

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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POINT RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

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WASHINGTON PLAYGROUND-6

by George Hagen

In previous articles you saw the following ideograms or characters (Kanji, in Japanese), 日本. These are the characters for sun, 日 and origin, 本, and put together in a compound they form the written word 日本 Japan, which means literally origin-of-the-sun. The English word Japan came from the Mandarin (Chinese) pronunciation of the characters, Jih Pen, and was, I believe, introduced by Perry. The Romanized (Romanji) Japanese is spelled Nihon, or Nippon.

The written Japanese language is a little more confusing than the spoken language because as I mentioned last week they use any of three phonetic alphabets plus Kanji in their writing. It is not as confusing as it sounds, because there is good justification for all systems. They have all been used throughout the modern Japanese era, since the Meiji Restoration, 100 years ago.

I bought an excellent book, Read Japanese Today, by Len Walsh a week before I left Japan. I wish I could have found it sooner. Most of the following is contained in passages of this book.



The book discusses Japanese writing, how the characters were constructed and how Japan borrowed the characters from China. Then the author tries to teach the reader 300 basic characters using a pictorial mnemonic method. I learned a few hundred characters by rote while I was in Malaya. This is the method used almost universally. Such things as stroke order, penmanship, and the number of strokes in each character are stressed. I like Walsh's method better, and this is the way it goes:


"Japanese writing using ideograms was borrowed from China almost 2,000 years ago. Two thousand years before that, the ancient Chinese had formed these charac-

ters from pictures of things they knew. To them the sun had looked like this:



, so this became their written word for sun. This was gradually squared off and simplified to make it easier to write, changing its shape to 日. This is still the way the word sun is written both in China and Japan today.

"The Ancient Chinese first drew a tree like this . This was also gradually simplified and squared to 木 which became the written word for tree. To form the word for root or origin the Chinese just drew in more roots at the bottom of the tree to emphasize this portion of the picture, , then squared and simplified the character to 本. This became the written word for root or origin.

"A picture of the sun in the east at sunrise coming up behind a tree  forms the written word for east: 東. (I learned this character by rote several years ago, but I could have saved much time and effort by reading the sentence above at that time.)

"The characters as these examples show are not so mysterious as they first look. They are not just random strokes; each one is a picture and has a meaning based on the content of the picture.

"The Japanese written language contains a number of these characters, but fortunately not as many as Westerners often assume. To graduate from grammar school a student must know 881 characters. At this point he is considered literate. A high school graduate must know 1,850. To read college textbooks, about 3,000 characters are necessary.

(Continued on page 17)

REMINISCING

With DON CHURCH

Interesting and sometimes amusing articles from old Richmond and Point Richmond newspapers, courtesy of the Richmond Museum.

THE DAY JACK LONDON VISITED RICHMOND:

OCTOBER 1, 1914

One of Kozy Kove's most memorable days was Thursday, October 1, 1914, when members of the West Side Improvement Club, City officials, Standard Oil officials and hundreds of others did homage to the greatest author of the west, Jack London.

The Independent of Oct. 1 states that Jack London, soldier of Fortune, anchored his sloop

"The Roamer" off Kozy Kove yesterday. He was greeted by a number of local persons. To day he will be greeted by Mayor Garrard and other city officials besides Joseph Brooks and Herman Tuller of the Standard Oil Co., and will be taken on a tour of the oil refinery and other principal places in the city.

Festivities opened that evening with a clam bake. However, Jack was too busy shaking hands and was only permitted to eat clams for a few minutes and as to dancing, he did succeed in sandwiching in four waltzes between the handshakes.

At the clam bake, Mayor Garrard, Councilman Fernald and City Attorney Hall spoke, welcoming London to our midst. Then Jack responded in that humorous

fashion which made all sit at ease and which made them pronounce him a good fellow.

Refreshments abounded and Manager Agar had turned the resort into a veritable fairyland. London and his wife were so dumbfounded over Richmond's hospitality that they have decided to remain one more day.

The visit was arranged by Mr. Frank Agar, co-manager of Kozy Kove, who has been a close personal friend of London's for many years. The feature of the evening was the serving of dinner by moonlight. Mr. London is not possessed of

the characteristics of most writers, he simply Jack London. After having seen and talked with him, one can understand that the success of his writings is due

largely to the fact that his own personality and his own feelings are made a part.

I can remember a group of us boys who were in the early teens, tired of watching the dancing and the crowds, wandered down to the benches above the beach. It was a beautiful moonlight evening and the bay waters were smooth, reflecting the light of Jack's boat.

After a few minutes, Mr. London came down and asked if he could join us as he needed a "blow". He told us how strenuous the day had been. We asked questions, all of which he answered. Soon, ladies' voices were heard from above--"Where is Mr. London? Oh, Mr. London" as they surged in and out of the crowd looking for him. (continued on page 5, col. 2)



POINT RICHMOND'S SPARSELY POPULATED HILLS IN EARLY 1900'S.

5.

THE OLD PROF*

HOPPED UP HISTORY

JOAN OF ARC

Long years ago young JOAN OF ARC
Heard "VOICES" calling in the darc.
The words, she quickly diagnosed,
Were coming from a friendly ghosed.

JOAN listened, as the eerie VOICE
Told her that things were getting voice,
That she should fight to rescue FRANCE,
And kick the BRITISH in the pance.

This was enough for jaunty JOAN.
She hustled to the nearest phoan,
And told King Charles she'd save his crown,
If only he would stick arown.

She bought herself a suit of armor,
So British arrows couldn't harmor,
Then, aided by the FOREIGN LEGION,
The British she was soon besegion.

She won the BATTLE OF ORLEANS,
Though she was only a mer teans.
The British fled across the CHANNEL
For Joan was more than they could hannel.

Joan hung the crown on young KING CHARLIE,
Who now, at last, ruled FRANCE entarlie.
And then, since things were going fine,
The VOICES told her to resine.

But France's noblemen grew jealous,
(They were a bunch of nasty fealous),
They kidnapped Joan by sly maneuver,
And forced the KING to disappreuver.

They said that Joan was just a COMMIE
And also more than slightly bommie;
That she was crazy as a LOON,
And didn't know what she was doon.



They got a stake, to which they pinned
her
And burned poor Joannie to a cinned her.
So--never listen to a ghost
Or you, too, may become a rhost.

*Robert C. Friend.

(Reminiscing --continued
from page 4)

He said to us, "listen to them--I would
much rather stay here with you boys and
talk, but guess I'll have to go back and
face it again." However, he did stay a
while longer.

Back to newspaper accounts: Much
of the evening was spent by Jack discus-
sing leading characters of his books who
were taken from real life, such as Alec
McLaren of the Sea Wolf, who had recent-
ly passed away. He also told of his first
meeting with Herbert Bosworth who be-
came the leading man in most of his mov-
ies. He told of abandoning his trip on
"The Snark" in Australia due to ill health.
Two of his ailments the doctors had diag-
nosed as incurable. London had written
of Richmond long before it existed. It was
back in 1891 and included the life in the
old Chinese Shrimp Camp.

A summary of Jack was given by the
Record Herald reporter, who writes, "Lo-
don is the same London you read about
and the same London whose pictures you
see. While not characterized by any of tl
many eccentricities attributed to authors,
he stands out among men. He is a big man.
His suit, negligee shirt and white string
tie are mounted with a full cut square-
jawed beaming face, topped off with an
abundance of curly hair. (p. 6)