

The Interpreter

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

Number 169

★ Remember September 11, 2001 ★

arv@colorado.edu

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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.

**John E. Thayer III,
Peabody Curator, 67**

John E. Thayer 3d, a research fellow and curator in Japanese arts at the Peabody Museum in Salem, Mass., died Saturday at New England Baptist Hospital in Boston. He was 67 years old.

He died of multiple myeloma, his family said.

Mr. Thayer wrote advertising copy for 21 years for the Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn and J. Walter Thompson agencies in this country and for Hakuhodo Advertising in Tokyo.

In 1978 he began a second career, interpreting Japanese history and culture as a curator at the Peabody Museum and as a lecturer and photographer specializing in Japan. He held a black belt in the discipline of kendo.

He was born in Lancaster, Mass., and held bachelors and master's degrees from Harvard. He was a Japanese interpreter as a Navy ensign in World War II [OLS 1/45-].

Mr. Thayer is survived by his wife, the former Keiko Fukuhara;

a son, Nathaniel, of Arlington, Mass.; two daughters, Chandler Thayer-Tamulonis of Placerville, Colo., and Katharine Thayer of Cape Porpoise, Me.; two sisters, Evelyn Chace of Yemassee, S.C., and Sylvia Ferry of Montpelier, Vt., and two grandchildren.

New York Times
December 27, 1990

**CONVERSATION
BETWEEN MARINES**

Dear Aubrey [Farb]:

My plane back to Tetuan was late but they had held up the JU-52 for us. A number of people were already aboard. My reserved seat was on the right rear, a window seat. I had only one diplomatic bag to carry. The seats were all occupied and remaining passengers were allowed to fill the aisle. The pilot announced that bad weather was forecast but we should be able to get across to Seville before it hit. We didn't. About 15 minutes out, we flew into heavy rain and wind. The pilot apologized for the capricious weather and added that now Seville was socked in. He assured us that this was no problem. We'd just fly in circles over the Med until the weather moved on. The turbulence became quite violent and there was a chorus of yells, groans, prayers in several languages - and a lot of upchucking. The atmosphere in the cabin began to approach one of Dante's levels. There was a small access panel in the plane's hull next to my seat about a foot and a half square. The panel blew loose and rain came in. I held onto the panel and finally got an attendant to come back to deal with it. He couldn't latch it and asked if I would just hold it shut. In self-defense I did. We finally did get to Seville where I'm sure they had to sluice out the interior of the plane with a fire hose.

I neglected to mention an earlier flight to Iceland from Copenhagen. I over-nighted in Reykjavik and the next morning boarded for the return flight. A

young, beautiful blonde (I think they all are, in Iceland!) was in the adjoining seat. We began to talk. She said she had never left Iceland before and had never been on a plane. I gave her my window seat. She said she was going to Copenhagen to marry her fiancé. As we flew over the North Atlantic and the North Sea and came in view of the city, she was like a kid at the candy store window. The fiancé, a handsome blonde chap, was there to meet her. I wished them well.

Our Grand Tour completed, Chick and I flew back to the real Marine Corps at 8th and Eye, in DC. No luxurious Connie this time. Tony deGrassi, who had been stationed at a USMC post near 23rd and Constitution found out I was back and sought me out to give me some interesting news. He had resigned his commission, gone to work for the CIA, and was leaving shortly for the Far East. He told me whom to see if I were interested.

Since I as yet had no duty assignment I sneaked over to CIA and there encountered a USMC Lt. Col, who was on detached duty to CIA. He asked if I would like to stay in the Corps and be lent to CIA, as he was. I left the decision open and he said he would check with the USMC. A couple days later he said that the reduced peacetime Corps couldn't spare any more assignments to the Agency. I was passed on to the civilian personnel people who said they would hire me because of my language proficiency - assuming, of course that I could pass security and other checks. They gave me a sheaf of forms to fill out. It was late June before they said I was cleared to come aboard. This was awkward since I was still in the Marine Corps, assigned to the barracks. I had to confess to Lt. Col. Kendall what I had done and that I was resigning my commission. I said that my interest lay in working in Japan, which the CIA would assure. Col. Kendall said he was sorry to hear I was leaving, but

understood my decision. The day after my release from the Corps, I reported for duty at CIA and prepared to go to Japan.

Semper Fi
Glenn Nelson [RIP Glenn]
JLS 1944

**Charles L. Latimer
OLS 12/44-8/45
(Chinese, Cantonese)**

Dr. Charles Laurens Latimer, Jr., a loving husband, father, educator, psychologist, counselor, naval officer, civil servant, humanist, linguist, genealogist, and world traveler died on 12 September 2008 in Greenville, SC following a stroke.

He is survived by his wife, Alice W. Latimer, son James L. Latimer, daughter-in-law Lina M. Latimer, daughter Mary L. Latimer, grandson, Edward L. Latimer, grand-daughter-in-law, Morgan L. Latimer, grandson Richard P. Latimer, great grandson Samuel L. Latimer, brother Edward B. Latimer, and sister-in-law Dorothy W. Latimer.

Born on the Augusta Road in Greenville County, SC, raised on a farm along the Reedy River, growing up during the depression, and a graduate at the age of 19 from the College of Charleston, he gave his life to service to his family, his country, his community, and the children of the world. Following service as navigator, linguist, intelligence officer and instructor during WWII, he graduated with advanced degrees from Harvard and Columbia Universities and started teaching elementary school, later responsible for 60,000 children of Army personnel and Europe and 15,000 children in the Panama Canal Zone, and served as a school counselor in Polk County, NC.

He was active as a leader to numerous national, state, and community organizations. These included: professional societies relating to education, psychology, and counseling; associations relating to his 37-

year naval career and boating; community associations serving the handicapped, disabilities, and mental health needs; university alumni associations; scouting organizations; international cooperation and humanitarian education groups; and genealogy societies, receiving many awards and commendations for his stewardship, generous service, and acts as pioneer and founder in the field of counseling.

He is deeply loved by all and will be missed greatly by his family.

The Greenville News
September 14, 2008

[Ed. Note: More information on Dr. Latimer can be found in issues #90A, #91, #92A, #102A as well as in issues #146, #147 and #150 in the future.]

James F. Davidson 1924-2008



BLACKSBURG, Va. — James F. Davidson [OLS 3/6/45-], age 83, died June 5, 2008. Born October 4, 1924, in Newton, Kan., he lived and was schooled through high school in Topeka, Kan.

He attended Yale University, entering with a debating scholarship, and subsequently spent three years on active duty with the U.S. Naval Reserve, including graduation in Japanese from the Navy's Oriental Language School. As a civilian again in 1946, he returned to Yale for a year and then went to Washington, D.C. as an intern with the National Institute of Public Affairs. This led to employment in the Secretariat of the Far Eastern Commission and later in the Secretariat of

Economic Cooperation Administration (Marshall Plan).

With another N.I.P.A. intern, Mary Harnden, he formed a partnership that would produce forty years of co-operative work on college and university campuses, and four children.

In 1951 he earned a Master's Degree in Economics from George Washington University; and in 1954 a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Chicago. He taught for several years at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tenn., and then was appointed Assistant Dean of College of Liberal Arts at that University. During this time, he also wrote dramatic works for the stage.

After a Fellowship in College Administration at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Mich., he became Dean of Faculty at Concord College, Athens, W.Va. in 1964 and Dean of Newcomb College of Tulane University in New Orleans, La., in 1969. In 1977 he returned to full time teaching as Professor of Political Science at Tulane University.

Retiring in 1991, he began dividing the year between his New Orleans residence and mountain property in West Virginia. Since 2001 he had been a resident in the Warm Hearth Village in Blacksburg, Va.

He is survived by four children: James Harnden Davidson, Arlington, Va.; Margaret Davidson Steininger, Innsbruck, Austria; Priscilla Davidson Lambson, Monroe County, W.Va.; John Ellsworth Davidson, Columbus, Ohio; and by three grandchildren: Hannah Davidson, Zachary Davidson, Columbus, Ohio; and Oliver Davidson Steininger, Innsbruck, Austria.

Bluefield Daily Telegraph
June 28, 2008

[Ed. Note: We were never able to find this OLSer. Perhaps I can find his family.]

Some Brushes with History: Handling the Japanese Language During WWII

(Cont'd) [At JICPOA] If Steele was diligent he was also straightforward and down-to-

earth. He was, in fact, the saltiest officer I ever encountered during my three and a half years in the Navy. His instructions were invariably a mixture of slang, Navy lingo, and profanity that sometimes I had to think over a bit before I could figure out exactly what he wanted me to do. At a general meeting of the translation section shortly after he became head, one of the ensigns asked if we were expected to salute him every time we met him on base. "Salute me the first time you see me in the morning, if you want to," croaked Steele, "but for Christ's sake don't go on saluting me the rest of the day!" [I recall my battery's troops taking happy revenge in saluting me one-at-a-time coming across the parade ground from the motor pool.] One day, the chief personnel officer, a fussy fellow with the rank of lieutenant, sent a solemn memo around for posting in all sections: "It has been observed that junior officers are addressing

Lieutenant Commanders as Commanders. This is incorrect. Lieutenant Commanders are to be addressed as Mister." Lieutenant Commander Steele posted the memo with a notation of his own at the bottom, "Correct as hell. Button up your pants, Madam."

What did Z Section (Translation), JICPOA, contribute to the naval war effort? Its job was to process the tons of documents captured from the Japanese during the fighting in the Pacific and translate into English anything that contained information which might be important for American military and naval operations against the enemy. To facilitate the work, Z Section was divided into *han* (subsections), eventually fifteen, specializing in documents dealing with various subjects: aviation, land forces, radar and sonar, ordnance, ships, shipbuilding, geography, and the like. For a time I worked in the *han* devoted to naval vessels; then I became one of the sorters, that is I went through the documents pouring into JICPOA from the islands captured from the Japanese, and assigned them to the appropriate *han*. We sorters were sometimes called "Sparrows," because, as Captain

Winfred J. Holmes (deputy officer in charge of JICPOA, which included cryptanalysts as well as translators) put it, they "scratch through a mound of horse manure and select the few grains of potentially important information."

Much of the material we sorted was of little or no interest to JICPOA and was sent to the Washington Document Center (called "Over the River Burial Association") for handling. At one point JICPOA sorters began labeling low-priority documents "crap" before transporting them to Washington [sounds like a fellow archivist I knew], but this produced such vehement protests that eventually my friend Carl Nelson [JLS 1943], a zealous sorter, went through all the documents and carefully prefixed an "S" to the labels. This mollified but did not overjoy the Washington Document Center people [I wonder why?], which included WAVES who had begun receiving language training at Boulder about the time I left.

Some of the documents coming into JICPOA from the Marshalls and other islands captured from the Japanese were extremely valuable. There was a rush job, I recall, shortly after I got to JICPOA, when eighty-five top secret Japanese hydrographic charts containing invaluable information about the location of minefields around all of Japan's main ports came into our hands, and it was important to translate and transmit the information to American submarines on patrol as quickly as possible. But few of the captured documents were that crucial; most of them were of longer-range interest to JICPOA. By the time the war ended, JICPOA had issued thirty-nine volumes of translations and interrogations (there was a prisoner-of-war camp at Pearl Harbor) and about ninety special translations. In his memoirs, Captain Holmes singled out five JICPOA translations he regarded as having been of immense strategic importance: 1944 Japanese Army Mobilization Plan; Hypothetic Defense of Kyushu; Kagoshima Defense Battle Plan; Digest of Japanese Naval Air Bases; and Manual of

Anti-Aircraft Defense. (to be cont'd)

*From Paul F. Boller, Jr.,
Memoirs of an Obscure Professor
& Other Essays,
(Fort Worth, TX: TCU Press, 1992)
38-41.*

John Dowling, dean emeritus of Graduate School, dies at age 88



John Dowling, a former dean of the Graduate School, died Jan. 31, 2009 at the age of 88.

Dowling earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado, where he was elected to the honorary Phi Beta Kappa. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Navy. He was a graduate of the Navy Japanese Language School at Boulder, Colo. He retired from the Naval Reserve as a lieutenant commander after 20 years of service.

During his 45 years in higher education, Dowling chaired departments of foreign languages at Texas Tech University (Lubbock); Indiana University (Bloomington) and UGA. He served as visiting professor at the University of Texas and the University of Iowa; as adjunct professor at the University of South Carolina (Beaufort); and as interim dean of the Schmidt College of Arts and Humanities of Florida Atlantic University at Boca Raton, Fla.

He served as dean of UGA's Graduate School from 1979 to 1989. He worked with the graduate faculty to initiate new master's and doctoral programs, among them: mass communications, musical arts, social work, historic preservation and artificial intelligence.

He retired from UGA in 1992 as Alumni Foundation Distinguished Professor of

Romance Languages and dean emeritus of the Graduate School.

A funeral service for Dowling was held Feb. 7 in Williamsburg, Va. Contributions in his honor may be sent to Chantel Dunham, director of development, main library, UGA. Make the check payable to the Arch Foundation. Designate the gift to the Hargrett Rare Books and Manuscript Library.

Columns
*Faculty Staff Newspaper
University of Georgia
February 9, 2009*

**Excerpt from:
Henry F. May**

**PROFESSOR OF
AMERICAN
INTELLECTUAL HISTORY,
UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY,
1952-1980**

(Cont'd) *[After being picked to go to USN JLS in Boulder]*

Lage: You weren't eager to pick up the gun right away?

May: By no means.

Lage: [laughter] Okay. Well, you get different stories about World War II.

May: From different people. Oh, yes, well, I was all for the war, of course, by that time, as were all the radicals, with the Communists as the center of it more even than anybody else. Some Communists, incidentally, fought heroically. But it was fine with me to be doing my duty by studying Japanese and living in Boulder: a very nice place to live.

Boulder can only be described as a strange interlude. The Navy had taken some Japanese *[to be sensei]* out of the relocation camps on the West Coast, and had prepared the townspeople, telling them the Japanese were coming, were important, and were to be treated with respect.

So we had all sorts of teachers, some of them teachers of little children from the language schools in San Francisco and Los Angeles, some of them from other professions, a few Caucasians who had lived in Japan and really spoke the language well. We were divided into sections of five and we worked very hard.

We had to learn a certain number of characters every week. You are nowhere if you don't know a good thousand or fifteen hundred fairly well, so most of the work was on the written language, which is much easier to teach, of course, than the spoken language. And it was a very good lively group of people. I had good friends there.

Lage: How was the group's attitude towards the Japanese teachers?

May: Extremely respectful. That is, you would call them sensei, teacher, and you'd bow slightly when you met them in the streets and so forth. That was how it was.

Lage: And they were Japanese-American?

May: Yes, Japanese-American, or as I said, a few Caucasians who lived in Japan, but they had to have very good Japanese obviously. And there were all sorts of comic aspects to it. Some people gave their dogs Japanese names and one couple actually gave a child a Japanese name.

So, while we were at war, a particular atmosphere was a great respect for things Japanese. The books we were using, which had been developed for embassy children, talked about how we poured out our blood on the plains of Manchuria and so forth.

Lage: Oh my goodness! That was very ironic!

May: Yes. Not all was about that, there was a lot of folklore and so forth. They posted grades every week, comparative grades, and we were under Navy discipline, though the married people fared infinitely better than the people who had to live in the dorm in Boulder, where there was a strict little martinet, a former education professor, that tried very hard to be Navy. The teacher would practice on our honorifics. First they would ask, "Do you respect Captain so and so?"--he was the head of the naval unit's language group and then, "Do you respect Miss Walne"--she was a former missionary, the civilian head of the school and then, "Do you respect Lieutenant Conover?" and so forth, each using a different kind of honorific. It's a terrible mess of a language because it's adapted; there are

Chinese characters adapted to Japanese sounds, so any character can be sounded at least three or four ways.

Lage: Depending on when it came into the language?

May: Yes. And you even do see Japanese speakers making finger gestures to show which character they mean of the syllable they're speaking.

I've sometimes thought it was as if the Chinese had conquered medieval England and then given both Anglo-Saxon and Norman French sounds to Chinese characters. It's an extraordinarily difficult language, which explains why even now the Japanese are handicapped when they are in foreign contact. Japanese is hard on the Japanese.

Lage: Even hard for the Japanese?

May: Yes. And it has something to do with the number of adolescent suicides and something to do with the discipline of the society because they have to work so hard. (to be cont'd)

an oral history conducted in 1998

*by Ann Lage,
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library,
University of California,
Berkeley, 1999, 53-55.*

Murray Isard, 77, Developer & Preservationist

Murray Isard, 77, a developer who helped build houses in the Northeast, preserve historic structures downtown and rethink the use of city space, died Sunday in Santa Fe, NM, September 3, 1994.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Mr. Isard was a major part of the reform administrations of Philadelphia Mayors Richardson Dilworth and Joseph S. Clark, serving from 1952 to 1968 on the City Planning Commission. He was also a member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

"He was in development and real estate his whole life," said his son Larry. "He was an innovator."

It was Mr. Isard who thought of preserving historic facades of buildings while modernizing the interiors. He saved the appearance of the Land and Title Building on South Broad Street, among others, that way.

While an owner of the Alden Park Apartments in Germantown, he also came up with an affordable way to preserve open spaces around buildings by letting owners donate easements for that purpose and take tax writeoffs.

Mr. Isard also helped conceive the Market Street East development, including the Gallery, one of the first suburban-style shopping malls in a downtown area. It started as an effort to restore and preserve Society Hill and mushroomed into a major effort to bring all of East Market back to life, Larry Isard said.

Born in Philadelphia in 1917, Mr. Isard was in the first class to graduate from Olney High. He went on to a special program for exceptionally bright students at Temple, graduating just before World War II. As a young sailor he was quickly snapped up for one of the most difficult jobs of the war – learning Japanese so he could serve as an interpreter in Naval intelligence.

After the war, he joined his father's development company, Isard-Orleans, later Isard-Risen, which built hundreds of homes in the Northeast, an area that was exploding in the postwar housing boom.

An active Democrat, in 1952 he was tapped by the new reform mayor, Richard Dilworth, to sit on the Planning Commission. While on the commission, he opposed a movement to build a new stadium for the Phillies in Torresdale and was one of the first to suggest South Philadelphia as a better location.

He spent most of his career with Hyman Korman and in addition to housing, he was involved in historic preservation as well as the recycling and restoration of many buildings. With several partners, he spearheaded the conversion of the old Gimbel's warehouse at 24th and Market into the Marketplace, a wholesale furniture design center.

He was also instrumental in the building of Cedarbrook Mall and the adjacent apartments in Wyncote; in construction of the Plaza on the Benjamin Franklin Freeway, now the Embassy Suites Hotel; in the restorations of the office building at 1422

Chestnut St. and the Robert Morris building at 17th and Arch Streets; and the conversion of the old Sears Roebuck building in Abington to a modern shopping complex.

"He put together groups of investors to develop these sites," said his son. "Purchase of the ground and getting the financing - that was his strong point." In his later years in Philadelphia, he was a real estate consultant.

Mr. Isard served on the board of managers of the Germantown Savings Fund Society and the Library Company of Philadelphia.

About ten years ago he moved to Santa Fe, where he spent summers. He wintered in Florida.

In addition to his son and his brother, he is survived by his wife, Bette; a daughter, Carol; two step-children, Lisa and Eddie Marshall; a sister, and five grandchildren.

Dale Mezzacappa
Philadelphia Inquirer
B6

[Ed. Note: Carol Isard emailed us looking for more information about her father's WWII experience. She said he was quite closed-mouthed about his service. We could only give her his entrance date, projected graduation date, but nothing else. We had never been able to contact Mr. Isard.]

Review of Ooka Shohei, *Taken Captive: A Japanese POW's Story*

For eight months during 1945 I served as a Japanese interpreter (U.S. Marine Corps) at the Japanese POW Camp on Guam. I met and interviewed many Japanese prisoners during that time. This is the first account published by a former Japanese POW that I have seen since the War. American POWs have published but no Japanese for reasons made obvious by the author. I was on the outside looking in. To view prison life from the other side of the fence was most interesting. The book is superbly written. It is factual and honest. For anyone who fought the Japanese in the

Pacific this book will open windows and offer to you a view that you might never have expected to look upon.

A. J. Tillery

USMCEL

July 25, 1999

<http://www.amazon.com/Taken-Captive-Japanese-POWs-Story/product-reviews/B000W11056>

Reprise on Kinsman

Enjoyed your latest (#134, April 1, 2009). Dear old Kinsman was one of Irwin's instructors, at Camp Elliott. In fact, Irwin told me several years ago that Kinsman saved him from getting axed from the program, so probably saved his life. We had the pleasure of seeing him again at that first gathering at Boulder [probably at Pomona].

Carole Slesnick

One of the authors of Kanji & Codes

Reprise on Stevenson and Kinsman

I want to thank you for sending me *The Interpreter* all these years since you first inquired about my husband, Paul Mussen's [OLS 1944 Malay], experiences at Boulder and in service in the Pacific.

It has been fascinating to follow all the adventures and experiences of the JSL and other Language School participants. Paul had mentioned that the applicants were chosen from the various college programs as members of Phi Beta Kappa and their stories and achievements certainly indicate that they were "the best and the brightest." (He told a story about an outdoor workout program at Boulder where the language people were on the same field with another group obviously chosen for size and athletic ability. The kindly instructor comforted the less agile linguists by assuring them they were selected for their brains, not for brawn.)

It has been nostalgic to read the stories and obituaries of friends as well as strangers. One recent issue covered our good friend and colleague, Hal Stevenson, who, like my husband, became a leader in the field of Child Development in Psychology. Both spent time in Japan and China and exerted considerable influence in their universities. Since we were at Berkeley, we spent much time together when Hal and Nancy were visiting Stanford as well as overlapping briefly in China.

Today's issue [#134] brought me word of one of my own friends, Bob Kinsman. I had spent the war years

in nurse's training and medical research and finally changed careers in 1948 and entered UCLA as a major in Speech-English. I was like other students who entered with the GI bill and were the same age as many of the Instructors and Assistant professors. These were either new Ph.D.s or graduate students working on their dissertations. Our relationships were as cordial, friendly peers of these men who happened to be our professors. When I was in Bob's class he was already "Dr. Kinsman" so it must have been in 1949 or 1950, according to your obit. One of my cousins (with the same last name as mine) was a Santa Barbara Professor who had gotten his doctorate at Yale, like Bob (and my husband) and who was an authority on Boswell. The English connection made us friends from the beginning. Bob was also active in the Phi Beta Kappa Society and when I was elected, he was a delighted mentor and gave me a reprint of a journal article he'd recently published, called "J. Sparrowe, Titulus." I suppose it was to stimulate me to publish also; which I did, eventually.

We never discussed his wartime experiences nor mine, so I didn't know about his language school or marine experience. Since I met my husband later in graduate school at Ohio State, I never thought to ask him if he was a contemporary of Bob's. Other friends of mine who later joined the Faculty and Academic Administration of UCLA knew him well. What I did bring to our friendship was an enjoyment of his interests in Renaissance Literature and my experience in nursing/research to know that his Marie-Strumpel's form of rheumatoid arthritis was common in his age group to those men who served in the South Pacific especially the Solomon Islands. Since I didn't see him in his later years, I didn't learn if he became as disabled with age as did some of the others. It is a cruel affliction.

This all revives the lovely spirit of the time when we veterans of the War years mixed it up with the apathetic generation of the 50's to wallow in learning and expanding our intellectual energies and move on to new or broader horizons. I treasure the memory of one who helped me grow. Thank you for your archival efforts.

Ethel Foladare Mussen

Recent Losses: