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 reconciliation programs after World War II.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN MARINES

Dear Aubrey [Farb]:

Another Marine joined me in the courier assignment - TechSgt Charles "Chick" Vienneau, who spoke French. We were given $100 to buy civilian clothing. With this bought a trench coat, fedora, shoes and some shirts. I provided my other clothing. Chick and I spent a day at the State Dept learning about mail bags, security concerns, documentation, etc. A couple days later we were given diplomatic passports and tickets on a TWA Lockheed Constellation, a one-class luxury liner in terms of seat space, comfortables and service. We were told that Sonja Henie, the ice skater was aboard but we didn't see her until we made an unscheduled stop in Iceland and passengers had to disembark while the mechanics did something with the engines. After several hours we flew on, landing at Shannon, Ireland. Then on to Paris. We were met by an Embassy car and taken to the Embassy. The mail room there was the central point for distributing diplomatic mail to the other European countries. (nb - the European office is now in Frankfurt, Germany.) Chick and I were taken to the small Hotel Perey near the Embassy where the Embassy's Marine Guards were billeted. The dozen professional civilian couriers lived elsewhere.

By this time diplomatic couriers were no longer handcuffed to their cases, as we used to see in movies. The standard diplomatic bag for mail was about 2 1/2 by 1 1/2 feet, made of heavy OD-colored canvas with metal grommets around the top. A cord was threaded through the grommets, the cord was pulled tight and the ends run through the two holes in a nickel-sized lead seal. The seal was mashed down by a tool and impressed with the U.S. emblem. The receiving mailroom clipped the cord, removed the contents of the bag and repeated the process. The Paris courier office was headed by a pleasant chap who told Chick and me that since we were temporaries, he would try to assign us to a different trip each time we went out, to increase our opportunities for some sight-seeing. "Lots of things to see, if you've never been in Europe before." Thanks to his thoughtfulness, I visited Madrid, Portugal, Seville, Reykjavik, Barcelona, Tanger, Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Bucharest and Moscow. A pair of couriers made the Moscow trip. The European airlines at this time were flying a lot of tattered old planes, some of which were C-47's left behind by the U.S. Army Air Forces. There were crashes now and then, but I didn't hear of any couriers going down.

The flight to Moscow was noteworthy. Before daylight we were driven from West Berlin to Gatow airport which was in the Soviet sector of Berlin. We boarded and were given conventional airline seats toward the rear. Ahead of us were about half a dozen armchair-like seats. Presently some great-coated Soviet officers came aboard and settled in the chairs. They produced bottles of what I assume was vodka and began enjoying themselves. Finally a pilot came aboard and started the engines. Then, with none of the usual warm-up, he taxied out on the strip and took off. We stopped briefly at Minsk on the way. After moving on we ran into low cloud cover and the pilot flew at low altitude. It appeared to me that he was faithfully following a railroad below - easier than bothering with navigation! The weather worsened with a lot of turbulence. At one point there was a flash and a loud bang. This was a first time for me, but I assume we were hit by lightning. Luckily there seemed to be no problem, and the vodka came out again.

There is a good deal more to this travelogue so I'll add another Part. [RIP Glenn.]

Semper Fi

Glenn Nelson
JLS 1944

Herbert L. Sultan, 89;
Served in State Department

Herbert L. Sultan, 89, a retired Foreign Service officer who worked for the Allied High Commission in post-World War II Europe and in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, died July 20, 2008, while swimming in Lake Barcroft near his home in Falls Church.

The death was determined to be an accidental drowning, according to the Fairfax County Police department.

Mr. Sultan was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., and received a degree in government in 1940 from Cornell University, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He entered Yale Law School before World War II but interrupted his studies to join the Navy.

He trained as a translator and interpreter at the Navy Japanese Language School, based at the University of Colorado in Boulder. As a Navy officer, he served in the Pacific as an onboard interpreter and interrogator of Japanese prisoners of war.

Afterward, Mr. Sultan returned to Yale and received his law degree in 1945. He became a lawyer for the Allied High Commission, initially in Vienna, Austria, and then in Frankfurt and Bonn in Germany.

In 1962, he joined the State Department and was posted to Vientiane, Laos, where he remained throughout the Vietnam War. He moved to Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) in 1974 and remained until the city fell to the North Vietnamese. He retired in 1981 after spending several years assigned to the Ivory Coast.

In retirement, he and his wife lived in Germany and Falls Church. He loved music, finance, exercise, tennis, film and conversation about politics. He practiced tai chi and Iyengar yoga and swam in Lake Barcroft daily.

Survivors include his wife of 53 years, Ursula Sultan of Falls Church; four sons, Peter Sultan of Baltimore, Christopher Sultan of Roxbury, N.Y., Eric Sultan of Bryn Mawr, Pa., and Timothy Sultan of Brooklyn; and four grandchildren.

Joe Holley
Washington Post
Saturday, July 26, 2008; B06

JAMES V. DI CROCCO

JLS 1943

James V. Di Crocco II, a 30-plus year member of the American expatriate community in Bangkok, and an Old Town Alexandria home-owner, died in Bangkok, Thailand on January 3, 2008, following a long illness.

A 1942 graduate of Columbia University, Di Crocco entered...
the US Navy, serving during World War II. He attended the US Navy Japanese/Oriental Language School at the University of Colorado in Boulder with other Columbia graduates, Paul Hauck, Gene Sosin, Harold Rogers, Sanford Rogers, Bill Voelker, and Owen Zurhellen II, graduating in late summer, 1943. As both Yeoman 2nd Class and Lt (j.g.), Di Crocco participated in musical reviews and received several military awards. His studies led to a scholarship to study at Columbia University, where he attended for many years. Mr. Di Crocco's remains were interred during a short ceremony at the Columbarium in Arlington National Cemetery on September 10, 2008.

Mr. James V. Di Crocco

An accomplished writer and historian and a meticulous editor, he was the author, co-author, and translator of numerous scholarly historical articles, books, and other publications including the historical monograph, The Mons: A Civilisation of Southeast Asia, published in 1999 by the Siam Society. He had the high honor, of which he was most proud, of being granted an audience with His Majesty the King of Thailand following the publication of the original edition of The King of Thailand in World Focus in 1988 for which he was an associate editor. After retiring from a successful career in US government service, he lectured at the Thai military academy and Chulalongkorn University for several years.

Mr. Di Crocco was a past Vice President of the Siam Society, a Thai scholarly historical association, and Honorary Editor of The Journal of the Siam Society. A patron of the arts, he was a great lover of classical music and expert on opera, particularly those of Giuseppe Verdi. He is survived by his wife of almost 50 years, Virginia McKeen Di Crocco; a son and daughter-in-law, Lieutenant Colonel James V. Di Crocco III and Katherine Di Crocco of Newport News, Virginia; a sister, Mrs. Margaret Robinson of Croton-on-Hudson, New York; and Colonel Junphon Chalerytoy of the Royal Thai Army, as well as several nieces and nephews. A funeral service was held on January 7, 2008 at Christ Church, Bangkok, which he attended for many years. Mr. Di Crocco's remains were interred during a short ceremony at the Columbarium in Arlington National Cemetery on September 10, 2008.

Donald Keene, 7 others, win Order of Culture

The [Japanese] government announced Tuesday [October 28, 2008] it would award eight people the 2008 Order of Culture, including three Nobel Prize winners, while designating 16 Persons of Cultural Merit.

The eight are conductor Seiji Ozawa, 73; mathematician Kiyoshi Itō, 93; elementary particle researchers Makoto Kobayashi, 64, and Toshihide Masukawa, 68; ocean biologist Osamu Shimomura, 80; novelist Seiko Tanabe, 80; researcher of Japanese literature Donald Keene, 86; and former athlete Hironoshin Furuhashi, 80.

Shimomura, who won this year's Nobel Prize in Chemistry, also was designated a Person of Cultural Merit, an honor he had not previously received.

Keene is a U.S. citizen from New York. Non-Japanese winners of the Order of Culture in the past include the year's recipient of the Nobel Prize in Physics, Yoichiro Nambu, a naturalized U.S. citizen who won the designation in 1978; and Capt. Neil Armstrong and two other crew members of the Apollo 11, who won the award in 1969 for landing on the moon.

Furuhashi is a former freestyle swimmer who served as president of the Japanese Olympic Committee. He is the first former sportsman to be awarded the Order of Culture.

The other Persons of Cultural Merit are:

-- Makoto Asahshima, 64, developmental biologist.
-- Akira Ito, 66, researcher of molecular cell biology.
-- Toshi Ichiyangi, 75, composer.
-- Sayume Okuda, 71, craftswoman.
-- Tota Kaneko, 89, haiku poet.
-- Hiroyuki Sakaki, 64, electronic engineer.
-- Koichi Shimoda, 88, applied physicist and leading educator.
-- Ichiro Sumikawa, 77, sculptor.
-- Kenichi Tomiraga, 77, economic sociologist.
-- Makoto Nagao, 72, researcher of information engineering and leading educator.
-- Tatsu Nishida, 79, linguist.
-- Man Nomura, 78, kyogen actor.
-- Asami Maki, 74, choreographer.
-- Toru Funamura, 76, composer.
-- Tomijuro Nakamura, 79, kabuki actor.

Every year, five or so people are chosen for the Order of Culture. This year, the three Nobel winners were added to the list of those already chosen.

An awards ceremony for the Order of Culture will be held Nov. 3 at the Imperial Palace, while one for the Persons of Cultural Merit will take place on Tuesday at Hotel Okura in Tokyo.

The Yomiuri Shimbun
Oct. 29, 2008

Attorney and writer
John S. Robinson, 81
JLS 1943

John S. Robinson, a lifelong bachelor who lawyered for his paycheck but wrote for his soul, died last week at the age of 81.

He was raised in the Denny-Blaine neighborhood in Seattle, the son of a state Supreme Court justice, and attended Garfield High School. He hobnobbed with old-money families — the Bullitts, Baillargeons and Bloedels — and became politically aligned with a generation of liberal Republicans.

Mr. Robinson volunteered for the Navy in World War II, becoming a Japanese-language translator and codebreaker.

Toward the war's end, as American ordinance rained on Japanese cities, he wrote a letter urging the bombers to spare the picturesque city of Nara, home to an eighth-century wooden monastery and a 53-foot-high image of Buddha. He recalled decades later in the Seattle Weekly that "this letter may have been the important act of my life."

He graduated from Yale Law School in 1949 and joined the firm that is now known as Preston Gates & Ellis. A few years later, he drafted documents to support the bond financing of the Evergreen Point Floating Bridge.

In 1960 he left for what was supposed to be a three-month journey into Africa. Instead, he stayed three years and mailed travelogues to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

He was expelled from South Africa, after interviewing a tribal chief in the territory of South-West Africa, because the government believed he was a spy for the United Nations.

Mr. Robinson later worked for then state Attorney General Slade Gorton. In Olympia, he organized a coalition to fight development plans near The Evergreen State College at Cooper Point. He volunteered his legal services to preserve what is now the 153-acre Watershed Park.

Each morning, he went to the Spar Cafe, a favorite legislators' hangout, for conversation and a bowl of oatmeal. In 1980 he was campaign coordinator for independent attorney-general candidate John Miller.

He wrote long, amiable profiles for the Weekly, where he argued with editors to keep even a few words of his painstakingly crafted prose from being cut. Founding publisher David Brewster valued his erudition, his optimism and the trust interviewees placed in him.

At the same time, "there was an undertone of sadness in his writing, because the things he was writing about had been supplanted" by a coarser and
behavior is a great example; he devised an analytical framework for permitting inferences about family planning choices within Japanese peasant families demonstrating very specific preferences about birth order depending on the age and wealth of the parents. See "Conjugal Power in Tokugawa Japanese Families" in Sex and Gender Hierarchies, edited by B. D. Miller (Cambridge University Press, 1989). Skinner was insistent that social data need to be analyzed in spatial terms; he believed that many social patterns will be best understood when they are placed in their geographical context. And the reason for this is straightforward: human social activity itself is structured in space, through transport systems, habituation patterns, the circuits of merchants and necromancers, and the waterways that integrate social and economic systems in pre-modern societies. He also believed that identifying the right level of geographical aggregation is an important and substantive task; for example, he argued against the idea of making economic comparisons across provinces in China, on the basis that provincial boundaries emerged as a result of a series of administrative accidents rather than defining "natural" boundaries of human activity.

Several ideas that Skinner developed in detail have had particular impact. His analysis of the marketing systems of Sichuan using the conceptual tools of central place theory was very influential when it appeared in three parts in the Journal of Asian Studies (1964-65) (part I, part II, part III). This analysis was innovative in several key ways. It gave an important emphasis to the role of the abstract geometry of central place theory -- the nested hexagons that represent the optimal spatial distribution of towns, villages, and cities. But more important, the analysis creates an important shift of focus from the village to the larger social systems of interchange within which villages are located -- the patterns of social intercourse that are associated with periodic markets, the flow of ideas associated with the circuits of martial arts specialists, and the likelihood of intersections between economic, cultural, and political processes rooted in the geometry of social exchange.

A second highly influential idea also falls within the intellectual precincts of economic geography. Skinner offered an analysis of the economic geography of late imperial China in terms of a set of eight (or nine) macroregions: physiographically bounded regions consisting of core and periphery, regarding which the bulk of trade occurs internally rather than externally. Skinner argues in this body of research that it is analytically faulty to treat China as a single national market system in this period macroregion, economic geography was largely confined within the separate macroregions. He used empirical measures to establish the distinctions between core and periphery, as well as to draw boundaries between adjacent macroregions. As he pointed out, the economic geography of traditional Chinese economy was largely governed by transport cost, and this meant that China's river systems largely defined the shape and scope of intra- and inter-regional markets. And he demonstrated how human activity was structured by the patterns of social interaction defined by these macroregions -- for example, the transfer of soil fertility from periphery to core through the gathering of fuel wood in the provinces which then is transferred to core soils after burning.

Another critical contribution that Skinner provided, through his own contribution to the highly important City in Late Imperial China volume (link), is the idea of a hierarchy of scale in urban systems. Skinner argued that there was an orderly hierarchy of places, ranging from higher-level cities through lower-level cities, market towns, and villages. He distinguishes between two types of hierarchy: administrative-bureaucratic hierarchy of places and the economic-commercial hierarchy of places. These two systems create different characteristics and functions for the cities that fall within them. This body of formal analytical ideas is borrowed from urban geographers such as Walter Christaller and Johan Heinrich von Thünen. Skinner's genius was to recognize that these analytical approaches provided a lens through which to make sense of China's social activity across space and time and that other approaches do not. In particular, Bill demonstrated the utility of a spatial and regional approach in contrast to both purely statistical analyses of China's economy and village-level ethnographic studies that ignored the urban and town relationships within which village society was situated.

A central and crucial aspect of Skinner's thinking is spatial; he was vastly ahead of the GIS revolution in the social sciences, in that he consistently tried to analyze China's social, economic, and cultural data in terms of spatial patterns that it displayed decades before the corresponding desktop computation capability was available. I visited his research laboratory at UC-Davis sometime early in the 1990s, and was struck by a couple of vignettes. When I arrived he was poring over a Chinese census atlas in eight gradations with a magnifying glass; he was laboriously coding counties by the color representing a range of social, economic, cultural data. And when he brought me to examine a wall-sized map he had produced mapping sex ratios across part of southeastern China, he was interested in pointing out how the values of sex ratios corresponded to the core-periphery framework mentioned above. I pointed out a small, bounded region in southwest China that appeared to be anomalous, in that it represented an island of normal sex ratios in a sea of high male-female ratios. He instantly replied: that's an ethnic minority population that doesn't discriminate against girls. Culture and space!

Another of Skinner's crucial contributions to the China field -- and to historical social science more generally -- was his devotion to the project of creating a public database of historical Chinese social, economic, and cultural data at the county level. This effort contributed to the eventual formation of the China Historical Geographic Information System (CHGIS). What is striking about this work is that it was begun at a period in which the desktop computing tools that would permit easy and flexible use of the data -- in producing historical statistical maps, for example -- did not yet exist.

G. William Skinner provided a genuinely unique contribution to our understanding of the social realities of China. His contributions were innovative in the deepest sense possible: he brought an appropriate set of tools to each topic of investigation he addressed, without presuming that existing analytical techniques would do the job.

Daniel Little
The China Beat
http://thechinabeat.blogspot.com/2008/11/g-william-skinner.html
11/17/2008

Japanese American
Redress Activist
Tsuyako "Sox" Kitashima
Dies
Helping Applicants Get Redress
(Cont'd) Sox Kitashima became the face and voice of the redress program, particularly in the Bay Area, helping potential applicants obtain their due redress.

"For Sox, the Redress Movement represented an opportunity to right a sad chapter in American history," said Adachi. "She was tireless in her
efforts, and brought a level of grassroots organizing to the Redress Movement that was unprecedented in the Japanese American community.

"Many would have rested on laurels after the redress legislation passed, but Sox continued her advocacy for those internees who were excluded from the redress guidelines," Adachi added.

She helped the Office of Redress Administration (ORA), the government agency set up to distribute redress, locate those who were eligible.

She would often call the ORA in Washington, D.C. in the wee hours of the morning on the West Coast, knowing that they were just coming into the office.

"When I think of redress, I think of Sox," wrote former ORA Administrator Robert K. Bratt in Kitashima’s biography. "She really made a difference." Bratt described Kitashima as a motivator who makes everyone around "want" to help.

"No sooner had we expanded our regulations to include another group of individuals who were overlooked, when Sox would present another compelling case for redress," said Bratt. "She was one of the reasons I believe we left no stone unturned."

One of those in the expanded groups that Kitashima helped get redress was Allen Okamoto.

"Under the initial guidelines it appeared that I didn’t qualify, but with the help of Sox and Jeff Adachi I was able to get the check," said Okamoto.

"I was born in Boulder, Colorado as my mother and father were instructors of Japanese at the Naval Language School at the University of Colorado," Okamoto explained. "Since it was shown that we were under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Navy, we qualified for redress. Sox and my wife went all the way to Washington, D.C. to fight for not only my family but for many other Japanese Americans."

Kitashima even visited a Japanese American in prison to inform him of his eligibility for redress for his wartime incarceration.

To get into the prison, she called on Adachi’s help.

"Because I was a lawyer, I could obtain access," Adachi recalled. "I brought Sox with me, and we went into the prison and met with this man who was a complete stranger to us."

The man, in his 50s, told them that he ran away as a child and had not communicated with his parents since.

"When Sox told him of the $20k he was eligible for, he was extremely grateful," Adachi said. "Sox told the man that he could take the money and turn his life around. He was eventually released, and hopefully, Sox’s efforts helped him find a new life."

According to Adachi, Kitashima helped many who were confused about the redress legislation and what it meant, particularly the elderly and infirm.

"Sox helped them fill out the necessary paperwork to speed the process along, and then pressured the ORA to make sure it happened," he remembered. (to be cont’d)

Kenji G. Taguma
Nichi Bei Times
January 12, 2006

Some Brushes with History: Handling the Japanese Language During WWII

William James once said that life was a series of interruptions, and I have always found this to be so. One afternoon, shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, I was chatting with Bob Wade, a fellow graduate student, in Yale’s Sterling Memorial Library, when suddenly he broke off and cried, “Sorry, I’ve got to leave. I have to see Commander Hindmarsh.” “Hindmarsh? Who’s he?” I asked puzzledly. “Here, read this,” said Bob, handing me a flyer as he left. It was an announcement that Commander A.E. Hindmarsh, USNR, was appearing on the Yale campus to recruit students for the Navy’s Japanese Language School in Boulder, Colorado. I was at once intrigued. I liked languages; I had studied Latin and French in high school and German in college, and I even knew a few simple Japanese phrases I had learned from Nisei friends in New York City. The upshot: I saw Hindmarsh, too, and ended up at Boulder with Bob and a couple hundred other college students trying to master the intricacies of Nihongo.

The Navy’s program, which used the dormitories, dining halls, and classrooms of the University of Colorado [actually the Navy contracted the effort to the University of Colorado, as the instructors were paid by the University, and all the students received CU credit for their JLS/OLS courses], was a rigorous one: it compressed a three-year course the Navy had sponsored in peacetime into one year [14 months, normally]. We met four hours a day in classes (two hours of reading, an hour of conversation, and an hour of dictation) and had a four-hour examination every Saturday morning, as well as periodic oral exams in the middle of the week. We were supposed to speak Nihongo at meals, but usually didn’t. We needed to get away from our studies whenever we could (“We owe it to ourselves,” as my genial Texas friend, Carl Bartz liked to put it), for we were always moving ahead at breakneck speed, memorizing a dozen or so new Kanji each day and rushing from one chapter to the next in Naganuma, our multi-volume Japanese text. Falling behind in assignments was fatal. My roommate, a likeable fellow just out of Yale, tried the old college trick of leaving everything until Friday night, when he would suddenly begin cramming for Saturday’s exam, right after supper. It didn’t work; he lasted only a few months.

Some evenings we saw Japanese movies. The school had acquired a handful of old pre-war B-movies in Nihongo, including one featuring a big fellow who was an obvious take-off on America’s silent film comedian, Fatty Arbuckle, and who sang “Aozora” (“My Blue Heaven”) whenever he couldn’t think of anything else to do. The movies were just plain awful, and we saw the same ones so often that we couldn’t help hissing and booing, to our instructors’ chagrin, as soon as the titles appeared on the screen. Saturday nights, though we were free to do as we pleased. We saw some good movies in Boulder’s movie palaces – classics (though we did not know it at the time) like The Maltese Falcon and Casablanca. We saw some of Hollywood’s war movies, too, and were amused by the way Chinese performers handled the roles of Japanese villains. The Chinese language has an L but no R; Nihongo has an R but no L.

From Paul F. Boller, Jr., Memoirs of an Obscure Professor & Other Essays, (Fort Worth, TX: TCU Press, 1992) 35-36.

Reprise: William Skinner

William Skinner was a man of great acumen and imagination. When I first met him (in the UH computing center in Honolulu) he was analyzing his Singapore Chinese offspring database. He was excited on having just found that first sons and second daughters were conformists, while second sons and first daughters were rebels, and so on down each line. I introduced Skinner to the noted geographer Duane Marble, and within ten minutes they worked out that they were third cousins: the small world once again.

Forrest R. “Woody” Pitts
OLS 3/45

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