

Resigns Here for New Pacific Post

McCameron: Librarian for Japan

By FRANK PRICE
Battalion Feature Staff

"Not nearly enough publicity has been given to what should be the most important phase of our overall policy for re-educating the Japanese people," says Mr. Lloyd McCameron, head of the Cushing Memorial Library Circulation Department.

This man is slight of build, with blue, twinkling eyes that light up at the mention of books or libraries. He speaks with the ease and smoothness that is characteristic of one who has had many years of public service.

Native Texan

A native Texan, born in Ft. Worth December 23, 1912, he feels particularly devoted to anything that makes this great state what it is. With the exception of a year at Peabody College in Nashville, Tenn. where he received a B. S. degree in Library Science, the entirety of his education is Texas founded. He is a graduate of Tyler High School (1930), Tyler Junior College (1932), and Stephen F. Austin (1938).

In January of this year, he was employed at his present position. If you have visited the Circulation Department, you have probably seen this man with the sandy, short-cropped hair, moving about with the nimbleness of one who knows what he is doing—and does it. Like most typical Texans when they are amused, numerous crows-feet like wrinkles appear at the corners of his eyes.

Wrinkles From Texas Sun

The reason for such profound wrinkles is probably due to the fact that while in Texas one must "suntan" to face the blistering Summer sun or the raging Winter winds. His eagerness to help you find what you want, the patience he exhibits if you are undecided, and the air of efficiency that exists in his department, all label McCameron as a man who is in love with his work. Yet, a nostalgic look appears in his eyes as he describes his work in Japan.

Before you can understand this apparent perturbation, you will first need to know the chain of events that led up to it. After he was discharged from the Army in 1944, he worked for two years in the Atomic Bomb Plant in Oakridge, Tenn. When he learned that librarians were needed overseas, he made application to the Civil Service for placement.

Moved Into Jap Barracks

"During the last war, the Japanese had an air strip there at Yamoto," began McCameron, "and we moved into their old barracks. Many new buildings were constructed and several others were remodeled, but this change was laborious and months in coming. We spent the winter in these well-ventilated but poorly heated shacks and the Winters there were really bitter.

However, to have one's efforts appreciated, compensates for many hardships. The G.I.'s were hungry for something to read. I was the first person to go there, other than a chaplain, for purposes of recreation or morals. I recall, vividly, one G. I. who turned to his buddy and said, as he pointed a finger at me, 'You know, this guy doesn't have to be here. He could be 'Stateside' if he wanted to be, but he came up here and fixed all this (the library) just for us.'

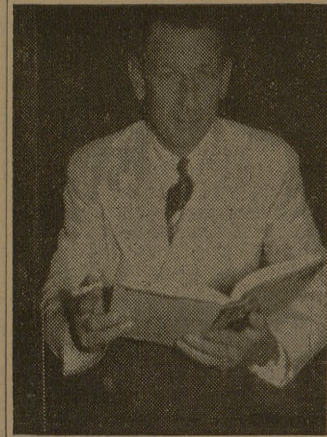
Returned to U.S.

By the spring of '47, the library was comparable to some of our better ones here at home. McCameron felt that he had undergone all the Oriental life that a normal man should, and returned to the "States" vowing never to depart.

However, he couldn't shake the memory of the Orient, and felt himself desiring to return. Eight months later, his desires were fulfilled. He received a letter from

Washington offering him a position in the Information and Education Section of SCAP (Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in the Pacific). He accepted gratefully.

This, McCameron, entered the field that prompted him to say, "Not nearly enough publicity has been given to what I think to be the most important phase of our overall policy for re-educating Japan."



Lloyd McCameron

He was sent to Tokyo and after a few weeks there, went to Osaka where he worked as an assistant in the library. Then he set up similar libraries in Kobe and Kumamoto. He spent 20 months in Kumamoto and it was there that he first began to realize the vast importance of his work.

Importance of Work

In answer to the question, "Just what was the importance of your work?" McCameron replied: "Under SCAP there is the Information and Education Section. This embraces radio, newspapers, schools, etc. Our unit was the library division. Since the Japanese had never had public libraries, in the sense that we have them, we set ours up with emphasis on factual material.

"We exploited our institutions for the purpose of telling the Japanese people the truth about democracy, thereby, encouraging democratic thinking among them. We tried to create an awareness in the Japanese mind, the importance of individuality. This was a totally new idea in Japan."

Indeed, the libraries that McCameron was instrumental in setting up in Japan, were, and still are, tremendously important as mediums of democracy. The libraries that the Japanese had were so utterly inadequate that it is a misnomer to refer to them as being libraries. Most of them were located in the basement of some dingy, filthy, poorly-lit building.

"Feeling of Supremacy"

"A feeling of supremacy prevailed in most of the Japanese assistants that I hired," said McCameron. "It was a tedious task to implant into the Japanese mind that his position was that of a public servant, rather than a 'fig-urehead' of pre-eminence. Perhaps, I would have been even longer in accomplishing this end, if I had not come in contact with a Japanese who had been educated in Hawaii.

"This fellow, Ogata Kenturo, explained to me many things about the Japanese people and their tradition.

Results Gratifying

"Notwithstanding these minor difficulties, it was gratifying to

note after we had been in operation for about a year, that the Japanese began writing letters to the editors contrasting the poor and often rude service accorded them in their own libraries with the courteous and cooperative service which they received from us. This was proof that our democratic method of doing things was seeping into the Japanese mind.

"Most all Japanese are interested in technicalities," continued McCameron "and for this reason, the demand for technical books was greatest.

It was then that this writer asked Mr. McCameron the question he had wanted to ask ever since the interview began: "Do you think that the removal of MacArthur as SCAP will impair the democratic advancement that we have already attained in Japan?"

Japs Liked MacArthur

"Undoubtedly, the Japanese people felt deeply toward MacArthur," McCameron replied, "for he had become an institution as well as an inspiration to them. Still, I feel that the democratic advancement will not be hampered due to his removal if we continue to work vigorously toward establishing a democracy in Japan. Contrary to the beliefs of many, we have only scratched the surface of democratizing Japan.

"It is absurd to think that we could, in five short years, undo the thinking of two thousand years of Japanese tradition. Yet, we have taken a long step in the right direction. If we do not stumble along the way, we could accomplish this ultimate goal within the next 50 years.

"No, the removal of MacArthur did not impair the democratic ad-

vancement in Japan, because, you see, only the man was removed—his spirit and his plan still remain. General Ridgeway needs only to give consistent cultivation to the seeds of democracy that MacArthur has already planted in the heart of Japan."

Accepts New Post

Five days later, as this writer assembled his notes, there seemed to be something missing. Had he not asked sufficient questions, or had he misplaced a pertinent bit of information? At any rate, although we had a notebook full of data, there was something lacking. It would be impossible to culminate this story with that undecipherable "something" missing.

Suddenly, the telephone rang. "This is Mr. McCameron," said the voice at the other end of the wire. "There is something that I couldn't tell you the other day at the interview. Now, that it is official, I think that you should know that my resignation here at A&M has been accepted and that I will soon be on my way to Okinawa to assist in a library there.

Enjoyed Stay at A&M

I have had a splendid relationship with all concerned at A & M and I really hate to leave, but I feel that what little service I have to offer, is needed more over there."

It looks as if the Oriental magnet is still strong enough to pull Mr. McCameron back into the Pacific. Even though most officials and many students of A&M will not rue the departure of such an efficient and personable man, some people have said it is gratifying to have known one who puts his service to his country before the desire to remain in his native state.

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