

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.

Lt. Cdr. K.D. Ringle Naval Intelligence Gathered & Disregarded

VI: The Officer, the Internees, and History

Throughout the War, Kenneth Ringle corresponded with many internees who he had met and worked with in Southern California. He found that, in spite of his worried expectations, they had not been turned against America. In fact, they wrote admiring letters to him that both gratified and humbled him at the same time. One letter in February 1942 claimed that the writer had not turned against the United States precisely because of Ringle's "humane attitude and intelligent direction". The writer considered Ringle an inspiration. "Your name is on the lips of all of us.... We will not fail you...." Fred Tayama, Chair of the JACL in Manzanar, wrote in June of 1942, "I feel so weak and helpless to find words...for all you have done for the nisei. As long as we have persons like you, we feel our cause is worth fighting for. You can be assured

we won't fail you." These and other letters expressing similar sentiments were written to the naval officer who believed he and the nation had failed these Japanese American citizens.

For Vice Admiral Ringle, the only heroes of those times were the Japanese Americans themselves. Whenever the mail would bring snapshots of nisei valedictorians, or the news carried stories of a Japanese American physicist or a nisei senator he would remind his family how much each had overcome to achieve their honors and his son recalled that the old sailor's "jaws would tighten with pride."

Ringle's wife remembered that after her husband died, she felt "more alone than I had in all my life". But when she had returned to her house from seeing her children off, she found a "wealth of flowers". The card for the unexpected flowers came from California and read, "With deepest sympathy from your Japanese American friends in Los Angeles." Somehow, all the way across the country, they had read that Admiral Ringle was gone and they cared enough to send flowers and condolences. Twenty years later, and they had not held his 'failure' against him; they had remembered his attempts on their behalf.

When his son, now working at the *Washington Post*, researched his father's career at the National Archives, the clerk startled him by asking if he was related to the Lt. Cdr. Ringle who wrote about the Japanese. He was told that the "Ringle Reports" were much-requested items. To a small band of historians, it seemed, Lt. Cdr. Kenneth Ringle had become a minor sort of hero; his little known effort to halt injustice had come to be seen as gallant with the passage of time. The Japanese Americans with whom he had worked and conversed had known it all along.

[VI of VI, The End]

*Adapted from Ken Ringle,
"What Did You Do
Before The War, Dad,"*

Washington Post, December 6, 1981

Some Memories of a JLS Wife, Part II

We [*Frances and Sherwood Moran*] had no sooner gotten settled in Berkeley and learned our street-car stops, and engaged my 3rd doctor in five months, when the Army decreed that all persons of Japanese descent had to get out of California. This meant that we, and all our Nisei teachers had to leave the state, even though they and we were under the direct command of US Naval Intelligence. We were told that "calls had gone out to Universities farther east" to relocate some 60 to 80 students, faculty, and their families ASAP. We almost went to the University of New Mexico, but the University of Colorado was able to get us into Boulder right away, because so many of their male students had left for military service [*President Robert Stearns had gone about replacing these students with Navy and Army schools: a radio school, a flying school, a cooks' school, a large V-12 program (ROTC) and, of course, JLS*].

So we all got on a train for Cheyenne and then on a bus to Boulder. By the time we arrived at the bungalow on Grant Street, which my husband had rented over the phone, sight unseen [*good neighborhood, though*], I was nauseous, stressed out, upset at the plight of our Japanese instructors, running a temperature, 7 months pregnant, and angry. As I lay shivering on our bed, a porch light came on next door, and I heard a woman say, "Thank you, doctor. I'll call you in the morning". I called to my husband to run out, ask the man getting in his car if he was a people-doctor and, if so, to drag him in to see me. So I finally got my fourth doc, who turned out to be Dr. Walter Reed, the only physician left in town and the

nephew of the Walter Reed of malaria fame

Dr. Reed was badly overworked, and Boulder's small Community Hospital was understaffed. But my baby and I thrived although I was only 6 pounds up, in my 7th month. Dr. Reed told me to walk downtown every day, get a malted milk, and then walk back up Grant Street to home!

Fortunately, I passed a grocery store on this trek to the drug store [*Since Grant stops at College, it might have been the College Grocery & Market and the Drug Store might have been either Greenman's or Quines on 13th, otherwise to get to the drug stores on 12 hundred block Pearl Street was a ways off Grant on 9th*], which had a lending library of contemporary, popular books. So I was able to read and buy food and ride a bus back up Grant. I never ventured off Grant, for fear of getting lost. But we often walked UP Grant to Baseline to view the gorgeous Flatirons. There were no houses above Baseline [*just Chautauqua Park*], so in the eight months we lived in Boulder, we fell in love with the Flatirons, and my husband climbed one of them (from the back). We took pictures galore of them in summer, fall and winter, and watched the sun rise and set on them. (*to be continued*)

Mrs. Frances H. Moran

Attorney at War

In December 1942, I was employed as a civilian attorney in the Cleveland Ordnance District, US War Department. As a member of Phi Beta Kappa, AB 1938, Western Reserve University (now Case Western Reserve University), I received the *Phi Beta Kappa Quarterly*. I noted in the fall issue, 1942, that the US Navy was seeking 500 Phi Beta Kappa individuals to study Japanese. The sensational naval victory at Midway, June 1942, was the result of Lt Commander Joseph Rochefort's

breaking the Japanese code and more importantly, translating the Japanese traffic. The Navy Department needed officers who could translate and interpret Japanese. From January 30, 1943 to April 15, 1944, I studied the Japanese. Upon graduation as an Ensign I was assigned to the Navy Communications Annex, Washington, DC, where I participated in translating captured Japanese documents. The work was challenging, interesting, and gave one a sense of accomplishment. In my

section of about forty Japanese language officers, great cooperation and dedication prevailed. We worked as a team even though our work was individually assigned. Our overall commanding officer was Captain Joseph Rochefort [Ed. *Note: Sounds like the officer who had the sign above his desk at HYPO, stating, "There is no limit to what can be accomplished if it doesn't matter who gets the credit".*]

On October 1, 1945, I was assigned to the Army Industrial College in the Pentagon. My

background as an attorney qualified me for contract termination work in the Navy Inspector's Office. On November 1, 1945, after the Pentagon training, I was assigned to the Navy Inspector's Office in Cleveland, Ohio, until my retirement from active duty April 30, 1946.

I remained in the Naval Reserve as an active member of the US Navy Law Company 4-10, Cleveland, Ohio. On June 30, 1967, I reached retirement age for the Naval Reserve so I was Retired with the rank of Captain

after serving 5 years as Commanding Officer of the Law Company.

Since September 30, 1945, I have had no experience with the Japanese Language. I visited Japan only once, for 24 hours, en route from Seattle to Beijing, China, in 1986.

My Japanese language training at Boulder gave me a great appreciation for the Japanese people, their culture, their family relationships and their great intelligence. I regret not using my Boulder experience to further study Japanese history

and lifestyles.

Life at Boulder for me was as stimulating as it was for my wife who took Home Economics courses that Hazel Feldman taught.

Oliver Schroeder
JLS 1944

[Ed. Note: Another old letter from the files. I could not resist the bit about CPT Rochefort's sign. The author of the quotation appears to have been Ralph Waldo Emerson. However, for a quotation saluting the advantages of not taking credit, the saying has been attributed to many people:

Charles Edward Montague, British journalist; Florence Luscomb, a civil rights leader; Harry Truman, Blanton Collier, NFL Coach; Ronald Reagan; and Peter Gabriel. They have also been given credit for the same or very similar statements.]

Kanshasai in Stillwater

I came across these old photos the other day, and it occurred to me that you may want to add them to your archive. They are of the great Thanksgiving Festival (Kanshasai) put together by the teachers at

Stillwater (Oklahoma A&M) on Thanksgiving eve, 1945. They made it a great project, improvising all the props. Trying (rather in vain) to teach a couple of students to dance – *Kabuki onnagata* style, and putting together all sorts of acts. Pauline McAlpine, wife of the school director, James McAlpine, sang *Sakura*. It was held in the school gym.

Bill Sherman
OLS 1946

PS: I had lunch with an old friend and Boulder graduate, Curt Prendergast. Hard to believe we met at Boulder 58 years ago. [Old letter]

New Collections

The following are further collections promised, held or recently received by the Archives:

- William Gorham
- Daniel Karasik (add.)

\$Donations Received

The Archives has recently received generous donations from:

- S. Daniel Date
- Jack Craig
- Suzanne L. Pineau