Our Mission
In the Spring of 2000, the Archives continued the original efforts of Captain Roger Pinaud 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.

Former Bullitt Chair:
Frank Freidel

Frank Burt Freidel Jr., [OLS 1945], Charles Warren Professor of American History, Emeritus, took satisfaction in the achievements of a distinguished career as teacher and scholar. But he never effaced the memory of a difficult youth. Born in Brooklyn, New York, on May 22, 1916, he moved with his family from place to place before coming to rest in southern California. His father struggled to make ends meet, but had not really established himself when the Great Depression struck. Frank learned to contribute to family income by odd jobs while he continued his studies; stints as an extra in movies and as a local reporter broadened his experience. Meanwhile he continued his undergraduate work at the University of Southern California, where he earned his bachelor’s degree in 1937. Marriage a year later, and soon after, children, did not weaken his determination to pursue a scholarly career, but did emphasize the urgency of achievement and of haste. After earning a master’s degree at his alma mater, he proceeded to Madison, Wisconsin, where he took his doctorate in 1942.

For prospective young teachers, times were as difficult during the war as they had been in the Depression. Apart from a brief term in the United States Naval Reserve, where he struggled to learn Japanese, Freidel took whatever positions were available, moving from place to place as opportunity presented itself. Short stints at Shurtleff College in Illinois, at the University of Maryland in College Park, at Pennsylvania State University, at Vassar, and at the University of Illinois, filled the next decade, each position an improvement over its predecessor, but each move disruptive, especially because financial pressures compelled him to fill out his calendar with summer teaching. However, he acquired from the experience redoubtable lecturing skill and the ability to inspire a variety of students. He also gained a first-hand acquaintance with almost every region of the country.

In 1953 his years of wandering seemed to close when he accepted a position at Stanford University. There he could have remained, for the institution offered him not only first-class students but also the research opportunities of its own excellent library and of the Hoover Institution – collections certainly attractive to a scholar of twentieth century political history. After two years, however, Freidel elected to come to Harvard, where he remained except for the few years after his retirement when he served as distinguished senior professor at the University of Washington in Seattle. Marriage in 1956 to Madeleine Bieskery had by then added stability and comfort to his life, thereafter imbued with emotional warmth and intellectual understanding.

At Harvard, Freidel took responsibility for the large introductory survey course in American history, directed primarily at undergraduates. Therein he followed in the long tradition of scholars – among them Edward Channing, A.B. Hart, Paul H. Buck, Frederick Merk, and Arthur M. Schlesinger— who took teaching at that level seriously. Freidel worked hard and successfully at that course. Yet he also gladly devoted himself to guiding graduate studies in the history of the United States in the twentieth century, an era which relentlessly extended itself as time went on. A generation of outstanding scholars and teachers who worked with him testified to the skill and devotion with which he guided them to their doctorates. As a matter of course, he also bore whatever committee and administrative chores the university loaded on him. He did so out of a sense of responsibility and also out of the ethos of doing good that was a product of his Quaker heritage.

He responded also the long and laborious challenge of revising the Harvard Guide to American History, a useful—indeed indispensable—tool in the pre-computer age. Channing, Hart, and Frederick Jackson Turner had prepared the first edition in 1906; a revision by the next generation of Harvard historians followed in 1954, by which time it had become the standard reference work throughout the world. By the time Frank Freidel prepared a third edition (1970), the field had grown luxuriantly, not only in the number of titles, but also in scope and complexity. It took mastery of a vast literature to draw it into comprehensible shape.

The same sense of responsibility moved Freidel to prepare a pioneering course on African-American history in response to undergraduate complaints about the neglect of the subject at Harvard. Not having worked previously in the field, Freidel devoted prodigious effort to assembling the necessary materials, to organizing the sections, and to composing the lectures. He succeeded insofar as he drew the then-fragmentary sources into a meaningful analysis, presented in a thoroughly scholarly fashion. Nevertheless, he did not repeat the endeavor. Instead, the African-American Studies program then took up the task.

Freidel’s Wisconsin doctoral dissertation on Francis Lieber (published 1947) had opened a rich lore of material on nineteenth century political history which he treated intermittently thereafter. Well on in his career, he explored some other aspects of this subject, notably in the volumes of pamphlets on the Civil War prepared for the John Harvard Library. The collections, notable for its breadth of coverage, illuminated neglected aspects of opinion about the great conflict.

However, by the time Freidel came to Harvard his primary attention had shifted to the era of the New Deal, at the time little more than a decade in the past. His analysis took the form of a full-scale biography of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The subject had, of course, attracted an outpouring of books by journalist and political scientists, and would continue to do so – much of it partisan, much of it directed at a popular audience. In addition, prominent figures from the 1930s put into print voluminous memoirs, diaries, and collections of correspondence – all of which added to, rather than eased, the burdens of analysis. Freidel mastered the vast flood of such material, and in addition made himself familiar with the collections in the Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, as well as with archival sources and manuscript and newspaper collections throughout the United States and Europe. The tolerance of his devoted wife...
Freidel Comment
I have been aware of Freidel for half-a-century -- shortly after he came to Harvard. At that time I was program manager at WGBH in Boston, concentrating in public affairs. He was an occasional guest on a series we produced, and for many years one of his books on FDR has stood next to the Schlesinger trilogy in my library.

Lawrence Creshoff
OLS 12/44/8/45

Chronicles of My Life in the 20th Century
3. A Journey to Paris
Autobiographical essays by Donald Keene

The first port of call was Cobh in Ireland. Having learned in school that Ireland was known as “the emerald island” I was pleased to see that the hills really looked green. We didn’t go ashore, but someone got me a newspaper. I remember an advertisement on the front page, something like “Try our coffee. Our tea is also good.” This made me laugh, thinking that in America a similar advertisement would boast that its coffee or tea was the best in the world. The words “also good” seemed particularly funny. It was a first awareness of difference in cultures.

The ship called next at Cherbourg in France where we disembarked. It was exciting to be surrounded by people speaking French. My mother had learned French in school and still remembered it well enough to compose little poems, but I hardly knew a word. We travelled by train from Cherbourg to Paris. Each station we passed not only intrigued me but gave renewed excitement over being, as I had long dreamed, in a foreign country. The name of one station has stuck in my mind—Limolay—Litteray. The cadences of the name seemed very much like the sound the train made as it speeded towards Paris. I have never found this place-name on a map. Did I only dream this?

I decided on the basis of this first experience that French trains were much better than American trains. I liked the compartments into which the French train was divided, giving a feeling of privacy. In later years, after learning French, I could understand what people in the same compartment were saying, and this added interest to a journey. I also liked the metal tag under the window, urging passengers to open the windows “vivement mais sans brutalité” [ed. “vigorously but without undue force”], a good motto to observe in life.

While writing the diary (the only one I have ever kept) in which I described my impressions of France. Reading it now, it surprises me what a prosaic child I was. For example, I say nothing about the hotel where my father and I stayed in Paris except to note with shock that in the hotel restaurant it cost 8 francs (about 300 yen today) for one egg. Again, when I recorded my visit to Fontainebleau I gave the exact number of windows in the palace, and noted that a royal bed was big enough for eight people to sleep in it. Perhaps my father was right in thinking I was not yet ready to appreciate Europe.

In another way, the trip to Europe occurred exactly at the right time for my education. Like most boys in my class at school, I had wondered why we should study foreign languages. One could travel five thousand kilometers, all the way to the Pacific Ocean, and speak English everywhere. But in France I became aware for the first time that I would have to learn foreign languages. It is not recorded in my diary, but I remember exactly when I had this realization. I was seated in the back of a car with a French girl of about my age, the daughter of one of my father’s business associates. She spoke no English, I spoke no French.

In a desperate attempt to communicate with her I sang the one French song I knew, “Frere Jacques.”

Ever since then I have felt strongly attracted by foreign languages. Japanese often ask me how many I know. It is extremely difficult to answer this question. I would need to vary it to the number of my languages. I can understand perhaps eight or nine languages, but I have totally forgotten some and others I can understand but not speak or can read but not write. Yet even in the case of a language like classical Greek, which I have almost totally forgotten, I am happy that I have had the experience of reading Homer and Greek tragedies in the original. In the case of Japanese, on the other hand, I sometimes think that if, as the result of an accident, I were to lose my knowledge of this language, there would not be much left to me. I am fond of sashimi, I dislike if I eat shokkara. Of course, I like some dishes better than others, but I would not find it a hardship to eat Japanese food exclusively, provided it was well prepared.

But some prejudices remain. I would not willingly eat dog meat nor the celebrated Chinese specialty, monkey brains. If I were offered by an Arab host the eye of a sheep, said to be the most delicious part of the animal, I don’t think I would touch it, at the risk of offending my host. I do not wish to have a glass of terrapin blood, though the owner of my favorite Japanese restaurant insists that it is delicious.

I am surprised now by how much more vivid my memory is of the fish in the Indo-Chinese restaurant than of the sights of Paris.

Donald L. Keene
JLS 1943

Student Researcher Seeks Definition of Japanese through Language Training
A senior in high school wrote a paper seeking the varying definition of what makes a Japanese person through a comparison of Naganuma texts with Japanese language texts of today. She entered CU fall ’06. By the time you read this, she will be a junior majoring in Japanese at CU.

Ilona J. Tylecek, Assistant Professor of History

[Ed. Note: Third of a multi-part autobiographical “journal” by one of the many illustrious USN JLS/OLS graduates and attendees]
An Adopted Brazilian

Paul Donovan Kigar was born on December 8, 1915 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA. He was a descendent of the Adams clan, America's most famous family. Such noteworthy figures from American culture and history as writer Henry Adams and US presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams were among his forebears. He was raised in the Christian faith by the congregation of the Church of God. The church was founded by his forefathers so as ecumenically to bring together Christians from several religious denominations.

Paul Donovan Kigar worked to strengthen ties between people. He took his inspiration from such great names as Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson, Lord Nelson, the British admiral, and Dom Pedro II, the magnanimous, emperor of Brazil.

He was an outstanding pupil, never missing a single class. On several occasions while still young he read the Bible in its entirety. He was a good Boy Scout. He acquired an interest in stamps at twelve years of age. He was a true example of many children. He worked with the São Paulo Historical and Geographical Institute, of which he was an Emeritus Member, having been sponsored by Admiral Tamandaré, patron of the Brazilian Navy. He was President of the Church of God in Brazil. He retired from the US Navy as a Lieutenant Commander.

Many honors and decorations came to him. He was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and member of other institutions. Good-humored and communicative, he made friends and gained admirers wherever he went. He was a true example of life and of dedication to his fellowmen and to human knowledge. He passed away on October 16, 2000.

The Paul Donovan Kigar Award is a tribute to Paul Donovan Kigar, who served and still serves as an example to many. On December 8, 2004, the year in which the 450th anniversary of the city of São Paulo is celebrated, this award was created by the São Paulo Historical and Geographical Institute with the launch of a Commemorative Stamp by the Post Office, and an exhibition of philately and philatelic literature.

Malcolm Forest Kigar
& David M. Hays
Editor & Archivist

Chronicles of My Life in the 20th Century

4. European trip opens my eyes

Autobiographical essays by Donald Keene

All I remember of the train journey from Paris to Vienna, our next destination, is another trivial incident. When the train pulled into a station somewhere in Switzerland, I asked my father to buy something for me to drink. A woman came to the train window selling fruit juice and my father bought a container. I drank it eagerly and then fell into a heavy sleep that lasted until we reached Vienna. It turned out that I had drunk not fruit juice but wine. My father often recalled in later years that he had allowed me to sleep with my head in his lap all the way to Vienna. I remember Vienna not for the grandeur of this magnificent city but for another momentary experience. At some point in our sightseeing we visited a museum where I saw the automobile in which the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife had been riding when a fast-moving nationalist threw a bomb at them. The archduke's uniform and the white plume in his ceremonial helmet were stained with his blood. I knew from my history book that the assassination of the archduke had been the immediate cause of the World War, and now I saw before my eyes what had led to the deaths of a million men. It stunned me. Even as a child I was an intense pacifist, sure that nothing was worse than war, and the sight of the archduke's uniform crystallized my hatred of bloodshed. I left the museum unable to speak.

After the war I visited Austria several times, especially Salzburg, but I never went to Vienna, still haunted by the bloodstains. A few years ago I finally summoned up the courage to visit Vienna. I searched for the museum, not knowing its name, hoping to exercise the painful memory. On the morning of my last day in the city, quite by chance, I learned there was a Museum of the Weather. I went in and, without asking the way, walked directly to the bombed car and the blood-stained uniform. The exorcism worked. I still hate war but my unceasness about Vienna has disappeared.

I have another painful memory of my visit to Vienna. I saw children of my age kneeling at the street corners, their hands joined in prayer, begging for money. In New York I had often seen beggars and long lines of men waiting for free soup, but the sight of begging children brought home the misery of the depression as never before. When my father gave the guide on the tourist bus a somewhat larger than usual tip the man burst into tears of gratitude.

From Vienna we travelled to Berlin. My father decided we would go by air. I was tremendously excited. I had never been in an airplane before. I certainly would be the first in my class and probably in my entire school to have travelled by air.

I looked forward to telling everyone about my experience, confident that it would give me a moment of glory, but I was also rather frightened. Travel by air was by no means common at the time and I wondered if it was really safe.

The plane landed in Prague in order to permit the passengers to have lunch. I remember nothing about what we ate, but I remember the name of the proprietor (or possibly the name of the restaurant). It was Vlk. A name without a vowel fascinated me and was one more revelation of the mysteries of foreign languages. When the plane landed in Berlin the pilot said something in German that I did not understand but he seemed to be apologizing.

I have a similar memory of Japan in 1957. I flew in a small seaplane from Sakai to Tokushima. When the plane alighted on the Yoshinogawa, the pilot turned to the six passengers and said somewhat bashfully, "Shitsuurei itashimashita."

I have few memories of Berlin. It seemed much like Vienna, a sad city. After a few days we went on to Bremen where we boarded a German ship for New York. A photograph survives of me climbing up the gangplank to the ship. I am wearing a beret in the manner of a French boy. I had no idea how I came to be wearing the beret, but it may have signified that I had changed somewhat since arriving in Europe.

What had I learned in a month or so? I now had vivid recollections of the historical figures who had simply been names to me. I had seen Napoleon's tomb. I had seen the cottage at Versailles where Marie Antoinette played at being a shepherdess. I had been to the Place de la Concorde where the guide, pointing to the statues symbolizing the great cities of France, told us that
the statue of Strasbourg had been draped in black until after the French victory in the Great War. I remembered the story I had read by Alphonse Daudet about the last French lesson in Alsace after the defeat in the Franco-Prussian War.

I now wanted to learn foreign languages, especially French. When we got back to New York I asked my father to hire a French tutor for me, but by this time he really had no money and I had to wait until junior high school to begin the study of French. My love of France, begun at this time, has persisted through my life, though it now takes second place to Japan in my affection.

When I returned to school in September, I was a figure of importance, for a while anyway, because of the many stories I had to tell of Europe and the airplane.

Donald L. Keene
JLS 1943
Daily Yomiuri Online
February 4, 2006

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Willard F. Topping
Sensei, 1942-46

As a JLS kin, I have read with great pleasure the recollections and histories of JLS students and kin in your newsletter, and appreciated your hospitality, when I visited the archives in 2003.

The recent memorial to Sensei James McAlpine [#103 & #103A] reinforced memories which come alive every time I visit Boulder and walk along the riding-hiking trail now passing through the site along Boulder Creek where the McAlpine family lived. This has moved me to finally write this tribute to a colleague of Mr. McAlpine’s, my father Willard F. Topping, Sensei.

Willard Topping served his country well from 1942 to 1946 in JLS Boulder (and at Berkeley before and after), working long hours into the night in our basement study at our house at 956 University Avenue, preparing for classes, then interacting quietly with students, sharing jokes as well as insights into Japanese language and life.

Born of missionary parents in 1900, he was also a missionary, together with my mother, Evelyn, preceding and after his years at Berkeley and Boulder. Following World-War II, he served at the Kanto Gakuin Schools in Yokohama from 1947 to 1953, interacting periodically with various former Boulder JLS students assigned to the Occupation, until his health broke in 1953. He died at an early age in Berkeley in 1959. (to be cont’d)

Ken Topping
504 Warwick St.
Cambria, CA 93428

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John Rich Interview
At Univ. of North Texas

RICH, John (b. 1917). Journalist, Marine Corps veteran (4th Marine Division). His experiences as a Japanese language interpreter/interrogator in the Pacific Theater during World War II; and his observations as a journalist while covering the proceedings of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. Pre-war career in journalism; U.S. Navy Japanese Language School, University of Colorado, 1942-43; assignment to the 4th Marine Division, 1943; Roi-Namur and Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, 1944; interrogation of Japanese prisoners-of-war; Saipan and Tinian, Mariana Islands, 1944; Iwo Jima, 1945; coverage of the Tokyo war crimes trials for International News Service, 1946; reminiscences about covering Franklin D. Roosevelt’s meeting with the press after the Atlantic Conference with Winston Churchill off Argentia, Newfoundland, August 10-15, 1941.

40 pp.
Terms of Use: Open Date of Interview: October 12, 1996

Tilghman B. Koons II
OLS 1945 (Russian)

KOONS--Tilghman B. 79, on July 7, 2005, at his home in East Hampton, Son of Margaret O’Hara and Lucius Koons. Beloved and admired by his friends, "Skip" Koons had a wide-ranging career in the military, government and banking. Born in Plainfield, NJ, he received his B.A. from Princeton, with honors, at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs in 1946. From 1946 to 1949 he was in the U.S. Navy, learning Russian at the Language School in Boulder, CO, serving in Washington with Secretary James Forrestal and in China for two and a half years, working with Russian emigre communities in Shanghai, Peking and Manchuria. After receiving a Fulbright Fellowship, in 1952 he earned a Ph.D., with highest honors, from the University of Paris (Sorbonne). His thesis traced the political ideas and activities of the Russian emigres from the Russian Revolution to the outbreak of World War II. From 1953 to 1957 he served in the Executive Office of the President, as an adviser to General Robert Cutler, President Eisenhower's Special Assistant for National Security. Upon leaving the government, he joined the First National Bank of Boston and, in 1962, the Chase Manhattan Bank where, as Vice President, he was concerned with strategic planning of the bank's overseas expansion in Latin America, the Far East and Canada. In addition to his professional activities, Skip was learned in history and the arts, and assembled a notable collection of marine water colors and prints from the 18th and 19th centuries. His wisdom, warmth and generosity will be sorely missed by his many friends in this country and in Europe.

New York Times
July 11, 2005
Paid Notice: Deaths KOONS, TILGHMAN B.

The Slesnicks Donate Research Materials from Kanji & Codes

In 2006, Carole and Irwin Slesnick began the process of donating their research files for their JLS book to the Archives. They had self-published Kanji & Codes early in 2006 after more than 7 years of research, writing and editing. Their first edition was mainly produced to thank Russian emigres from the North (to get them to safety) in honorific Japanese which brought a derisive hoot from an unimpressed farmwoman. However, the promise of white rice in the internment camp did the trick.

Jack E. Bronston
JLS 1944

Roar Lion Roar

As always, I read your latest Interpreter issue #103 with great interest. I was particularly delighted to see the note from fellow Columbian, Gene Sosin. However, after 64 years his memory has played some tricks on him. The group traveling together from Columbia to Boulder did include Gene, Sanford Rogers, Harold Rogers, Jim DiCrocco and Bill Voelker - but not Owen Zurhellen. Owen traveled to Boulder separately. I was the 6th member of the group. (to be cont’d)

Paul E. Hauck
JLS 1943

$Donations Accepted

If you wish to support the JLS/OLS Archival Project in ways other than giving papers you may contribute donations to our US Navy JLS/OLS Fund. We hire work-study students on this fund, tripling its value. If you wish to donate, make your check out to the University of Colorado Foundation, writing US Navy JLS Fund on the memo line to the bottom left of your check, and mail it to our contact address.

Contact
David Hays
Archives
University of Colorado at Boulder
184 UCB
Boulder, Colorado 80309-0184
Phone (303) 492-7242
Fax (303) 492-3960
Email: ary@colorado.edu

JLS/OLS Website:
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