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

Ernest Kroll was born in 1913 and died in 1995. He was a poet and a historian. His first book, "Cape Horn & Other Poems," was published in 1945. It was a collection of satiric poems, all of them four-lines, that had been receiving much attention in many magazines. Among them were Harpers and 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. He wrote the best books of the year. 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 prais ed, 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!

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 1970 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 Frauxions, 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,
Brady—metaphorically at least, relates to the Civil War example, a short poem that "Homer with a Camera," for poetry he was writing. Here's imagine was his own name but it reflects what I on—there's no title poem of this. The Pauses of the Eye is right - him. The title of his second book Ernie's modus operandi is the In so many of the poems, reading these books again, over craft." In notes I made while graphic clarity of this poet's Wallace Fowlie refers to Kroll's work:


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, A Bridge" (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—their craftsmanship and their ability to evoke a sense of the familiar and the unknown. 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?"

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 multitudinously.

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."

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 ruminate 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.

In the beginning I referred to other modes that Ernie began writing in the later 50s and continued with well into the 80s, namely Fraxions 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 Fraxions - each fraxion 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 counterpart. 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]

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.,
And “Nuisance”:
As if my
Nature
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 Fraxioms
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
mid-1970s. We had met
which lasted a brief time in the
my own connection to Ernie,
I’ll close with remarks about
limited editions.

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
Sapiensti (Abattoir Editions,
The University of Nebraska at
Omaha, 1973)
15 Fraxioms (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
Published in
Volume 13:4, Fall 2012

[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
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 Kinichemon
Okamura, was published as a
volume in the Heibonsha Survey

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
cofounded 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 Stegmiaiers 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

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 whirlered 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 Miretta 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 Ehler, 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 lends 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 Chocin. Memories!

Miss Helen Zimmerman, MA
Stanford University, Radcliffe College, English, History

All the best,
Dick Moss
JLS 1943