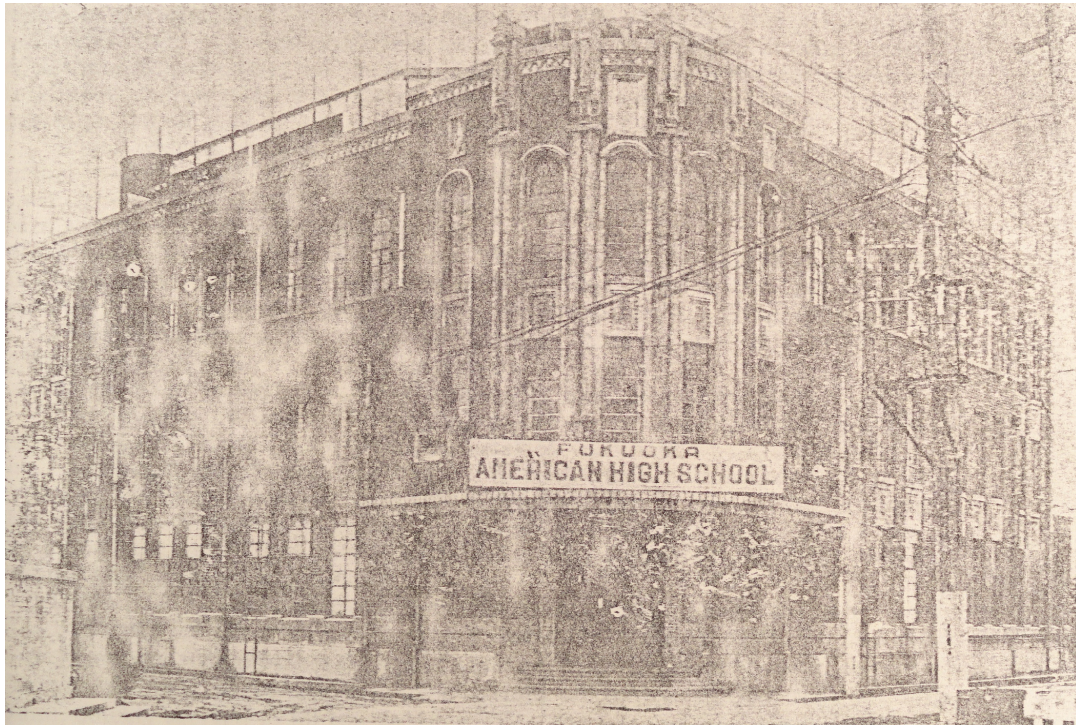


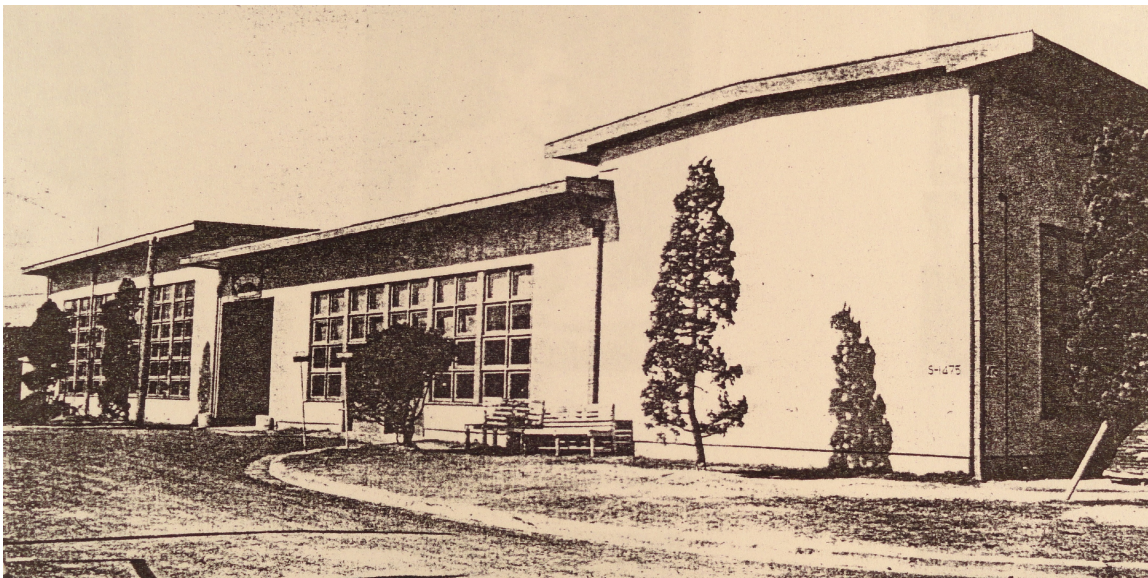
Dependents' schooling around Fukuoka 1947-1972

Joseph E Boling, IHS '60

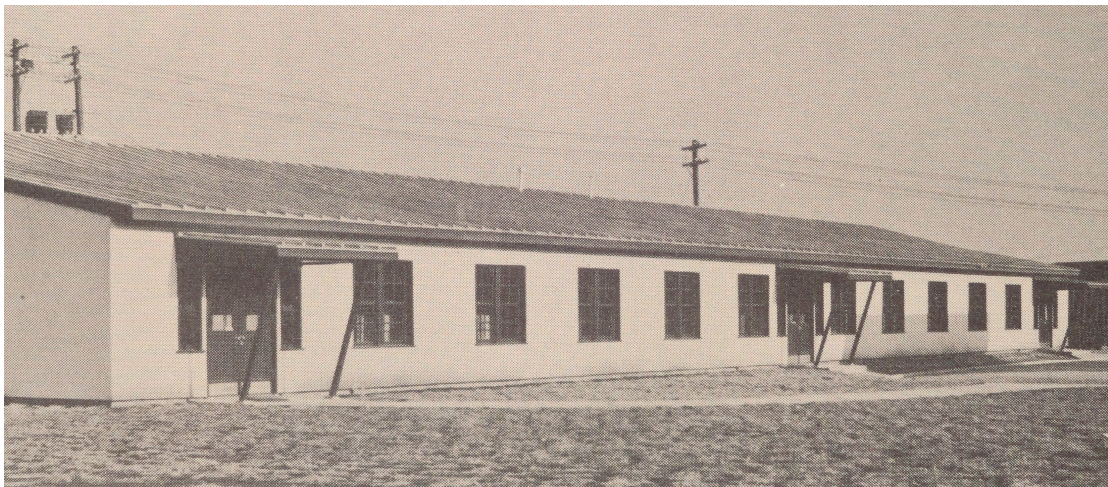
'50-52



'52-Apr 67



'53-??
(did not burn)



post-fire—no
photos known

Dependents' schooling around Fukuoka 1947-1972
Joseph E Boling, IHS '60

The following history of schools supporting Itazuke Air Base and its satellites is compiled mostly from the set of yearbooks that we have been able to assemble, complete from school year 1950-51 through closing in 1972. It is supplemented by information available online about the installations (but not the schools) and memories of a few of the hundreds of students who have passed through.

I know my uncle (Edward Rumpf) was at Itazuke during the Korean War (he was an Army field artillery officer, so I don't know what he was doing there). My aunt was with him; when we were there 1957-60 she sent us ¥3000-4000 that she found in a pocket of one of her coats, that she figured we would still be able to use. So dependents were there in the early 50s.

Our oldest IAA members report 1947 as their first year at an Itazuke school. In the 1952 yearbook there is a dedication to Mr. and Mrs. Matsutaro Imagawa as building supervisor and kitchen overseer, with a reference to their having been there "since the opening, five years ago." That would have been 1947. Mr. Imagawa was credited with a degree in mechanical engineering from Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Penna., so I suspect that he and his wife were Department of the Army civilian employees.

There were multiple US installations around Fukuoka—the "strip" (the airfield, now Fukuoka International Airport); the Itazuke Air Base Administration Annex, located between Shirakibaru and Kasugabaru; Brady Air Station, on the Saitozaki peninsula that forms the north side of Hakata Bay (Brady was the site of an Army Security Agency listening station when I was there); and Camp Hakata, another name for Brady AS when it was under Army control.

There was an elementary school there that carried whatever name was currently in use for the installation. High school students from that area were bused to the Itazuke Administration Annex. The 1961-62 *Bamboo* had a few pages devoted to the Hakata elementary school—it ran through 8th grade. And to make things really confusing, late in its life Brady was also called the Administration Annex.

The earliest yearbook that we have is from the Fukuoka American High School (FAHS), **1950-1951**. It is titled *Take no Ki*. Without the Japanese characters the translation is a guess, but a possible one would be "Bamboo Tree." In light of the eventual title of IHS yearbooks, this is most likely correct. The yearbook was dedicated to four persons: Miss Dunn (English teacher and no doubt the yearbook advisor), two officers at the 118th Station Hospital, whose roles are not described (Lt Colonels Day and Hancock), and Corporal Lambert, who assisted in printing the yearbook. Some subsequent annuals contained a specific credit to the hospital print shop.

1950-51 was described as the school's inaugural year, created by a merger of the already operating "senior and junior high schools of Itazuke Air Base and Hakata Army Base." The 1959 *Bamboo* has a history discussion on the frontispiece page that says the Itazuke school was "activated" in 1946 in two rooms in the "old Headquarters Building" with two teachers and thirty students. It continues that in 1947, after the completion of the "new section" to IAB, the school "was transferred to its present location" on the Administration Annex. It was then in five classrooms, with grades 1-6 enrollment under 100, and all high school students attending the Fukuoka American High School near the sports center in Fukuoka. That being so, then the "new school" described for the year 1950-1951 above would have been a merger of IHS students already downtown and the Brady students then joining them, in a new building.

That "new" school building was a three-story masonry building on a corner in downtown Fukuoka, previously occupied by a Corps of Engineers unit. It was apparently requisitioned from the Japanese during the occupation. The first graduating class from the new school comprised four seniors. One of them had been in the Santo Tomas Internment Camp in the Philippines 1942-45. The total student population in grades 7-12 was about 65 (it fluctuated through the year). Faculty numbered six, one of whom had been teaching several years at Camp Hakata and one of whom had been teaching at Itazuke High School, now merged with Hakata's students to form FAHS.

All through the school year '50-51 everyone wondered if the fierce fighting in Korea would force the evacuation of all dependents from Japan.

The boys basketball team was called the Rebels, and they played against several schools in the Southern Japan League, with mixed results. They also went to Tokyo for the Far East Command tournament. Their overall record for the year was 7-10-1 (yes, one tied game). Basketball remained a significant activity for the school every year.

1951-52, the school's second year, was under the same name, in the same building, but enrollment was only 35, augmented later by students from Ashiya to bring the numbers into the 50s. Faculty were only five. One senior graduated, and the ratification of the post-WWII peace treaty meant that the building reverted to its Japanese owners at the end of the school year. The yearbook title was a clumsy multi-syllabic *The Annual Round-Up 51-52: "Voice of Kyushu."* It was dedicated to two teachers, a colonel, a sergeant, and the base photo lab.

The basketball team, with no bench to speak of (only six players) lost every game that season. Some baseball and softball was played against servicemen's teams on base. In later years, local Japanese school teams also participated. Girls sports included basketball, volleyball, and softball, mostly in internal leagues including the junior high students. Activities included Student Council, Music Club, Publications, and Dramatics Club.

The third year of the merged school (**1952-53**) was in the building on the hill at the Administration Annex, the one that burned down a few years later. Now the Brady kids had a long ride, and the main body could walk to school. Faculty was back to six, and graduates rose to five. Enrollment barely got to fifty; the Ashiya students were now attending Kokura. The copy of the yearbook that we have has no cover, and the photo of its makers says simply "Annual Staff," so we do not know what its title was. There is no dedication, but the US Army Hospital gets credit for printing. The other school publication, the *Cobra Charmer*, made its first appearance. According to a note in the 1956 *Bamboo*, this is also the year that kindergarten was introduced in Itazuke education. The basketball team improved its record to 4-4, and the basketball jerseys said "Cobras."

The **1953-54** annual finally bears the name *Bamboo*. This was the first number that included photos of all twelve grades in the school (no sign of the kindergarten kids in the photos, but the kindergarten teachers were shown). The outlying supplementary building for high school classes shows up for the first time in a photo (the low building with one long hallway and a half-dozen classrooms). Faculty for grades 7-12 was up to seven, but the senior class was back to three. Enrollment was in the 50s. The *Bamboo* was dedicated to Mr. Pillep, "our principal, coach, sponsor, and friend."

Football made its first appearance, but this appears to be an intramural sport, as no win-loss record was shown. There were A and B squads in basketball (9 and 7 players), and the season record was 8-9. In the Southern Japan League, finishing in third place meant that the IHS received its first sports trophy. Activities added Newspaper Staff, Chess Club, Choir, Pep Squad, and Cheer Leaders.

The **1955** *Bamboo* makes it look like the faculty had skyrocketed, but closer inspection shows that almost a dozen of them were elementary teachers, and 7-12 faculty had fallen back to six. Seniors were back to five, and grades 7-12 students in the 80s—a new high. No new activities were noted, but a school nurse appeared for the first time—an Air Force male captain. The dedication was to Edward C. Pino, whose relationship to the *Bamboo* was not explained. He was not listed among faculty, administration, or P.T.A.

That year the school played basketball in four leagues and tournaments, and went 12-0 in regular season play and 8-4 in tournaments. In baseball, not so well—the boys won only four of 14 games (and tied three—those must have been called for darkness). Most of these games were against on-base organizational teams, presumably several years older than the boys.

The **1956** *Bamboo* was also dedicated to Mr. Pino, now described as "the youngest and finest principal in the Far East" (the previous year Mr. Pillep had still been the principal). The book is replete with recitations of accomplishments. One of those was initiation of National Honor Society recognition of the school, and induction of six students into the NHS. Another was creation of the radio workshop, including presentation of several Saturday morning programs over the Far East Network. A mixed chorus contributed to those

programs.

The basketball team, went 16-1, and the cheerleaders won the Team Spirit Trophy at a cheerleading tournament. Several new electives were offered, including Japanese language. League play for girls basketball was started. A requirement for gym every day for at least two years of high school was introduced. Faculty was up to ten and graduating seniors to eleven, with grades 7-12 enrollment at 146—all new highs. K-12 enrollment was over 650. The *Bamboo* began selling advertising.

1957 continued the climb. Faculty was up to 16, graduates to 13, and 7-12 enrollment to 210. Were more Air Force personnel being assigned, or were we just seeing the postwar baby boom in action? I don't know. The book was dedicated to two teachers who were also teaching in multiple subjects—Miss Rouillard and Mr. Hunt. The senior trip was a nine-day trek to Tokyo (four days) and to five cities between there and Itazuke. During those middle-'50s years several new activities were offered—a marching band (with instruments and uniforms), a new group of baton twirlers (the “High Steppers”), shop classes (working out of the base hobby shop), a mixed chorus, a drama club, and senior class fund-raising activities of all sorts (to finance that nine-day trip). Both boys and girls basketball had winning seasons that year (17-6, 5-1).

School-year '57-58 found faculty at 16, graduates at 12, 7-12 enrollment at 186. There were five classrooms of first grade, four of second grade, and three each of third-sixth grades. There was no dedication, but a regional superintendent was added to supervise the high school and elementary principals (and presumably principals at other installations). New activities that year were a typing club, a projection club, a library club, and Junior Red Cross.

The girls basketball team said “We removed our skirts and proceeded to show the boys that we too could wear shorts and jerseys. **We could play too!**” Boys basketball went 16-12 in two leagues and a tournament; no record was shown for the girls. IHS sent its first graduate to MIT (Andy Humer).

That was my first year at Itazuke. I was surprised to find that Japanese language was not offered (despite what the 1956 *Bamboo* said about it bring a new elective in '55-56). When I was in Morocco 1953-55 (6th and 7th grades) we were required to take French. IHS required two years of a single language. I took Latin as a sophomore and could not continue because no Latin teacher was on faculty in my junior year. I had to switch to French and take that for two years in order to satisfy the graduation requirement.

George Shaffer joined the faculty that year (science, math), and brought his ham radio rig. From the supplies room in the back of the science lab he communicated with other operators all over the Far East on call sign KA7GS, using a large antenna on the roof above the lab. He would broadcast as “This is king-able-seven-george-sugar in sunny southern Japan.” He signed my yearbook and added “New Vienna, Ohio.” Years later I was searching for IHS faculty to come to a reunion, and I called information for New Vienna. The operator said she had no listing, but she did have one for a George Shaffer in another nearby town. I called there and asked the man who answered if he was king-able-seven-george-sugar. Pause. “Where did you hear that?” It was him, and he came to our first Las Vegas reunion in 1989.

The history narrative in the **1959** *Bamboo* describes several years of construction and re-purposing to make new buildings, and wings on old buildings, available for classroom space. By that time total K-12 enrollment was 938 with 38 faculty. Faculty for grades 7-12 was still 16 with ten seniors and 7-12 enrollment at 206. The yearbook was dedicated to Itazuke Air Base and its personnel, who had provided “a home for all of us.”

The Cobra boys were 9-4 in league play and 2-2 in the tournament. No season was indicated for the girls—just cheerleading. The band played 19 concerts, twelve of them for Japanese audiences at a variety of events. The chorus likewise performed for both US and Japanese events.

Along about here Itazuke High School began an exchange visit program with Hagi High School on southern Honshu. Some of us went to Hagi for 3-4 days of visiting their school and sights in the vicinity. Students were hosted in the homes of Hagi students of equivalent grades. A few months later some of them came to IHS and were hosted in the homes of the students whom they had hosted in Hagi. The student with whom I swapped, Minoru Hirota, made a career choice based on those exchange visits. He became a professor of English literature, studied at Oxford in England and at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, and made

a career at Kyushu University in Fukuoka. We exchange birthday and Christmas greetings to this day.

1960 was an interesting year for Americans in Japan. Francis Gary Powers was shot down over Russia flying a U2 reconnaissance aircraft. Radical elements in Japan picketed the gates of the Administration Annex, making passage difficult. Since I rode a school bus daily, we got to see the sign-waving and noisy demonstrators up close and personal.

Faculty continued at 16, with 16 seniors and grades 7-12 enrollment at 254. The *Bamboo* was dedicated to the P.T.A. This year and for a couple of years previously, IHS began participating in Japanese cultural celebrations, sometimes by riding in parades, sometimes by visiting sites such as Dazaifu. A Junior Japan-American Society was an activity that appeared for the first time in the 1960 *Bamboo*. The basketball team was 7-3 in league play and 4-0 at the tournament. In the elementary grades, special classes for “handicapped” (not defined) kids were introduced, as well as speech therapy classes.

More about having a regional superintendent in the school building—when it was time for the 1960 prom, the committee prepared a large publicity poster headlined “Guys and Gals!” Miss Ruggiero would not allow it to be displayed—“too crude.” We all wondered what planet she had been reared on.

That was my senior year. Our senior trip was to Osaka/Kyoto/Nara, but the highlight was seeing *Ben Hur* in a cavernous theater. At that time US movies were projected in English with Japanese subtitles vertically at the right side of the image. It would be months before *Ben Hur* would make it to a Japanese theater in backwater Fukuoka, and I have no idea how long it took to make the BX circuit. I was gone to college. IHS sent its second graduate to MIT—me.

The **1961** *Bamboo* was dedicated to Henry Matsumoto (faculty, science and math). I tried for years to find him and invite him to a reunion—never succeeded. Faculty grew to 17, and graduates grew to 28! Grades 7-12 enrollment was about 275—the school was growing. A new activity was Student Court (with three judges shown in the *Bamboo*, along with an “advisor” (counsel for the accused?)). Drama club was back, along with Senior Red Cross (with Jr. Red Cross still also listed), and Student Patrol. I thought this would be watching the crosswalks for the elementary students, but in the following year’s *Bamboo* they are described as “Guardians of our halls.” Say, what? They were checking for hall passes?

The administration cancelled the senior trip, with no explanation evident in the *Bamboo*. In basketball, the *Bamboo* is ambiguous. It shows 2-2 against Sasebo, and 1-2 in the Tokyo tournament, but “undefeated champions of the Independent League.” No games are listed for that group—one can’t tell whom they were playing. The school had a deep bench—fourteen players listed. Elementary school faculty was 33. There were seven *full* classrooms of first grade, tapering down to two classrooms of grade six. Twelve students were initiated into National Honor Society, with five who remained from the previous year. Admission to the Student Council dance (with two bands over five hours) was \$1.25 per person.

The class of 1961 included Jerrie Paine, whose professional name is Jean-Pierre Dorléac. He is a costume designer who was nominated for an Oscar (for *Somewhere in Time*) and has received two prime time Emmy awards (*Battlestar Galactica* and *The Lot*), with nine more Emmy nominations. I found 55 costume design credits for him on IMDb (for films such as *The Blue Lagoon* and *Leave it to Beaver*, and almost 300 TV episodes on many series).

For the **'61-62** school year, grades 7-12 faculty leapt to 22 plus a local-national college grad teaching Japanese culture. There were 34 seniors, and I am not going to try to count the 7-11 population. The senior trip was back. It does not say where they went (hula dancing was mentioned), but there is a photo of one of the chaperones holding his head, captioned “Never again.”

The *Bamboo* was dedicated to Mrs. Elsie Manning, who had joined the faculty the previous year as the HS secretary, and whose daughter Babs would be a member of the class of '64. This year Mrs. Manning was teaching English and social studies. In addition to the long-time activities, this year included a female double sextet (vocal), a female chorus of 62 voices, and a male chorus of sixteen voices. The drama club (28 members) called themselves the Hambones and produced two plays during the year. The basketball team suffered from losing many seniors the year before, posting a losing season in two leagues (7-11) and in two tournaments (0-6). Wait 'till next year! The baseball team fielded 18 players (no record shown), and there was

a track team, something we had not seen previously. The junior high boys also had a basketball team—that was not new.

The first graders were up to nine classrooms. New to this *Bamboo* (and never repeated) were pages for Hakata Elementary School. Fourteen classrooms are illustrated covering grades K-8 at Hakata.

For **1962-63**, HS faculty seems to have risen by one, including a full-time guidance counselor—never before singled out as a specific individual (rather than being an additional duty for one or more of the subject matter teachers). Graduates rose to 35. There were 37 elementary faculty, and for the first time, no elementary classroom photos were included in the *Bamboo*.

This edition was dedicated to George L. Sande, a PE and business teacher for the previous five years. The *Cobra Charmer* had become the *Torii Times*. There was something called the Varsity Club (the previous year it was the Lettermen's Club). The Student Patrol was now the Hall Patrol. There was an IHS Music Department, with the band, a single female sextet, and a male quartet, and an unlabeled group that appears to be the girls' chorus. There were a Science Club, Library Club, Romance Language Club, and a Junior Classical League. The junior high students had their own hall patrol.

The basketball team went 14-8 in three leagues, with no apparent tournaments. Girls basketball was back, as well as a girls volleyball team. Running through the entire *Bamboo* is a take-off on *Peanuts* by an uncredited artist, and the book was manufactured in Missouri (all previous production credits, when present, having been to local military or civilian printers).

The '**63-64** *Bamboo* was dedicated to science teacher Robert Fellenz, who was also the faculty sponsor for the yearbook staff. The students were proud of having kept the dedication a secret from him until the books were released. The Foreword noted that IHS enrollment was at an all-time high (without saying what it actually was). But there must have been a cloud on the horizon—the editor-in-chief (Babs Manning) wrote that the year “promises to be the last in which Itazuke High School will maintain its current large enrollment.” Faculty was up to 24, with 45 graduating seniors. The total 7-12 enrollment was 403. Where were they putting all these kids? This was the first year for J. Donald Cates in administration—I have heard his name often among alumni.

Although no faculty member was identified as teaching Japanese, but there was now a Japanese language club. Also new was a chapter of Alpha Sigma Chi, with a motto of “Honor through Service.” Eighteen junior and senior girls are illustrated as members. I could find nothing online about this as an academic sorority. Other new clubs included Itazuke Artisans, a Government Club, a Math Club, and a Future Teachers of America group. Many others were continued from prior years—those kids kept busy. There was a tag football league with five teams, and a varsity baseball team. The basketball team played 26 games in three leagues, with a record of 14-12. Nothing was said about what sports the Girls Athletic Association was involved in. Starting with this year nothing related to the K-6 grades was included in the *Bamboo* (perhaps for space reasons—there would have been scores of classrooms, and this book ran to 128 pages, also produced by Walsworth in Marceline, Missouri).

In **1964-65**, I don't know what wall Babs Manning was reading the previous year, but the school contracted noticeably. Only 18 seniors graduated, 40% of the preceding year's crop, guided by sixteen faculty—a number we have seen in many prior years. Grades 7-12 enrollment was 181. *Bamboo* staff dedicated their work to the school as a whole (faculty, staff, and students), with a special shout-out to Messrs. Osterhout and Ohga.

Activities were cut back to Student Council, Japanese-American Cultural Club, Hall Patrol, Red Cross, Letterman's Club, Yoga Club (a new appearance), and Drama Club (only one production). There was no mention of National Honor Society nor of any musical activities. Varsity basketball played 22 games in three leagues, with a record of 9-13, their first losing season in a while. The cheerleaders were still active, but there is no mention of girls sports teams in the *Bamboo*. No advertisements were sold, and there is no production credit.

The **1965-66** *Bamboo* was dedicated to Hideo Ohga, who appears in the staff lists as Japanese Culture Coordinator. Ohga-san first appeared in the *Bamboo* in 1954, billed as “building supervisor.” He had

advanced through “Japanese manager” to the title above, obviously carrying greater responsibilities over almost the entire existence of IHS. He last appeared in the *Bamboo* for school year 1971-72, the final year of the school.

In '65-66 faculty was down to fifteen, and elementary faculty to sixteen. Graduates numbered sixteen, the same number we had produced in 1960. Enrollment 7-12 was 186.

The previous year's *Bamboo* was apparently somewhat deficient in its coverage, because many activities not mentioned therein are resurrected in the 1966 book—National Honor Society, Color Guards (two students who evidently were responsible for raising and lowering the flag in front of the school), Future Teachers of America, Pep Club (which included the cheerleaders, in separate uniforms), library assistants, office assistants, and lab assistants (fourteen, six, and seven students, respectively), Chorus, and *Torii Times*. No scores were offered for the basketball season, and the baseball team was back. Although there were no printed ads, there was a list of financial and in-kind supporters.

Moving to **1966-67**, the *Bamboo* was dedicated to Vern Kempton, who had been there since 1962. HS faculty were down to 13, and elementary faculty were again shown, numbering 15. There were only five seniors, all girls, but 24 juniors coming behind them. Total in grades 7-12 were 212, the highest since 1964, but where were all the seniors?

27 April 1967 was the day the school burned down. I remember there were heavy fire doors separating sections of that building; I have not heard whether they functioned as designed and contained the fire at all. I have heard that school was back in session in new quarters within two days. The fire was not mentioned in that year's *Bamboo*, so it must have already gone to press when the catastrophe occurred. It got a full page in the back of the following year's book.

A new activity right under Future Teachers of America is Future Homemakers of America. There are 25 students in the photo, all girls. How far we have come. There was also now a Glee Club, a dozen girls standing around a piano, all in matching blazers. The cheerleaders are separate. The basketball team went 11-7, back on the winning side. The advertising crew worked hard for this edition; twenty ads were sold over twelve pages. The last page of the book, after the ads, was a farewell message from Mr. Cates, now listed as John D. Cates after four years on station.

The **1967-68** *Bamboo* was dedicated to Mr. Richard Paschild, the guidance counselor since '62-63 (six years on station). Faculty were still at thirteen, and some of those juniors from the previous year contributed to fourteen seniors this year. Mr. Kempton was still on board. Total grades 7-12 enrollment was 234, still climbing (but nowhere near 1964's population). The band program was back. No win-loss record for the basketball team was included.

The frontispiece (a drawing) shows the school sign in front of a middle-sized U-shaped building that I do not recognize, with a two-story building nearby. I assume these were the new digs following the fire. Parts of those buildings are visible in some of the outdoor group photos included in this and following *Bamboos*. Kent B. Winter, the new principal, wrote in his introduction to this year's *Bamboo*: “The disastrous fire in the spring of 1967 was a calamity and destroyed a fine building and all equipment. You students were forced to adjust to the aftermath of this loss. You had to adapt to substandard buildings and lack of equipment. As the year wore on, a number of these deficiencies have been corrected but your patience during this painstaking process was outstanding.”

The **1968-69** *Bamboo* was dedicated to Miss M. Lane, social studies and government teacher, in her only year at Itazuke. Faculty was back up to 16, and seniors up to seventeen. Grades 7-12 enrollment was 232, almost unchanged. Mr. Kempton had been the *Bamboo* advisor for the past three years (maybe longer, as the two years before those did not show a faculty advisor). Again no basketball record, although there is a statement that “the trip to Tokyo was not fruitful.” And speaking of trips, it has been many years since a senior trip has been mentioned. I guess they were phased out.

All those exotic activities that sprang up when enrollment was 400+ had faded away. In this year there were only Student Council, Band, Future Homemakers of America, Japan-America Society, Lettermen's Club, Pep Club, *Torii Times*, Cheerleaders, and *Bamboo*. No Honor Society (they were 35-strong the previous year).

Boys basketball is the only sport mentioned.

The **1969-70** *Bamboo* was dedicated to Mrs. Alice Swander, teaching English, Social Studies, and Language Arts (Speech), in her third year at Itazuke. Faculty was up to nineteen, including a Japanese teacher again. Graduates were up to 22, grades 7-12 enrollment was 258—still climbing. The National Honor Society was back, and an Art Club, Drill Team, Electronics Club, and Science Club. Basketball included a JV team, and there were a varsity baseball team and boys and girls track teams.

Since 1967 the lead advertisement had been a full page for the Yoshioka Collotype Printing Company in Fukuoka. Their name as producer first appeared in 1958; I assume they had been printing it ever since. This year (1970) their ad had a full color print of a samurai doll tipped in on their page—very snazzy.

The **1970-71** *Bamboo* was dedicated to Miss M. Starwalt, teacher of US history and government, global history, and social studies in her second year at Itazuke. There were nineteen faculty. The principal's half-page portrait and half-page message were unsigned—we don't know who he was. There were 27 graduates, and total 7-12 enrollment was 270—again an increase, but nowhere near what 1964 had numbered. No new activities were shown among the eight that were recognized. The varsity went undefeated in fourteen games, including one score of 100-32 against Chikushi (all games this season were against Japanese schools—none were shown against local military teams or other dependent schools, and no tournaments). There was still a JV boys team. New this year was a wrestling team of 25 members. Strangely, while the basketball players were all identified with full names, the wrestlers were listed with only given names and family initials. A girls intramural table tennis team was also recognized with a group picture and *no* names. One photo of a girl hanging from still rings was completely unexplained—was there a gymnastics team? The prom got two pages of photos (often also shown in previous years). Yoshioka Collotype had another color photo, of a mascot at a fair or expo, which I recognize as having seen before, but I cannot identify it.

This ends the life of Itazuke Dependents School. With the US presence at Itazuke scheduled to end in spring 1972, for school year **1971-72** the school moved over to Brady Air Station under the name Hakata High School. The *Bamboo* was dedicated to Mr. Charles Weber, a teacher of algebra, geometry, applied math, biology, physics, and IPS (whatever that was). He had been at IHS since 1967. Faculty was at twenty, including Vern Kempton, in his tenth year there. Graduates were down to fourteen, and grades 7-12 enrollment 166—the drawdown of service families was well under way.

It's hard to tell exactly what was happening with the curriculum. The principal's message mentioned “a year in which the school turned its back on traditional education and embraced an entirely new flexible and individualized approach to learning.” On the pages before the activities were featured, two pages titled “distributive education” contained photos of students engaged in activities labeled dispensary, civil engineers, veterinary medicine, business manager (in an electronics shop), business management (in a department store), law enforcement, food service, and dental clinic. One wonders what the report cards looked like, and how college applications were evaluated. Activities in this final year were student council, newspaper (no longer *Torii Times*), National Honor Society, A.V. Club, Drama Club, Art Club, girls intramurals, Pep Club, and *Bamboo*.

The “Mighty” Cobras went 25-2 in (apparently) two leagues and a tournament, often with blowout scores. Surpassing last year's top was a 105-67 win over Nishiko. Games against US school teams included Sasebo (five times), Pusan (Korea), Iwakuni, Wagner (Philippines), J.F.K. (Guam) and Johnson and Yokota from the Tokyo area. Those last several had to have been a tournament. For the first time there were JV cheerleaders, the wrestling team was still active, and for the first time there was a soccer team. Yoshioka Collotype's color tip-in was a photo of a Hakata doll Noh drama actor.

Thus ended USAF educational offerings for dependents in Fukuoka. The installation known variously as Brady and Hakata closed in June 1972, three months after Itazuke. There was no further need for a school.

One elementary level teacher should be mentioned. Mrs. Wilda O'Mahoney was an elementary teacher in 1959-60, then the elementary school principal from 1960 to at least 1967 (the last year that elementary faculty was included in the *Bamboo*). There were also several local civilian maintenance men (Japanese nationals), and Japanese women working as secretaries, librarians, and food service, who worked for the

school for a decade or more, plus Hideo Ohga, who was closing in on twenty years when Hakata HS closed.

Every year had its quota of dances, holiday events, and occasionally banquets. Of course the prom was the most exciting, with its queen, king, and princesses. The prom would be at one of the service clubs on base (officers, NCO, or enlisted), and would be attended by parents as well as kids. Music would often be provided by a student ensemble.

What has not received much attention was **activities away from school**. **Scouts** had a large presence for both boys and girls. BSA troop 73 was sponsored by one of the service clubs on base. Initially the Scout hut was a small building near the steam plant and football field on the east side of the base. Later it was a larger building between the swimming pool and the fence. I don't recall where the **girl scouts** met. Boy Scouts from all over Japan went to a summer camp at Lake Motosu near Mt. Fuji. The camp met two weeks each summer (a troop would go for only one week). A special event at the camp was climbing Fuji-san—a two-day process, climbing in the afternoon and evening to arrive at the summit at sunrise, then descending and catching the bus back to camp. In 1958 we were typhooned out of camp and had to spend a week at Yokosuka naval station waiting for the seas to abate so we could take our LST back to Moji, at the north end of Kyushu, from where we took buses back to Itazuke.

That drive from Moji took us right past **Shingu Wells**, a Corps of Engineers facility on the beach up the coast from Brady. Shingu Wells was used as a recreational site for events like Scout camporees or high school beach parties. Some of us learned to drive at Shingu Wells, using the Jeep that the Scout troop owned. There was a small building back from the beach that everyone called the crematorium. I never saw anyone near it except kids, but it generated ghost stories around the campfires.

Ah, yes—**teen driving**. One could get a license to drive at age 16, but about 1959 the Japanese government said that the off-base driving age was rising to 18. Our licenses were marked “on base only” and for those of us who lived off base, it was a mortal blow. It meant riding the **densha** again if home was too far to walk. The densha was the electric interurban train. One line ran along the east side of the Administration Annex a long block from either gate—there was a station near each one. It ran all the way into Fukuoka, and south many miles as well. I never had occasion to take it in that direction.

So how did those living off-base get to school? By **Air Force bus**. We lived in Takamiya, 7-8 miles from base, almost into downtown Fukuoka. Some students on our bus lived even farther away—the kids of the US consul in Fukuoka, and the kids of the missionary families who paid to have their children attend the US school (those kids went to Canadian Academy in Kobe after the Air Force installations closed). If you had an after-school activity, most likely you had to ride the densha to get home (from either Shirakibaru station or Kasugabaru station, depending on which end of the base your after-school activity was on). The densha fare was not onerous—¥18-25, depending on what distance you were riding (adults paid more). That was 5¢-7¢.

But you didn't have to go into Fukuoka for entertainment. The **Teen Club** was in the same area as the original Scout shack, and it had music and snacks every night and on weekends, and a pool table. If company was not what you wanted (save for one accompanying individual), you could go up to **Bear Lake**, a reservoir on the high ground above the school. There was also the on-base **movie theater**, with 15¢ tickets for teenagers. Down the street from the theater was the **Green Wave Café**, a regular burger joint that wanted money for food. Up past the swimming pool (an Olympic-size facility) there was a **community center** that could be used for events like special dinners or inter-base gatherings, but it did not have full-time food service.

It did offer one of the few places that HS kids could earn money—as a janitor on weekends. The problem was that they could not pay us any more than they would pay a local national for the same job. In the case of janitor, that was ¥100/hour—28¢. By the time I left Japan to go to college, I had saved all of \$15 from such employment.

Money. All on-base facilities took military payment certificates (**MPC**), scrip denominated in cents and dollars (5¢-\$10). The only coins used were “pennies.” MPC were used worldwide to prevent US dollars from getting into recovering civilian economies and distorting prices and exchange rates. MPC were exchanged from one series to another without notice—the gates would be closed, and all old series notes would be exchanged for the incoming one. Since MPC were not supposed to be used by Japanese civilians, any old

series notes in their hands became worthless (the reason for closing the gates). For US families living off base, the sponsor would be sent home to gather up all the MPC in the house and bring it back for exchange. It was an actionable offense to accept any MPC from the Japanese gathering at the gates trying to exchange their notes. The last series of MPC used in Japan was withdrawn in May 1969, after which US dollars (“green”) were used by US forces.

If you wanted to take the densha, buy a snack, or conduct any other kind of commercial business off base, you needed **yen**. You could buy it at the bank or from your parents. Early arrivals in Japan found fixed exchange rates of ¥50/\$ (March 1947-July 1948), ¥270/\$ (until April 1949), and thereafter ¥360/\$. That is the rate that most of us used and may remember. That rate was fixed until Nixon unhooked the dollar from gold. By then Itazuke was closed.

The Recreation Services Office ran **tours to area attractions**, such as the ceramics factory in Arita. A little father out was Nagasaki, with its Peace Park. But such trips were more likely to be used by the parents than by the kids. I remember taking a train to Sasebo for a Scout tour of an aircraft carrier that was in port. We were told to not photograph any of the antennas on the mast.

A little north of Dazaifu was **Monkey Mountain**. I vaguely remember a small shrine up there. That was another Scout objective at random times for no good reason—just a way to get off base and do some hiking.

The **only paved highway** on Kyushu when we were there (1957-60) was the road from Fukuoka south to Dazaifu—everything else was graded (or potholed) dirt. That’s what our school bus had to navigate—it was a bumpy ride.

All told, for most of us who were there in that period, our years at Itazuke are counted among the **best years of our lives**.



Mis-cut MPC received in change at the Green Wave Café, probably 1959.