviet Union who remained in the West after the war. The project became famous as a pioneer in research that assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet system, and enriched America's understanding of our Cold War adversary. Gloria and I were thrilled to have participated in that Red Letter Year: Munich 1950–1951, the title we gave to the book she published recently about our experiences, made possible by our Columbia education.

In 1952, I was hired by Radio Liberty, the U.S. shortwave station, to prepare broadcasts to millions of Russians and other ethnic groups within the USSR. For the next 33 years I held several executive positions in New York and Munich in the area of policy and programming. In 1959, thanks to a generous travel grant from the Social Science Research Council, I spent five weeks in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev doing postdoctoral research on state-subsidized theaters for children, and absorbing the reality of everyday Soviet life.

Gloria and I visited the USSR under Gorbachev, and post-Soviet Russia in the 1990s. Today, after many years of retirement, I still keep in close touch with the Russian (now Harriman) Institute, where I have lectured on a variety of topics, and plan to continue. Now, when crossing the campus as an octogenarian dinosaur, I feel as if I'm in a time warp: again a young freshman wearing a blue dink, never dreaming of the exciting and fulfilling future virtually programmed for me there. My Columbia? Yes, indeed.

Gene Sosin
'41CC, '58GSAS
JLS 1943
Columbia Magazine

Winter 2008-2009

Columbia Magazine Ed. Note: *Gene Sosin is the author of* Sparks of Liberty: An Insider's Memoir of Radio Liberty *(Penn State, 1999). He and Gloria '49GSAS live in White Plains, NY, where they write and lecture. Their son, Donald '76GSAS, is a composer. Daughter, Deborah, a writer, helped carry Gene's dissertation into Low Library at the age of four.*

Japanese American Redress Activist

Tsuyako 'Sox' Kitashima Dies

Teaching History

(Cont'd) Kitashima not only played an active role in redress, but would eventually talk to numerous schools about the Japanese American incarceration experience.

"It is critical to educate our young about the past so that they can help mold a better future," she wrote. "I tell them we must remember what our Constitution stands for and to make sure that our rights are always protected and safeguarded, so that no group will ever experience what we did."

"She believed that people needed to know the story of the camps, and she realized that she had the ability to talk about her experience in a way that young people understood and related to," said Adachi.

"In all her talks at high schools and groups, she would speak with such emotion to her audience " in her own words " the angst, agony, and humiliation of the Japanese American incarceration experience as if it just happened yesterday," said Rosalyn Tonai, the executive director of the National Japanese American Historical Society.

Community Volunteer

As respected as she was for her work in redress, Kitashima was also appreciated for the countless times she willingly volunteered for community organizations.

"I don"t think that she ever turned down a request for help," said Okamoto. "She had so much energy and passion."

"She would make hundreds of sushi for events, from JACL community film premieres at the AMC Kabuki to community events at the JCCCNC, social events, community fundraisers, often footing the costs herself and refusing to accept any payment," Adachi revealed.

Kitashima was a fixture at the Kimochi Nutrition Program, volunteering everyday for more than 20 years in the kitchen to help prepare meals for seniors.

"She felt this was her way of giving back to seniors," said Sandy Ouye Mori, director of development at Kimochi, Inc. "She had a commitment to helping the Issei and the Nisei."

According to Mori, Kitashima, who served on the Kimochi board of directors for more than 12 years, was instrumental in efforts to raise more than a half-million dollars to build the Kimochi Home for seniors in 1983.

Kitashima was also involved in numerous other community organizations, including the Nihonmachi Legal Outreach (now Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach), the San Francisco chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, the National Japanese American Historical Society, the Asian Law Caucus and the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California.

Supporter of the Arts

In 1995, Kitashima joined with Adachi to launch the Asian American Arts Foundation (AAAF) to both honor and support Asian American artists.

"She was the driving force behind the foundation," recalled Adachi, the chair of the organization. "She was truly my "partner in crime" in making the Arts Foundation what it was."

The organization would host three to four major events each year, Adachi said.

The AAAF produced the "Golden Ring Awards" dubbed the "Asian American Oscars" which honored established artists such as Asian American jazz band Hiroshima, actor Chow Yun-Fat, the cast of "Flower Drum Song" and movie director John Woo. The programs also highlighted Asian American talent, and funds raised from the Golden Ring Awards were

turned into grants for emerging artists.

According to Adachi, Kitashima's desire to be an artist influenced her support of the arts.

"She had aspirations to be an artist when she was young, and her involvement in the Arts Foundation reminded her of that," he said.

"Sox firmly believed that artists, because of their sacrifices, deserved the support of the community, and she was visionary in her support of the arts," said Adachi. (to be cont'd)

Kenji G. Taguma
Nichi Bei Times
January 12, 2006

Joseph P. Redick CIA Officer, JLS 1944

Joseph P. Reddick, 92, a CIA operations officer from 1950 to the mid-1970s, died January 11, 2009 at Augusta Medical Center in Fishersville, Virginia, of pneumonia.

His CIA assignments included posts in Southeast Asia and Africa. In 1960, he received the agency's Intelligence Medal of Merit.

Joseph Pierce Redick was born in Frankfort, Indiana, on July 29, 1916 and received a bachelor's degree in linguistics from Indiana University in the mid-1930s. He served in the Navy during World War II as a Japanese-language officer.

He received a master's degree and doctorate in French from the University of Colorado in Boulder in the 1940s.

In 1963, he moved to McLean and retired to Staunton, Virginia, in 1989.

His wife of 61 years, Margaret W. Redick, died in 2002. A son, Charles W. Redick, died in 1993.

Survivors include a daughter, Nancy R. Powell of Arlington County; a sister; and a granddaughter.

Lauren Wiseman
Washington Post
January 25, 2009, C8

[Ed. Note: We had not found Mr. Redick in 8 years of looking. This obituary was sent in by Jeane N. Olson, from our mailing list. I will look for his daughter so as to inform her of our project.]

Language Competence Of USN JLS/OLSers

A friend who had been a Vietnamese interpreter for the USAF studied Vietnamese for only a few months and then was sent to a combat unit in VietNam. He did not feel competent in the language, and learned far more by daily action in Vietnam than he'd learned in the Air Force School.

I felt the same way after fourteen months in Japanese study at the Navy School of Oriental Languages in Boulder. I was a "Certified" Translator and Interpreter, but in Japan with the Naval Technical Mission to Japan (NavTechJap), I felt incompetent. The Boulder course taught us to manage in most daily situations but gave us almost no technical vocabulary. I had high grades at Boulder, but I spent most of my six months in Japan with a dictionary in my hand, and the phrase I used most often was *"Ainiku, wakarimasen. Mo ichido, kudasai, taihen yukkuri ni,"* which is, roughly, "Unfortunately, I didn't understand you. Please say it once more, and very, very slowly."

But most Japanese were amazed to talk to an American who knew any Japanese at all, and were always patient. When I had to translate a ship blueprint, I had to look up almost every term in a specialized dictionary.

Morris Cox
OLS 1945

Yes, I have heard this from many JLS/OLSers. There were also some BIJs and BICs who were very critical of the language skills of many of the JLS/OLS graduates. Still, in a tough situation demanding many more linguists than they had time to produce, it seems that, for a military operation, they did quite well. In 14 months, with Japanese American professionals as faculty, almost no military or naval training, the prevailing bigotry and hatred, I continue to be astounded that they got as much out of the 1200 or so entrants that they did.

Harry Muheim told me this story. When, during the Occupation, he reported to an Army commanding general to take his assigned position, Muheim explained to the general, "Sir, I know you think you have a naval officer on your staff. I can see my name up there on your organizational chart. But you really do not have a naval officer; you have a Japanese Language Officer, which is an entirely different kind of officer. And since you have Harry Muheim, you do not really have much of a Japanese Language Officer, either." The general puffed on his cigar for a minute, then looked at Muheim and replied, "Muheim, we Americans are new at this occupation business. We are just going to have to do the best we can." Muheim ended up with a Bronze Star for his work.

On the other hand, was it you that told me about Tom Kerr, perhaps the best Japanese linguist from the JLS/OLS? He ended up as a Navy mess officer and did not get to use his fine language skills at all?

David M. Hays
Editor & Archivist

I certainly agree that Boulder turned out translators and interpreters as competent as could possibly be expected, and a few with engineering and physics backgrounds were immediately valuable assets to NavTechJap. But most of us were English, Language, and History majors and had to learn the technical vocabulary on the job. That took time. My CO was very impatient with me when I got there. He said "All you know how to do is say 'Good Morning' and 'How do you find the Head' and 'how to go shopping'. We don't need that. We need you to help us with engineering problems."

He was considerably kinder three or four months later, when I had learned something *[Why should you JLS/OLSers be different from the rest of the 0-1s, when they enter the service? It took me 6 months in West Germany to be of real use to my unit, in 1975]*. He had high praise for Ed Snow, who had a Ph.D. in physics and picked up the technical vocabulary very quickly. When I left Japan for Pearl Harbor to help edit the NavTechJap Reports (and where my experience as a proofreader was helpful), I was just beginning to be useful in technical Japanese.

My classmate Tom Kerr, as you noted, was probably competent in almost any kind of Japanese from the very first, but NavTechJap in its infinite wisdom, made him Mess Officer, where his skills were wasted.

Morris Cox
OLS 1945

[Ed. Note: Let's see, recruit folks with language background that will understand learning foreign languages, or take engineers and physicists who will be able to apply the language once they've learned it? Hmm, that would have been a tough call. I was an art and history major and they made me a field artillery officer. I wonder in what world that was a match.]

Some Brushes with History:
Handling the Japanese Language During WWII

(Cont'd) *[At the Boulder JLS]* In addition to classwork there was *undō* for an hour every afternoon during the week and twice-a-week drills supervised by petty officers who could scarcely conceal their humiliation at having to deal with a bunch of college kids, some of them decidedly bookish, who entered the Navy as yeomen, but weren't scheduled to wear uniforms until they were commissioned as ensigns upon completing the language course. One of my friends, Wendel Furnas, regarded the *undō* period as a waste of time; he soon got into the habit of edging unobtrusively off the playing field during the workouts and then sneaking to the library to study his *Kanji.* The petty officers never seemed to notice what he did, or if they did, they didn't care. Furnas was no bookworm; he had spent time in a Japanese prison camp in China after Pearl Harbor and was anxious to get on with the war. (to be cont'd)

From Paul F. Boller, Jr.,
Memoirs of an Obscure Professor & Other Essays,
(Fort Worth, TX: TCU Press, 1992) 38-51.

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