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Off the Beaten Track: Discovering Sources for East Asian History in the Historical Manuscripts and Archives Department of the University of Maryland Libraries, College Park

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The Historical Manuscripts & Archives Department, part of the Special Collections Division at the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) Libraries, contains several collections of interest to the student of East Asia. In terms of bulk, this material amounts to less than one percent of the holdings of the Department—a fact that does not negate, however, the research potential of this relatively small grouping. (Other research collections may be included in this category when finding aids for underprocessed holdings within the Department are improved and as new materials are accessioned.)

The Historical Manuscripts & Archives Department has collected in depth the papers of Maryland political leaders, and one of the Department's most significant and heavily-used political collections is the Millard E. Tydings Papers. Millard Tydings graduated from the University of Maryland College Park in 1910 (it was then known as Maryland Agricultural College), fought in the American Expeditionary Force in World War I, quickly advanced through the political ranks in Maryland after that war, and was elected U.S. Senator in 1926. Tydings served in the U.S. Senate for four terms, from 1927 to 1951, and was one of the most important figures in that legislative body during the 1930s and 1940s. He was a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, and Chair of the Armed Services and Territories and Insular Affairs committees, and the Filipino Rehabilitation Commission.

Millard E. Tydings' papers were deposited at the University of Maryland in 1961; additional papers related to his career have been donated to the University by his son, Joseph D. Tydings (who incidentally has also placed his own senatorial papers at Maryland). The collection occupies approximately fifty-four linear feet of shelving.

With a collection of this size documenting the activity of an individual who held a key position in the U.S. Senate before, during, and immediately after the Second World War, it comes as no surprise that there is material of interest to scholars working in East Asian studies. The Tydings Papers contain U.S. Senate and Defense Department documents, now declassified, which provide detailed information about financial and military support given to China by the United States from 1937 to 1945, and about sales of serviceable military equipment to the Chinese Nationalists at the end of the war. The files dealing with Tydings' chairmanship of the Filipino Rehabilitation Commission contain significant documentation (both statistical and photographic) on the extent of war damage caused by the conflict in the Philippines; also included in the files are publications describing Philippine resistance against Japanese troops in that war zone.
As a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Chair of the Armed Services Committee, Tydings was one of Senator Joseph McCarthy's most notable adversaries as charges and countercharges were made regarding the number and influence of communist sympathizers occupying high positions in the U.S. State Department and other departments within the federal government. Two cases, which bear on the Far East, are heavily documented in the Tydings Papers. The first is the so-called Amerasia Papers case, involving the publishing by Philip Jaffe in 1945 of a number of confidential government documents related to Asian affairs in his magazine titled Amerasia. Senator Tydings held hearings on this matter and was later accused by Senator McCarthy of not vigorously pursuing real (or imagined) subversives in the State Department who had provided documents to Jaffe for publication. McCarthy's allegations provoked widespread editorial comment in American journals and newspapers.

Another case of this kind related to Asia is that of Owen Lattimore, long-time resident and student of China, editor of Pacific Affairs from 1934 to 1941, and consultant to the State Department in the late 1940s. Shortly after Chiang Kai-shek's loss of mainland China to Mao Tse-tung in 1949, McCarthy accused Lattimore of using his influence in the State Department to bring American foreign policy in China into line with Lattimore's "pro-communist" sympathies. Tydings held hearings on this matter; his papers include an extensive amount of documentation on Lattimore's career, including numerous letters of support from Lattimore's friends and colleagues, and notes from several U.S. Secretaries of State (including Cordell Hull, James F. Byrnes, and Dean Acheson) assessing the nature of Lattimore's role in determining U.S. foreign policy regarding China.

The documentation contained in the Tydings Papers gives information about the formulation of U.S. foreign policy regarding East Asia in the 1940s and the tribulations of American China experts, such as Owen Lattimore, during the McCarthy era.

Also located in the Historical Manuscripts & Archives Department are the papers of William J. Sebald, a graduate of the United States Naval Academy and University of Maryland who became a political advisor to General Douglas MacArthur during the Allied Occupation of Japan. After leaving Japan in 1952, Sebald served as ambassador to both Burma (1952-1954) and Australia (1957-1961). The Sebald Papers were acquired by the University of Maryland in 1972.

In addition to having translated several Japanese legal codes in the 1930s, Sebald published a number of books including With MacArthur in Japan: A Personal History of the Occupation (New York: W.W. Norton, 1965) and Japan: Prospects, Options, and Opportunities (Washington, D.C: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1967). The Sebald Papers, while not nearly as extensive as the Tydings Papers, contain some material of scholarly interest such as his correspondence with publishers regarding With MacArthur in Japan, half of the holograph manuscript of that work, and the complete galley proofs.

Another collection worthy of mention is the Bock Ark collection, deposited at the University in 1974. Bock Ark was born in China in 1896 and came to the United States in 1911. Settling in Baltimore, Maryland, he became involved in Chinese-American and other China-related organizations, such as the Federation of Overseas Chinese Associations and the National Chinese Welfare Council. While this collection is small, it does document to some extent Chinese-American reactions to events such as the revolution of 1949, occurring in China.
In the McKeldin Library is the Gordon W. Prange Collection, a distinguished collection of Japanese-language books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, news photographs, political posters, and other materials documenting the Allied Occupation of Japan. This collection is part of the East Asia Collection, under the curatorship of Frank Joseph Shulman.

If one visits College Park in order to study the life and career of Gordon W. Prange, or to learn more about the acquisition and depositing of his collection at the University of Maryland, the Historical Manuscripts & Archives Department can assist in two ways. The historical files of the Library Director's Office are located in the Department as part of the University Archives, and several additional folders related to Prange may be found in the papers of Harry Clifton Byrd, former University of Maryland president. Manuscripts connected with Prange's scholarly publications remain at the present time with the Prange family, but the files located in the Historical Manuscripts & Archives Department provide significant documentation on Prange's work in the G-2 Historical Section of the Allied Occupation government in Japan, Prange's own description of the contents of the Civil Censorship Detachment collection (now at the University of Maryland), letters indicating the nature of his relationship with his immediate superior, Major-General Charles A. Willoughby (a member of General MacArthur's staff), his assessment of attacks on Willoughby and MacArthur by the noted columnist Drew Pearson, transcripts of interviews Prange conducted in the course of his research on the Japanese, and notes by readers invited to comment on portions of the draft of his study on the attack on Pearl Harbor--At Dawn We Slept (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981).

An historical fact not generally known is that the first Korean student in an American College, Pyŏn Su (Penn Su), was enrolled at the Maryland Agricultural College in College Park. Lee Kwang-rin, in the December 1983 issue of The Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (Seoul: Korean Research Center, no. 58), has written about the brief career of this young man. Pyŏn Su attracted favorable attention as an attaché in the first diplomatic delegation from Korea to the United States in 1883 and became a member of the "three-day" government of the Korean Progressive Party headed by Kim Ok-kyun and Pak Yong-hyo the following year. Forced to flee Korea after this government was overthrown, he travelled to the United States, decided to enroll at Maryland Agricultural College in September 1887, and received a bachelor of science degree in 1891--the first Korean to acquire a degree at an American college. Pyŏn Su showed promise of developing into an agricultural expert, having written a report titled "Agriculture in Japan" for the U.S. Agriculture Department (U.S. Agriculture Department, Monthly Reports of the Statistical Bureau, no. 89; October 22, 1891) shortly after his graduation. On the night of October 22, 1891, he was tragically killed in a railroad train accident in College Park and is buried in nearby Ammendale.

Pyŏn Su is listed as a student in the early records of the University Maryland College Park Archives. Although specific information regarding his life at College Park has not yet been located, the University Archives certainly contains a variety of publications, manuscript records, photographs, and memorabilia that could provide documentation to put Pyŏn Su's student career in its proper context. The campus has grown much in the last ninety-five years, from a small academy of forty-six students in Pyŏn Su's day to a student body approaching 40,000. In the fall of 1984, there were 292 Koreans enrolled in undergraduate programs and eighty-three studying on the graduate level. The University of Maryland Archives can assist
researchers in learning more about the nature of Korean student activity at this campus, from Pyŏn Su to the latest matriculated student body class.

The Historical Manuscript & Archives Department, located on the fourth floor of the McKeldin Library, is open from 8:30 to 5:00, Monday through Friday, and on Saturdays from 10:00 to 5:00 by prior appointment. The collections are accessible through the use of prepared guides that are available on site or through mail by request. Collection guides normally begin with a biographical or institutional history, depending on whether an individual's collection or an organization's archive is being described. A scope and content note follows, containing information on the subject content of the collection, its geographical and chronological scope, and notable correspondents or materials of special interest. Each guide also provides an inventory, enabling the researcher to acquire information on the contents of each folder or box contained in the collection. The Department issued a pamphlet in 1978 summarizing its holdings at that time; it is available to researchers on request. A series of pamphlets, designed to provide the public with additional summary information on the Department's holdings, is being planned.