

The Interpreter

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

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★ Remember September 11, 2001 ★

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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.

**POETIC
ANCESTORS****Ernest Kroll (1913-1995)
Harvard JLS 1942**

photo: W. Linden, from the back cover of *The Pauses of the Eye*

Ernest Kroll was and may still be one of Washington's most published poets nationally. From 1945, when he sold his first poem to *The Washington Post*, through the early 90s, hundreds of poems appeared in large and little magazines—59, in 1978 alone. His first-book *Cape Horn and Other Poems* (Dutton) was a runner-up for the National Book

Award in 1952—The *New York Times* listed it among the 100 best books of the year. The *Pause of the Eye* (Dutton, 1955), his second, was also reviewed in *The New York Times* and other big-time places. And yet, except among poet friends of his generation and a few others, he was virtually unknown in Washington, DC, his home since the middle 40s. Case in point: in 1982, two lines from his poem “Washington, DC” were chiseled in foot-high letters into what is now called Freedom Plaza, on Pennsylvania Avenue NW between 13th and 14th streets: Ernie was one of thirty-nine literary and historical eminences to be so honored, putting him in company with George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Mark Twain, and Abraham Lincoln.

Here's his fourteen-liner, the sonnet form less the traditional rhyme scheme—the last two lines are those permanently at Freedom Plaza:

Hearing the twang among the porticoes
Where one expected only noble Romans,
You turn and keep a mild surprise, seeing
The public man descend the marble stairs,
Yourself, but for the grace of God, in the blue day
Among the floating domes. He disappears,
A little heady in that atmosphere,
Trailing the air of power, a solemn figure
Quick in the abstract landscape of the state.
His passage leaves you baffled in the void,
Looking out between two columns. The sun
Burns in the silence of the white facades.

How shall you act the natural man in this
Invented city, neither Rome nor home?

Ernie only learned about his “hand-chiseled immortality” by accident a year afterwards when he was at a friend's house for a

party—according to Colman McCarthy, who wrote a feature article about Kroll in *The Washington Post*, “a woman came over and said he must be bored being praised, but she had to say it anyway. She loved his lines.” Ernie was of course stupefied—what lines? This was the first he had heard about it. He wrote the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation to ask how this all came about and why he wasn't invited to the ceremony a year before, when the wall of quotations was unveiled. He received a three-page letter from the committee chair, Francis Ladd of Wellesley College, explaining in numbing detail how the search committee went about its selections. She was shocked to learn he wasn't dead—of course he would have been invited had they known he was still alive!

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Over the last several months I have been immersed in Ernie's poems, many of which I first read in the mid-70s, with an appreciation now that I don't think I had when we first met and corresponded about American Panels, a manuscript of satiric poems, all of them four-lines, that had been appearing in many magazines, among them *Harpers and Voyages*, the sharply distinctive magazine Bill Claire founded and shepherded in Washington in the late 60s and 70s. I'll have more to say of American Panels later but first this:

Ernest Kroll was born in Manhattan and grew up there—he put himself through Columbia University, in part by writing for *The Brooklyn Eagle*, the newspaper Whitman once edited. His journalistic writing wasn't incidental to the kind of poems Kroll came to write—Colman McCarthy quoted him in the 1979 *Washington Post* article:

“I discovered that many others before me—Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, Dreiser, Ring Lardner, Hemingway—had

learned from journalism to stick to the facts. I learned that having to write down immediately “who, what, when, where and why” was the best preparation for letting the creation imagination go where it listed.”

WWII had begun and Ernie left his journalistic career to enroll in the US Navy Japanese Language School—he graduated from the Harvard program in May 1942 and spent the war years as Commander Kroll supervising teams working in translation, decryption, and interrogation—this is from David Hays, archivist at the University of Colorado at Boulder where the papers of the Language School are housed. (In 2009, the Naval Institute Press published Roger Dingman's *Deciphering the Rising Sun: Navy and Marine Corps Codebreakers, Translators, and Interpreters in the Pacific War.*) With the war over, Ernie remained in Washington and for the next 25 years worked in the State Department as a Japanese Affairs Specialist—he married, had a son, and wrote poems: many poems. He got them into the mails and while no doubt received many rejections, he had one hell of a lot of acceptances. And not just from little magazines.

Poems in *Cape Horn & Other Poems* first appeared in: *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Yale Review*, *Furioso*—this says nothing about first-rate publications like *Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Yale Review* et al. The same went for *The Pauses of the Eye* three years later, his books of *Fraxions*, his *American Panel* poems, and others that were never collected. Here is “The Missouri,” which appeared in *The New Yorker* in 1961:

Never changed habits;
Still impure from the source,
It lives off the land,
Like a guerrilla force
Marauding, dragging away
Earth and the color earth,

Brandishing cottonwood snags
 Snatched from assaulted banks,
 Shambling in muddy rags
 On the way, without ranks,
 Its baggage stolen debris—
 A guerrilla force on the way
 To a war with the sea.

What is it about this and the poems that attracted such wide-ranging poetry editors? There's no general explanation of course, though I'll hazard one anyway: his lines have a precision, an exactitude about them that ride on the back of lyric rhythms. No stunting, no razzmatazz, no wild locations but a deliberate pacing that keeps impelling you from one line to the next. Reviewing his second book in *The New York Times*, along with John Logan's first and William Carlos Williams' *Journey to Love*, Wallace Fowlie refers to Kroll's "fine sense of rhythm" and "the graphic clarity of this poet's craft." In notes I made while reading these books again, over and over again I marked the pacing.

In so many of the poems, Ernie's *modus operandi* is the observer: he sees, he stops, he ruminates about what is before him. The title of his second book *The Pauses of the Eye* is right-on—there's no title poem of this name but it reflects what I imagine was his own understanding of the kind of poetry he was writing. Here's "Homer with a Camera," for example, a short poem that relates to the Civil War photographer Mathew B. Brady—metaphorically at least, it may characterize Kroll's own work:

In his ramshackle wagon rattling
 after battles,
 And down on the ground and under
 the black
 Cloth, his eye in the makeshift dark
 alive
 With love of the visual image,
 His hand directing the light to cut
 War's configurations on the plate,
 He saw the truth as terrible as myth,
 And made for the eye its only Iliad
 Of gods unbuttoned and the dead.

Not surprisingly, Ernie organized his first two books largely by subjects. In *Cape Horn*, the first part brings together observations of people and landscapes; the second is made up of city poems, several of which are narratives, e.g.,

"Crash, 1929,"
 "Unemployment," "The Divided Man," "The Salesman"; the third, poems set in Washington and the surrounding area such as "Washington, DC," "In a Georgetown Garden," "At the Adams Memorial," "Lafayette Square," "In the Woods Near Cabin John," "Antietam Battlefield."; and part four gathers poems on place—"New England: A Vision," "Rockingham," "Marblehead," "A Hampton Suite."

I won't summarize all six parts of *The Pauses of the Eye*, which begins with a number of poems set in Washington and on American figures, among them, "Washington, Astride" (on the sculpture of the first president mounted on his horse), "Lines for the Sherman Monument," "Whitman," "Emerson," and "Three Painters" (Thomas Eakins, Winslow Homer and Albert Pinkham Ryder). There's a rich section of poems related to the natural world, birds especially—"The Passenger Pigeon," "Whooping Crane," "Ivory-Billed Woodpecker," "The Bittern"—here are two:

The Snowy Owl

Eating the songbird, does it eat
 The song, too? Relish it with the
 smack and
 Tang of sauce, or wine, upon the
 tongue?
 Little creatures, keep out of the wide
 purview
 Of the hunting glance of the snowy
 owl,
 Come soaring out of the north, half-
 starved, for you.
 It is the particular own of
 Your worst nightmare; most bright,
 Most terrible eye of the air
 To fall afoul of.

Cardinal

More flame than bird
 At loose in the wood,
 Though gone, still
 Burning where it stood.

These poems reflect at least two aspects of tone: in the first, a sense of darkness in the world that Kroll's poems don't shrink from and in the second, a sense of quiet rapture, almost visionary. The meditative, reflective strain is common to both the lyrics and his urban narratives I referred to above—

here is the opening to "The Divided Man":

He awakens to the day's affairs,
 Welcomed by birdsong from the
 stucco eaves.
 The clock goes off to make a point:
 It has his being in its care.
 Staring through the upper panes,
 Distractedly he cracks an egg.
 The moon descending in the morning
 air
 Looks like the sun's discarded shell.

The divided man goes through the day in nearly 80 lines, the last of which brings him home from the long day's work:

He hangs at evening from the thong
 In the swaying trolley throng,
 His pocket rich with transfers.
 Returned, intact, ascends the stairs,
 Preoccupied as he came down. He
 enters
 To the dying cheers, only a rumor in
 his ears,
 Of birds still active in the eaves
 He contemplates the scene. He sits.
 After the day's distraction,
 Gathers in his wits,
 But gradually nods.
 Unfavored by the gods,
 He twitches in his sleep,
 His dreams demanding action.

Is Kroll writing about himself here? Maybe—only rarely does he write poem framed by the first-person I. His poetry is both camera and mind. "Expanding Universe," the opening poem in *Cape Horn*, begins with the visual thought that the planets are sailing into the dark and "Have only their own light for mark." This leads him to an analogy about our own selves sailing into the dark: "How shall we manage our one light / To navigate the perfect dark, / Lacking a mark upon the light?" "How shall we manage our one light" – and his answers are in the poems that follow: not the abstraction of "being in the world" but being and seeing and hearing and touching the world in all its multitudinousness.

These analogies bear the quietly reflective, more logically associative mind – they don't leap like the so-called deep image poems by Robert Bly or, later, James Wright—take "Kaibab Wood" in *Arizona*, where "the feeding deer / Reach up eat the aspen browse." They show no signs of fear, nor do they evade the human presence, watching them, he imagines

them meditating "on some slow file / Of cloud like sails upon the Nile / Drawing a slow felucca."

Or "Flowers and Fever": here the speaker/Kroll is lying ill in bed: "Through the haze of fever the body's bulk / Diminished" he thinks of flowers: "I envy the vigor of the flowers / Erect in a glass upon the table" and follows the analogy out. Just as their "death cannot be cured," he takes a tablet, an aspirin maybe, "to make a stay, / To do the most one can to death, delay."

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Current poetic fashions that range from the first-person/tell-all poem at one extreme to the Dadaistic/language poem at the other leave little room for the ruminative voice such as these poems from the Fifties. That is too bad – there is so much here to appreciate and admire (a word that might be the kiss of death); but there's much for poets to learn from, especially the mindful precision.

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In the beginning I referred to other modes that Ernie began writing in the later 50s and continued with well into the 80s, namely *Fraxioms* and the *American Panel* poems. The first is his neologism made from the words "fracture . . . fragment . . . axiom." In 1974, Abattoir Editions at the University of Nebraska published a beautiful letterpress edition of them, *Fifty Fraxioms* – each fraxiom is nine lines: lines 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 are in English; lines 2, 5, 8 are in either French, German or Latin and serve as a complement or counterpoint. The book's subtitle is *Verbum Sat Sapienti* [trans. Enough for a Wise Word]. These are poems pared to the bare minimum, for instance, "Dr. Williams' Prescription":

Dose of
 Das
 Fact will
 Keep a
 Ding an
 Brain from
 Getting
 Sich
 Abstract

[German trans: The thing in itself]

And "Nuisance":

As if my
Natura
Shoe were not
Tight
Abhorret
Enough, it
Sucks in
A vacuo
Stones.

[Latin trans: Nature abhors a vacuum]

You get the idea. They're fast aperçus—clever, playful, satiric, and each would fit on Twitter! These are poems that should be reprinted—all three Fraxiom books were all published in limited editions.

I'll close with remarks about my own connection to Ernie, which lasted a brief time in the mid-1970s. We had met passingly in 1971 when my wife Ann Slayton and I were living in England—Ann Darr and her husband George were traveling the inland waterways and they stopped in Oxford to visit; this was after I went with Ann D for a poetry reading in London that she did with Theodore Weiss—and Ernie happened to be there at the same time.

Several years later, back in the US, Neil Lehrman and I were still publishing *Dryad* magazine, though we were in the process of transforming the magazine into what became Dryad Press. I had published a couple of issues of the magazine as books—the first, Rod Jellema's *Something Tugging the Line*, and the second, *A Tumult for John Berryman*, an anthology of poetic tributes, edited by Marguerite Harris. One of the tributes was by Kroll. He later wrote me that John Berryman was a classmate and friend at Columbia—both were protégés of Mark Van Doren, along with Robert Giroux who was in the same class.

In 1975, with Dryad Press in (relatively) full spring—publishing John Logan's *Poem in Progress*, reprinting Roland Flint's *And Morning*, and readying Myra Sklarew's *From the Backyard of the Diaspora*—I had a letter from Ernie about our publishing a book of satiric verses—four-line epigrammatic-like poems—on life in the US.

He wrote they were being widely published, e.g., in *Harper's*, *The Nation*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *The Carleton Miscellany*, *Voyages* and elsewhere. "Nobody I am aware of is writing satire with this deep-cutting edge today," he wrote. Here are a few of these poems, the first from *Voyages*, the second two from *Harper's*:

The Radio in the Manhole

Those infernal measures rising pure
Orpheus up from hell ascending?
No. Just some men with music
mending
Broken pipes within a sewer.

Marine

the cabin cruiser
Sleeps four;
The ocean,
More.

Church Supper

To congregate below the street
And dine from plates upon the
knees
Is secretly believed to ease
The soul beyond the pearly
gates.

"A reader of Harper's," Kroll wrote, "accused me of being a 'cynic' for having written 'Church Supper.' Vive l'esprit!"

I read the manuscript—I read it several times at single sittings. I wanted to care for the book but didn't feel strongly about it. There were poems that seemed "superb" then but the 123 poems that made up the manuscript, which he had cut down from the original 150, just didn't sustain my interest. "Now I know there has to be a rise and fall," I wrote him, "but it seems to me there are more poems wandering around rather than heading in a coherent direction." I referred to ones that I would stand by, saying that I felt I could do a chapbook-length collection because too long a book would dilute the strength of those like "Church Supper" and others I mentioned. I never heard back from Ernie and don't know that I saw him in the years following. Such are the pangs of being an editor-publisher.

I would love to be able to read those poems now, to see if I feel differently than I did then—maybe they were "ahead" of me

and I hadn't yet caught up to them. The best could be put together with the *Fraxioms* and a solid selection from *Cape Horn and Other Poems*, *The Pauses of the Eye*, and published but uncollected poems. This would be a book of poetry I could stand up for and publish.

Books by Ernest Kroll

Cape Horn and Other Poems
(E.P. Dutton & Co, Inc. 1952)

The Pauses of the Eye (E.P.
Dutton & Co, Inc., 1955)

Fifty Fraxioms, Verbum Sat Sapienti (Abattoir Editions,
The University of Nebraska at
Omaha, 1973)

15 Fraxions (Doe Press, 1977)
Tattoo Parlor & Other Fraxioms
(Press at Colorado College,
1982)

Six Letters to an Apprentice.
(Thaumatrope Press,
University of California,
Riverside 1994). To Ernest
Kroll from F. Scott
Fitzgerald, Willa Cather,
George Ade, Ellen Glasgow,
Don Marquis, Ring Lardner

Merrill Leffler is the author of three books of poems: *Mark the Music* (2012), *Take Hold* (1997), and *Partly Pandemonium, Partly Love* (1984). Leffler is editor of *Dryad Press*. He has taught literature at the University of Maryland and US Naval Academy, and was a senior science writer at the University of Maryland Sea Grant Program.

by Merrill Leffler
Beltway Poetry Quarterly
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[Ed. Note: How about that! I am inserting a fine biographical criticism of poet and Harvard JLSer, Ernest Kroll, and find that the author cited me!]

Stegmaier, Daphne Yuki Shaw JLS 1943 1923-2004

Daphne Yuki Shaw Stegmaier, 81, widow of U.S. diplomat John Lloyd Stegmaier and co-founder of the New Hope Foundation, died at her Kensington, Maryland home on November 21, 2004.

Born in Kobe, Japan in 1923, she spent her childhood and much of her adulthood in Japan,

earlier, as the daughter of American writer, translator and college professor Glenn William Shaw, and later as the wife of U.S. Foreign Service Officer John Stegmaier.

Mrs. Stegmaier graduated from the American School in Japan in 1940 and went on to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree in East Asian Studies from the University of Michigan.

A skilled calligrapher and painter, Mrs. Stegmaier was also expert in the Japanese language and her translation of *Folk Arts and Crafts of Japan* by Kageo Muraoka and Kichiemon Okamura, was published as a volume in the Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art, in 1981.

During World War II, Mrs. Stegmaier served as a Navy Intelligence officer after undergoing specialized training at the U.S. Navy Language School in Boulder, Colorado, in 1943. Shortly after the war, she married John Lloyd Stegmaier, whose career with the State Department took them to Shanghai, Montreal, Nagoya, Tokyo, Kobe and Port of Spain, Trinidad.

While Mr. Stegmaier was U.S. Consul General to Kobe-Osaka, Japan, from 1964 to 1968, Daphne Shaw Stegmaier co-founded the International Toastmistress Club, an organization dedicated to furthering international understanding. She was also active in women's organizations in Tokyo, such as the International Ladies Benevolent Society and the College Women's Association of Japan.

After their retirement, Mr. and Mrs. Stegmaier returned to the Washington, D.C. area in 1977, where they shifted their focus from international relations to mental health, in order to understand and provide support for a loved one with mental illness. Together, they led the Well Mind Association of Greater Washington for more than a decade, and in 1991, they established the New Hope Foundation, through which they hoped to establish a residential program for the mentally ill that would combine traditional and alternative approaches of treatment.

On the occasion of the Vatican's Congress on the Family and Integration of the Disabled in 2000, Pope John Paul II recognized the Stegmaiers for their more than 30 years of work on behalf of the mentally ill.

Daphne Shaw Stegmaier was survived by three daughters, Cynthia Peterson of North Carolina, Gail Arias of Maryland and Louisa Stegmaier of Virginia; a son, David Stegmaier of Virginia, and five grandchildren.

*Provided by
David Stegmaier*

[Ed. Note: While we had previously posted an obituary on Daphne Yuki Shaw Stegmaier in Issue #115, this version is more complete.]

Jackson B. Wiley JLS 1943

**Professor Emeritus
Jackson Wiley Dies On
September 9, 2013**

Professor Emeritus Jackson Wiley, the beloved longtime conductor of the Butler Symphony Orchestra, died Sept. 3. He was 92.

Jackson Wiley tribute at Clowes Hall September 2, 2007. Wiley, who taught at Butler and conducted the Butler Symphony Orchestra from 1969-1991, had an enormous impact on music both at Butler and in Indianapolis. He founded and directed the Greater Indianapolis Youth Symphony, was conductor and music director of the Indiana Opera Theater and Indianapolis Opera Company, was music director for Indianapolis Ballet Theatre, served as director of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Indianapolis and the Athenaeum Orchestra, and was guest conductor for the Symphonic Praise Choir.

"Jackson Wiley was the in-house whirling dervish in music at Butler," said James Briscoe, professor of historical musicology. "And yet, he whirled with a high purpose, not wildly but with an energy that took us all to high achievements. He led many romantic music festivals and the Butler Symphony with keen intelligence and artistry, and the students' good was, without

exception, his good. Before its articulation, Jackson gave life to the Butler Way—its downplay of ego and its purpose of selflessness."

In 2007, Butler honored Wiley with a tribute concert and endowed a scholarship in his name. The Jackson Wiley Scholarship benefits underclassmen pursuing a degree in music, with first preference given to those participating in the Butler Symphony Orchestra.

Wiley was born April 15, 1921, the third of the five children of Joseph Burton Wiley and Katherine Pellet, both teachers. He attended Yale University on a full scholarship, where he produced what he once described as "a totally undistinguished record except in protest political activity."

He spent four years in the Navy during World War II, with time in Australia, New Guinea, the Philippines, and Japan, where he interpreted for the Strategic Bombing Survey. He earned the Bronze Star for his service.

After the war, he studied at Juilliard and helped form the LaSalle String Quartet with other students. The string quartet achieved a residency position at Colorado College, where Wiley eloped with his first pupil, Jane, and returned to Juilliard.

"Some hard work on the piano made possible a student coaching position in the Juilliard Opera Theatre, where Leontyne (then Mary) Price was in preparation for her initial role as Mistress Ford in 'Falstaff,'" Wiley recalled in 2007. "They were lean years of learning—with help from a willing wife, GI and parent money, and such jobs as cellist in Edith Piaf's engagement at the Versailles Club, with Radio City Music Hall, and on Bernstein's 'Omnibus' TV programs, great training under Leonard Rose, and playing in the New York City Opera Orchestra."

After graduation, he freelanced through concerts and recordings under Leopold Stokowski and Thomas Beecham and in chamber music premieres by pianist Russell Sherman and violinist Isidore Cohen. He became involved in jazz as well, playing with Charles Mingus.

"None of the great jazz players we recorded with stayed very long, because Mingus was too determined to write all their improvisations for them," he recalled. "But Charlie Parker would show up to visit, and John Lewis and Thelonious Monk came to play."

At 36, Wiley achieved his first salaried position as a conductor with the Springfield Symphony in Ohio, "a feat accomplished seemingly by my turning down their offers of an audition date three times, thereby forcing the president to interview me in Woodstock, N.Y., where I was totally absorbed in a small summer opera troupe."

The position expanded to include a new youth orchestra and civic chorus, an orchestra at Wittenberg University, a Wittenberg Trio, a column every Sunday in the local newspaper, and a weekly radio program.

Later in his 12 years at Springfield, Wiley made contact with Butler Ballet, which grew into annual visits by Butler's dance program. When Butler needed a conductor, Jackson Ehlert, dean of what then was called the Jordan College of Fine Arts, called Wiley.

"There were many new possibilities at Butler," Wiley said. "A Greater Indianapolis Youth Symphony to form, an opera workshop revived, and the Romantic Festival under Frank Cooper in full force, and extraordinarily unusual programs with the Butler Ballet under the guidance and genius of George Verdak."

After retiring from Butler, Wiley conducted the Indianapolis Philharmonic Orchestra.

He is survived by his wife, Jane; his brothers, Joseph and Steven; his daughter Candida; his sons Scott, Hunt, and Bradford; and his grandchildren, Theodore, Nathaniel, Jackson, Elizabeth, Chloe, and Audree.

In lieu of flowers, charitable donations can be made to:

The Philharmonic Orchestra of Indianapolis
c/o Robin Andres
32 E. Washington St., Symphony Center Suite 900
Indianapolis, IN 46204

"Jackson Wiley was a great teacher, with boundless energy, and he will be missed," Director of Bands Robert Grechesky said. "He mounted, produced, and conducted some amazing performances, participation in which were some of my proudest moments at Butler."

*Butler University
The Newsroom
September 9, 2013
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[Ed. Note: The number of JLS musicians is startling and lend credence to the claim that musical talent and interest played a role in the selection of USN JLS/OLSers.]

Reprise on Helen Zimmerman

Good morning, Dave.

Yesterday, while having a quick salad in my office, I read Number 196 of *The Interpreter*, and did a double take as I read Sally Canzoneri's letter about Vincent Canzoneri. I don't recall Vincent, but during the school year of 1938-1939, his wife, Helen Zimmerman, taught English literature and history to our graduating class (there were only seven of us in it!) at The American School in Japan. Attached is a photo of her that appeared in the school's 1939 yearbook, *The Chochin*. Memories!



**Miss Helen Zimmermann, MA
Stanford University, Radcliffe College, English, History**

*All the best,
Dick Moss
JLS 1943*