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.

Edward Seidensticker
A Direct Translator

(Cont’d) What was your impression of Mishima?
I never liked his writing, but he was a very interesting man. He was extremely intelligent. He had thoughts on lots of things, some of which I agreed with, others I didn't. I didn't like his fiction; I thought his plays were better than his fiction. But his best writing was his criticism. He was a superb critic. He was sometimes very mad at me, but I never heard that from him. I only heard that later from others. Some of the things I said made him very angry, but he never showed it. I got on with him very well, but he laughed too much. And when people laugh too much, you wonder whether anything amuses them.

Did you have any inkling that he would commit suicide?
I thought all along that he would one day kill himself. Suicide runs all the way through his writing. I thought that if he didn't someday kill himself, than it would all turn out to have been a lie. But I didn't expect him to do it the way he did or as soon as he did. I wasn't as startled with his suicide as I was with Kawabata's. Of course, there are people who still say that Kawabata didn't kill himself, that it was an accident. In Mishima's case, I think he decide how he would do it well in advance. That he knew when he would do it is quite clear. You know, he finished writing the last novel - the one that I translated, The Death of the Angel - in the summer. He killed himself that November. On the last page he gives the date of his death, so he'd obviously chosen that sometime earlier.

Why do you think that the fifties and sixties were such a vibrant period in Japanese literature?
I don't really know. I think it just happened. There are literary ups and downs. There are bleak periods and very good periods. It's not easy to tell why they come. I think the beginning of a very strong period was round about the time of the First World War; it lasted through the Second World War until the fifties and sixties. This would be a period from, say, 1910 to 1970, of 60 years. I think it can be looked upon perhaps as one cycle. Beginning with Natsume Soseki and ending with the deaths of the big writers - Tanizaki, Kawabata and Mishima. I suppose people who are good at this kind of thing can find sociological explanations. I'm not, I can't see it being anything more than chance. You can see why it started. At the beginning of the First World War, when Japan had pretty much assimilated influences form the West and was setting out on its own. The mystery is why nothing really good has come since. I guess you can explain that to a large measure by television. TV has had a terrible effect on arts the world over, and nowhere has the effect been more dreadful than here. And the computer. When young people have computers to play with, they no longer play with literature. The computer becomes an end in itself. But the worst thing is television, which has a very destructive effect.

Do you see any traits that link Genji with Kawabata?
Certainly, the Kawabata style is the Murasaki style. The elusiveness of the Kawabata style seems to be very akin to Murasaki. He can be clear, but he prefers to be elusive and foggy. And that is also Murasaki. You can think of classical Japanese literature falling into two categories. The Japanese style with Tale of Genji sort of at the beginning. And the Sino-Japanese style, Tale of Heike. The Japanese style is very elusive, very ambiguous, awfully hard to keep up with what's going on. One word will contain all the important elements of a sentence. A very long verb or adjective at the end, which will tell you who the speaker or doer is and what is his or her rank. It is all in that verb or adjective.
The Sino-Japanese style is very clear by comparison. It is difficult to read because you have to know a lot of characters. You don't with Genji and in that sense Genji is the simpler of the two. But in the sense of being explicit, of coming to the point, the Sino-Japanese style is much clearer. I've often said that Kawabata is in the Japanese style, while Tanizaki is in the Sino-Japanese style. (to be cont’d)

Edward Seidensticker
JLS 1943
JAL inflight magazine
January 2003

Frank Corriston Langdon
Professor Emeritus
University of British Columbia

Frank passed away at home sitting at his desk on the evening of February 22, 2006. For 16 of his 86 years he had been dealing with bladder cancer and lived with a pacemaker for 5 years. Before coming to UBC in 1958 to fill a newly created position teaching Japanese Government and Politics, he held positions in Canberra, Australia, and with the University of California program in South Korea, Guam, and Japan. During the Pacific War, Frank served in all but one of the battles in the Pacific as Communications Officer aboard the USS Minneapolis. Late in the war, he attended the US Navy Oriental Language School in Stillwater, Oklahoma. After the War, he was employed for one year in Japan at the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander as a translator and economic analyst. Before the War, he graduated from Harvard University and in 1947 he returned to Harvard to obtain an MA in China Studies. His next move in 1949 was to the University of California, Berkeley, where he received a Ph.D. in Political Science. In later years, Frank focused on the political decisions and actions which contributed to the relationship between Canada and Japan. More recently, he was looking at patterns of security and defense in the entire Asia region. In 2000, he received the “Order of the Sacred Treasure” from the Emperor of Japan. Mixed with academic life, in earlier years Frank enjoyed hiking, figure skating, skiing, traveling, and baking chocolate cakes. In more recent years, he found fun and friendship while playing bridge and taking exercise classes at Brock House. He met his wife, Virginia, in Japan and they were married in Australia. Since moving to Canada, they have had two sons, Peter and Marc, who view their father as the involved scholar, attentive father, and eternal gentleman.

Virginia Langdon
Wife
vlangdon@telus.net
& David M. Hays, Editor/Archivist

Instead of Carrying a Gun
(Cont’d) My next duty was at the Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific
Ocean Area, JICPOA, located at Pearl Harbor. My job was to translate documents captured in the invasion of the Japanese Empire. Because I had some technical background, I concentrated on scientific and technical documents. Among these was a progress report of a laboratory developing anti-aircraft control, fire control equipment which contained data on the limitations of anti-aircraft directors. This information was transmitted to naval aircraft operations and was useful; I understand, in planning fighter and bomber attacks.

At the close of hostilities, I became part of the Technical Mission To Japan, investigating the technical progress of Japan during the War. We interviewed the scientists and engineers involved in wartime research and development and visited the laboratories and workshops where the work was done. I was assigned to the team investigating progress in optics and photography. I worked with a Lieutenant Commander and a Lieutenant, who were highly qualified technical people. We visited laboratories and interrogated Japanese scientists and engineers. I am sure some of them played a significant role in the post-war Japanese camera industry. (to be cont’d)

LAWRENCE ALAN SEYMOUR
JLS 1944

CARL L. BUMGARDNER

Near the end of World War II, Carl Bumgardner graduated from the Naval Oriental Language School, specializing in Japanese at Oklahoma A&M in Stillwater. He received his B.A.Sc. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Toronto in 1952, and in 1956 his Ph.D. in Chemistry from MIT. After a year’s postdoctoral work with A. C. Cope, he took a research position with the Redstone Division of Rohm & Haas, Huntsville, Ala. In 1964, he joined the faculty of North Carolina State University at Raleigh. There he has been pursuing his research in the chemistry of nitrogen-fluorine compounds. Ernest Lawton received his Ph.D. from North Carolina State University in 1969, working with Professor Bumgardner.


SHANGHAI

In the Late 1930s

When it arrives, *The Interpreter* is the highlight of the day’s mail! A considerable number of familiar names march across the pages, most recently, Hank Knoch, who was an associate for some years.

The comments by Dan Williams (JLS 1943) brought back memories of Shanghai: when I graduated from Bowdoin in 1937, I was fortunate to have a job with the Far Eastern Division of Citibank – then named National City Bank of New York. I spent nearly four years in the Far East. There were three months in Kobe, Japan, while the Chinese and Japanese were fighting around Shanghai, then 28 months in Shanghai, followed by 12 months back in Kobe.

By the late 1930s the foreign forces in Shanghai had been augmented by an Italian military contingent [no help there], probably regimental size, which had seen service in the Italian conquest of Ethiopia. I recollect, somewhat faintly to be sure, that the 4th Regiment USMC had been reinforced by elements of the 6th Regiment USMC by this time in 1937–8.

My own contacts with USMC personnel were largely with the Shanghai Rowing Club. The Club put on two rowing “regattas” a year on Shanghai’s Whangpoo (Huangpu) River, involving eight oar shells, fours and pair sculls. One rowed by nationality: Americans, English, Scots, and Germans. For the 1938 regatta, the cox and coach of the American crew was 1st Lieutenant Victor “Brute” Krulak, USMC, who had been cox on the Annapolis crew of an earlier date. On the Whangpoo, the cox had to keep a sharp eye out for tugs, barges, rowed native water craft and the occasional ships. The water could get rough for a shell. In the Spring of ’38, there was still fighting going on upriver, so there was the infrequent human body floating downstream. From my position on the bow I had counted 14 “stiffs” by the middle of our 6-8 weeks training season before a strong request from the middle of the shell brought counting to an abrupt halt. (to be cont’d)

Euan G. Davis
JLS 1944

[A Direct Translator]

(Cont’d) After Separation, I went to Japan as a civilian translator for the Army of Occupation. Just getting to Japan was a memorable trip: a total of 6 weeks from Oregon to New York by train and by ship via the Panama Canal to Hawaii with long delays in each port. Blanche, Margaret Dilley and Betty Kneckt were also on the “cruise.”

Fortunately, I wasn’t a translator long, as I was asked to be a statistical assistant to the Office of Economic Research, to prepare data on the Japanese food shortage. That introduction to economics led 3 years later to my study of economics at Cambridge University—a most interesting and rewarding 2 years. After graduation at Cambridge, I married Ron and we soon went to work in Guatemala for 2 years. Then we moved to Washington, D.C.

My work for the CIA was on the “open” side, mainly writing reports on various aspects of foreign economies. I was always sorry that CIA did not need economic reports on Japan, thus I never worked on Japan. One benefit of my job was orientation travel in the country I was assigned to research. I took two major trips in the Far East and another in Latin America. Much of the CIA work involved high pressure and overtime during crises. Without Rose, our dependable maid and baby sitter five days a week, and Ron being the “Saturday maid,” as he called himself, our family life would not have been nearly as pleasant as it was. The family and friends were present when CIA awarded me a “Certificate of Merit with Distinction.”

I consider myself lucky; My study of Japanese began an interesting career with good friends and a very supportive husband and daughters. We now have 5 grandchildren, all achievers and fun to be with. Ron and I are still involved with real estate and charity work, but each year we try to get away for a major tour and visits with our offspring. I am sorry that our schedule this year conflicted with the WAVE reunion.

AVIS PICK WARING

JLS 1944

1993 WAVE JLS Reunion Book

EDWARD SEIDENSTICKER
A Direct Translator

(Cont’d) You have been observing Japan for more than 50 years. Some say that it changes on the surface but never changes underneath. I used to say that. People would say that Japan was changing. Look at the young people, and I would say, “Wait 20 years. Now they’re 15, but when they’re 35, they will be exactly like their mamas and papas.” But now I think they really are changing.

The young people are beyond redemption. That puts it somewhat extremely, but I really am put off by them. I think this is a change that will not be overcome as they age, but maybe it will. Perhaps this current will turn out to be stronger than I thought it was. But now I think that things are finally changing.

Why do you think the young are so bad? Because they have too much money. The Japanese are much nicer people when they are poor. This should not be taken to mean that I think they ought to be poor, but I think they are nicer when they are poor. The young people have too much money. They have an utterly hedonist outlook; they are interested only in pleasure, and they think they can do whatever they want to do. I think that is something we Americans taught them.
Do you feel that Japan has declined in the 50 years since you first arrived? It seemed to be so remarkable for its durability - the old system of ethics and morals, the old dogmas. I think it's a great pity that it has diminished. But it hasn't been quick. It has been 50 years, but it's only now that I feel that some permanent change is occurring. People are a great deal better off. The Japanese have a great deal more material things than ever before in their history. That can be considered improvement. That some great things are gone or are going is hard to deny. But I'm very reluctant to be nostalgic. To be nostalgic, to yearn for a time 50 years ago, is to yearn for a time when I had money and they had none. And that would be immoral. (end) Edward Seidensticker JLS 1943 JAL inflight magazine January 2003

Flournoy at War

I think my mental state vis a vis the Japanese was fairly adequate at the time. After all, I had a year in college before Boulder to absorb all the coverage of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Bataan and the rest, while a group of us were starting to learn Japanese from diplomats about to be repatriated to Japan. I had years in college before that, studying the German/Russian entente and the stand-off between Japan and the ABCD powers. Then at Boulder, I was treated to 15 months of study and association with new Issei and Nisei friends on Maui after Saipan.

I was one of the roughly 10% of our Boulder Class who chose to apply to the Marine Corps. My best friend’s parents (mistakenly attributing great good sense to me) decided the Marines might be okay for their son also, since I had elected to apply. My standing 6’2” while weighing less than 135 [He must not have stood sideways] didn’t seem to prevent me from passing all the physicals and surviving 18 months overseas. Of course, nobody was going to ask me to heft a BAR or flamethrower – only a carbine and a backpack with a Rose-Innes jiten.

But there had only been close-order drill and a lecture on wearing the Marine uniform in Boulder. Our intended training with aviation ground officers at Quantico was cut short after a few short days to get our compact group out to the 5th Amphibious Corps at Pearl. The M-1 they taught me to field strip blindfolded at Quantico was not the carbine they handed me in the Pacific, nor had we fired either one. So the oft-quoted dictum of some general about how the Marines always trained their men for battle readiness didn’t apply. We learned some of the useful things on our own, like putting a condom over the rifle barrel to keep the sand out, and to hoard the 2-cigarette ration per meal on Saipan in order to have some to share during the occasional POW interview. (to be cont’d)

Thomas N. Flournoy JLS 1944

Instead of Carrying a Gun

(After the War in Japan, Cont’d)

With few exceptions, the Japanese scientists and engineers were most cooperative in discussing their work and most eager to show that they were at least as good as the Germans. We landed at Sasebo, in southern Japan and our first target was Nagasaki. I became well acquainted with a Japanese engineer who was most cooperative. I got to know him pretty well, and I finally asked him where he was when the bomb dropped. He said he was okay because the lab was protected. He then explained that, unlike Hiroshima, Nagasaki was hilly and if you were on the far side of the hill, you were protected. I then asked him how his family had fared, and he told me his wife and two children were lost.

There was one exception: a Major General in charge of one lab. For the most part, the technical people were cooperative in discussing their work. But the chief interrupted and was obviously trying to conceal their work. Finally, the chief interrogator said he would have to keep quiet or leave. It was a strain on my Boulder Japanese for a Lieutenant J.G. to tell a 2 star General to shut up or get out. [While a ILT safety officer on the guns, I had the mixed blessing of asking a COL, the DIVARTY Commander, to don a helmet (which he was not carrying in his jeep), or leave the battery area, as we were live firing. I even offered him a GI’s helmet, which he declined in disgust. He left in a huff.]

At JICPOA, I worked the night shift from 4PM to midnight. One night as I was walking to the BOQ from JICPOA, I overtook an admiral, who was also walking. After requesting permission to pass, I recognized him to be Admiral Nimitz. (Fleet Admiral CINCPAO). He asked me to join him and we chatted the rest of the way. He wanted to know about my wife and children (at the time we had a six-month-old baby girl whom I had never seen) and what work I had been doing before the Navy. What an experience!!!

I would like to hear from any of my colleagues who shared this period in our lives. But it is unlikely, since I am ninety years old, and most of my friends are dead. (end) Lawrence Alan Seymour JLS 1944

Shanghai

In the Late 1930s

(Cont’d) Dan Williams’ reference to the Shanghai Volunteer Corps (SVC) also brought back a few memories since I was a member of the American Machine Gun Company for about two years. Most of the larger British and American “Hongs”, or companies, gave a certain amount of encouragement to their “juniors“ to join the corps. Leo Reierstad, JLS 1944, was a member. I don’t remember whether Halsey Wilbur, JLS 1943, who worked across the desk from me for 8-10 months at Citibank, was or not.

One battalion was equipped by the British military and included a cavalry unit, a couple infantry companies, manned by Brits, a Portuguese infantry company and a Jewish infantry company. I have often wondered how many, if any, overt Jewish military units of company size existed in the 1930s. The other battalion was equipped by the US military and included a cavalry troop, a machine gun unit, a Philippine infantry company, plus units I don’t recall.

The Machine Gun Company had four WWI machine guns. We wore WWI US helmets and had 45’s to wear when patrolling the streets which we did in the summers of 38 and 39 on the anniversary of the Japanese Attack on Shanghai [Ah, the M1911, know it well]. The professional military and the municipal police were on a high alert and the SVC mobilized to discourage any incidents that might give the Japanese military an excuse to take over the International Settlement and the French Concession.

During the two mobilizations that I was involved in, one of the several memories I have is of being housed at the Shanghai Race Club. My assigned cot was under a Para-Mutual sign. Unfortunately SLEEP was not mobilized along with me since the Philippine Company was housed in the same area. This unit’s members were mostly musicians in night clubs, and as those places closed between 0100 and 0500, the band members would come in chattering happily and clumping along loudly in their hob-nailed boots down the concrete walkway.

The outpouring above would suggest The Interpreter really pushed my Shanghai button. Thanks (end)

Euan G. Davis JLS 1944

[Ed. Note: E.G. Davis, Combat Infantryman, Heavy Weapons Co. I’ll bet he was never able to add that time to his later service time. An infantry company made up of jazz band members boggles the mind. It is probably a good thing the SVC was never mobilized for combat after December 8, 1941. No telling how much of a circus that would have been: too many calibers and nationalities of weapons and ammo, not enough training, no artillery or air support. “Anytime the newsletter pushes a “button”; feel free to send us the outpouring that results. We will place your story in a future issue.]
Ray F Rollins  
OLS 4/1945 –  

Ray Freemont Rollins, whose career was covered in Issue #107A, of Norkolk, VA, age 85, passed away at Lake Taylor Transitional Care Hospital Sunday July 9, 2006 at 12:45 AM.

He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Crowder Rollins, son Ronald Ray Rollins and wife Diana of Roswell, GA and grandchildren: Christopher Ray Rollins of Chesapeake, VA; Eric Troy Rollins of Virginia Beach, VA; Lisa Nichol Rollins of Virginia Beach; and Florence Nichole Rollins of Roswell, GA.

He was preceded in death by his former wives, Margaret Jones Rollins and Ethel Pittenger Rollins, his parents and five brothers.

His following step-children also survive him: Mrs. William Mann of Florida, Mrs. Tom Courson of Colorado, Wesley Crowder of Virginia, Mrs. Craig Norman of Virginia, along with a host of great-grandchildren, grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Elizabeth Crowder Rollins

Robert Starr Kinsman 1919–2006

Robert S. Kinsman, JLS 1943, was an educator, born in Jamaica Plains, Massachusetts, March 22, 1919, the son of Joshua Starr and Florence Ruby (Markham) Kinsman. He received his AB from Dartmouth College in 1940 and his MA from Yale University in 1942. He attended the US Navy Japanese Language School at the University of Colorado from July 1942 to September 1943 and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the USMC in 1943. Kinsman served from 1943 to 1946. For a time, he was assigned to the Enlisted Japanese Language School at Camp Elliott, after which he served in the Pacific in the Solomons, then, in mid-1944, he was assigned to Camp Richie, Maryland and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. He married Barbara Ann Yates on January 2, 1943 and they had three daughters: Susan Wilkes, Sarah Markham, and Margaret Roper.

Following the War, Kinsman was an instructor in English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1946 and an English Instructor at UCLA from 1948 to 1950. Meanwhile, he had completed his Ph.D. at Yale in 1949. He continued at UCLA in the English Department as an assistant professor (1950-56), associate professor (1956-1963), and professor (1963 to date). He was associate dean of the graduate division between 1962 and 1975, acting dean 1973-1975. Dr. Kinsman was regional chair Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation 1959 to 1962. He was a Ford Foundation Fellow from 1952 to 53 and a Guggenheim Fellow from 1956 to 1957. Dr. Kinsman was also a member of the MLA Renaissance Society of America, the Renaissance English Text Society, the Democratic Party and the Congregational Church.

Professor Kinsman was the author of John Skelton: Canon and Census, 1967; John Skelton, Poems, 1969; John Skelton, Early Tudor Laureate: an Annotated Bibliography, 1488-1977, 1979. He was also author of numerous articles and reviews. He was editor of and contributor to The Darker Vision of the Renaissance, 1974. He was a member of the editorial board of the University of California Press from 1978.


Editor/Archivist

[Ed. Note: After our newsletters were compiled, a possible obituary and found a comment that Bob Kinsman had been ill of is life but was a loved respected professor at UCLA for all those years—teaching all of us some lessons in courage and friendship.

Chuck Cross

JLS 1943

Photo at CPT Welch’s Home

Fred W. Frank sent a photograph of what appears to be a graduation gathering at the home of CPT Leo Welch, USN (he may have been behind the camera), with five Navy Ensigns, a Marine 2nd Lieutenant, Mrs. Welch and Barbara Welch.

James Holderbaum, Richard Sheehan, and James Holden Davis are in the photograph, taken on a late summer day (it could not be spring, as none of the three would have graduated yet), 1943. As Holderbaum has not responded and Sheehan and Davis have both passed, we need assistance identifying the rest.

Says Frank, “As you see, this was an ‘after-graduation’ photo: they’ve changed from enlisted attire to the white [and khaki] of Navy ensigns. Place of photo was 620 12th Street, Boulder, the [garden of the] Welch home. That was a hospitable house for many of us. During absences of CPT Welch, Mrs. Welch was a generous hostess. His daughter, at that time, was a friend of John Holden Davis. Many of this group were Ivy League grads.”

David M. Hays

Archivist & Editor & Fred W. Frank, JLS 1943

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