

August 4, 1973

Merriam Company Publishers
Springfield, Massachusetts.

Dear Sir:

The recent use of the racial epithet "Jap" by Attorney John J. Wilson again pin points the grave error that exists in your Webster Dictionary and the urgent need for its correction.

Your new Collegiate Dictionary, copyrighted in 1973, defines "Jap" as "abbreviation for Japan or Japanese."

You describe other racial epithets -- such as "Chinaman" and "Nigger" --but appropriately note that they are considered derogatory or offensive.

Why is it that no such notation follow the term "Jap?"

The United Nations and other international bodies use the abbreviation "Jpn" to denote Japan or Japanese.

Sincerely yours,

Clifford I. Uyeda, M.D.



G.&C. Merriam Company

PUBLISHERS OF MERRIAM-WEBSTER REFERENCE BOOKS

August 9, 1973

Dr. Clifford I. Uyeda
San Francisco Center
for Japanese American Studies
P.O. Box 99345
San Francisco, CA 94109

Dear Dr. Uyeda:

We have your letter of August 4 in which you comment on the entry Jap on page 619 of Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. Your suggestion that this is parallel to such racial epithets as Chinaman and nigger misses the mark: these last two are nouns and the dictionary entry is an abbreviation. What the dictionary records, then, is the fact that Jap is widely used as an abbreviation of Japan and of Japanese.

A check of our files reveals that this abbreviation occurs in such reference works as the Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World, the National Geographic Atlas of the World, and the Biographic Register of the U. S. Department of State, it is included in numerous dictionaries of abbreviations, and it is used in the Biographical Names and Geographical Names sections of the New Collegiate (as at Hiroshige on page 1390 and Sakhalin on page 1482). The abbreviation Jpn to which you refer has little or no backing in our files, so we would be grateful for any instances of its use that you might care to send us.

The noun Jap has come to be used less and less in recent years, and so it does not appear in any of our current abridged dictionaries. It is entered in Webster's Third New International Dictionary, our unabridged, with an appropriate usage note.

Sincerely yours,

H. B. Woolf

H. B. Woolf
Editorial Director, Dictionaries

HBW/hol

August 15, 1973

Mr. H. B. Woolf,
Editorial Director, Dictionaries
G. & C. Merriam Company
47 Federal Street
Springfield, Mass. 01101

Dear Mr. Woolf:


Your letter of August 9th has been received. Your definition of the term Jap as being only an abbreviation and not a "racial epithets such as Chinaman and nigger," and therefore innocuous is completely in error. Whether written or spoken it is used as a noun.

The fact that it is also used by publishers other than yourself merely manifests the ignorance that has been perpetrated from one publisher to another. For over two generations, on the West Coast of the United States the term Jap has been used with hate and contempt directly implied.

If your dictionary is to accurately record the definition for Jap, it cannot ignore the fact that the term has been used, is being used, and is taken by Japanese Americans as a stinging racial epithet. I assure you that the resentment and the bitterness engendered are very real indeed. To state otherwise is to misinform the users of your dictionary.

Corrections in your coming editions will be appreciated.

Sincerely yours,


Clifford I. Uyeda, M.D.



G.&C. Merriam Company

PUBLISHERS OF MERRIAM-WEBSTER REFERENCE BOOKS

August 21, 1973

Dr. Clifford I. Uyeda
San Francisco Center for
Japanese American Studies
P.O. Box 99345
San Francisco, CA 94109

Dear Dr. Uyeda:

It occurs to us that you might want to know that the abbreviation Jap for Japan or Japanese, about which you wrote recently, has been included in the last six Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionaries: 1916, 1931, 1936, 1949, 1963, and 1973 are their dates of publication. The current book, however, is the first of these to enter abbreviations in the A - Z vocabulary; the earlier editions had a separate section of abbreviations as part of the back matter.

Thousands of words are omitted from an abridged book like Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. If we decide to enter the noun Jap at some future time, we will use the note "usu. used disparagingly" that appears in the unabridged Webster's Third New International Dictionary.

Sincerely yours,

H. B. Woolf

H. B. Woolf
Editorial Director, Dictionaries

HBW/hol

August 29, 1973

Mr. H. B. Woolf,
Editorial Director, Dictionaries
G. & C. Merriam Company
47 Federal Street
Springfield, Mass. 01101

Dear Mr. Woolf:


We appreciate receiving your letter of August 21st.

Japanese in America and Japanese Americans were always acutely aware of and resented the use of the term Jap for Japan or Japanese; but our protests were either ignored or went unnoticed through all these years covering three quarter of a century.

It is only recently, with Japanese Americans holding visible local and federal positions, that the true meaning of the term Jap is being realized by a greater number of Americans.

The recent embarrassing errors might have been avoided if a reference source such as the prestigious Webster's Dictionaries had been correct in the interpretation of the term Jap. Perpetuating the error is a disservice to all concerned.

Sincerely yours,


Clifford I. Uyeda, M.D.

PATSY T. MINK
SECOND DISTRICT
HAWAII

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND LABOR
SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
GENERAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
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INSULAR AFFAIRS
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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346-348 FEDERAL BUILDING
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August 31, 1973

Mr. H. B. Woolf
Editorial Director, Dictionaries
G. & C. Merriam Company
47 Federal Street
Springfield, Massachusetts 01101

Dear Mr. Woolf:

You show a singular lack of perception of the nuances of the English language, in your correspondence with Dr. Clifford I. Uyeda concerning the word "Jap".

Perhaps in your view the feelings of "Japs" and other Americans of Asian ancestry are not deserving of attention because they are a small minority of the population.

Of course, your defense that your dictionary merely parrots the mistakes of other publishers does much to explain both your attitude and the quality of your dictionary. Although touted as a reference work for collegiates, obviously your dictionary is more closely attuned to the generation of Mr. John J. Wilson.

Which dictionary will be the first to use "Jpn."? If each one waits for the others, your reference to other works in support of your position is meaningless. As for the other users you mentioned, no doubt they look for guidance to their dictionaries!

Very truly yours,

PATSY T. MINK
Member of Congress

Enclosure



G.&C. Merriam Company

PUBLISHERS OF MERRIAM-WEBSTER REFERENCE BOOKS

September 5, 1973

Dr. Clifford I. Uyeda
San Francisco Center for
Japanese American Studies
P.O. Box 99345
San Francisco, CA 94109

Dear Dr. Uyeda:

Thank you for your letter of August 29 and for the enclosed pamphlet. We note with interest the reference to Webster's Third New International Dictionary, and we have added the pamphlet to our file of citations.

The abbreviation Jpn does not appear in Merriam-Webster dictionaries because it is not established in the English language. It will be included once adequate citational evidence becomes available to us.

Sincerely yours,

H. B. Woolf

H. B. Woolf
Editorial Director, Dictionaries

HBW/hol



G.&C. Merriam Company
PUBLISHERS OF MERRIAM-WEBSTER REFERENCE BOOKS

SEP 8 1973

September 5, 1973

The Honorable Patsy T. Mink
The United States House of
Representatives
2338 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mrs. Mink:

Your letter of August 31 distresses us: it reveals a failure to comprehend our letter of August 9 to Dr. Uyeda, and the implication of your reference to John J. Wilson is unworthy of an individual in your high position.

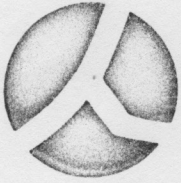
Merriam-Webster dictionaries do not enter the abbreviation Jpn because it is not established in the English language. They will include it once adequate citational evidence becomes available.

Sincerely yours,

H. B. Woolf

H. B. Woolf
Editorial Director, Dictionaries

HBW/hol



SAN FRANCISCO CENTER FOR JAPANESE AMERICAN STUDIES

P. O. BOX 99345 • SAN FRANCISCO • CALIFORNIA 94109

September 17, 1973

Mr. H. B. Woolf,
Editorial Director, Dictionaries
G. & C. Merriam Company
47 Federal Street
Springfield, Mass. 01101

Dear Mr. Woolf:

Although highly resented by Japanese in America and Japanese Americans, that a non-Japanese in America find no offense to the term Jap is a strange reasoning for its definition.

As stated previously, the term Jap has been used here on the West Coast with full derogatory intent since the turn of the Century. For those who know of its true meaning, your dictionary has become a convenient excuse to hide behind. For those who are innocent of its true meaning, your dictionary misinforms and subjects them to embarrassments.

The definition is most obviously in error if the historical and existing resentments of the Japanese Americans to the term Jap is ignored and remains incorrect in your dictionary.

As you can see, the need for correction is both overwhelming and urgent.

Sincerely yours,

Clifford I. Uyeda, M.D.

PATSY T. MINK
SECOND DISTRICT
HAWAII

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND LABOR
SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
GENERAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND
INSULAR AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRITORIAL AND
INSULAR AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS
AND RECREATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MINES AND MINING,
CHAIRMAN

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

September 25, 1973

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Dr. Clifford I. Uyeda
San Francisco Center for Japanese
American Studies
P.O. Box 99345
San Francisco, California 94109

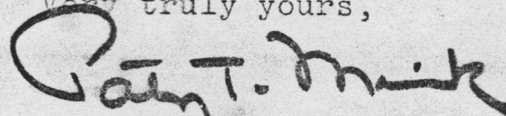
Dear Dr. Uyeda:

Thank you for your letter concerning efforts to
eliminate racially-offensive slurs from the Web-
ster's dictionary.

Apparently they intend to continue using "Jap"
without identifying it as offensive.

I will try to have this usage corrected in govern-
ment publications.

Very truly yours,



PATSY T. MINK
Member of Congress



OFFICE OF THE
PUBLIC PRINTER

OCT 5 1973

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20401

October 3, 1973

Honorable Patsy T. Mink
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mrs. Mink:

Your inquiry of September 25, 1973, to the Acting Superintendent of Documents regarding the correct abbreviation of "Japan" and "Japanese" in Government printing was referred to the Government Printing Office Style Board.

The 1973 edition of the U.S. Government Printing Office Style Manual does not list abbreviations for countries other than the United States (U.S.) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.).

Rule 9.11 of the Manual (p. 150) states: "The names of foreign countries, except U.S.S.R. (to avoid too long a name), are not abbreviated." Adherence to this rule would logically preclude the abbreviation of variations of these names - such as Japan/Japanese.

The only exceptions to this rule would be in the printing of a legal or historical document which must be followed literally or in tabular matter where space limitations sometimes force the shortening of words not otherwise abbreviated.

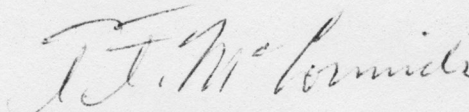
In the latter instance, a device frequently employed is removal of some (or all) vowels in each word, retaining as much of the word as possible to offer reader recognition. Under this system, "Japan" could become "Jpn." and "Japanese" would appear as "Jpnese." This method, obviously unsuited for such countries as Africa or Cuba, is utilized as an emergency measure.

The Government Printing Office Style Manual is the product of many years of public printing experience. Its rules are based on principles of good usage in the printing trade. The Style Board maintains an empathetic stance in areas of race and nationality. It is agreed that the term "Jap" is uncomplimentary and you may be assured it does not have the sanction of this Office.



Although you indicated that the correct abbreviation of "Japan" and "Japanese" in Federal Government documents be given as "Jpn," I trust that you will be in accord with our present custom.

Sincerely yours,



T. F. McCORMICK
Public Printer

Honorable F. T. Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20513

Dear Mr. Smith:

Your inquiry of September 28, 1973, to the Acting Superintendent of Documents regarding the correct abbreviation of "Japan" and "Japanese" in Government printing was referred to the Government Printing Office Style Board.

The 1973 edition of the U.S. Government Printing Office Style Manual does not list abbreviations for countries other than the United States (U.S.) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.).

Rule 9.12 of the Manual (p. 150) states: "The names of foreign countries, except U.S.S.R. (to avoid too long a name), are not abbreviated. Reference to this rule would logically exclude the abbreviation of variations of these names - such as Japan/Japanese.

The only exceptions to this rule would be in the printing of a legal or historical document which must be followed literally or in tabular matter where space limitations sometimes force the shortening of words not otherwise abbreviated.

In the latter instance, a device frequently employed is removal of some (or all) vowels in each word, retaining at least one vowel so as to avoid confusion. Under this system, "Japan" and "Japanese" would become "Jpn." and "Jpnese" would appear as "Jpnese." This method, obviously unsuited for such countries as Africa or Cuba, is utilized as an emergency measure.

The Government Printing Office Style Manual is the product of many years of public printing experience. Its rules are based on principles of good design in the printing trade. The Style Board maintains an alphabetical index in order of race and nationality. It is agreed that the term "Jpn." is unsatisfactory and you may be assured it does not have the sanction of this office.

PATSY T. MINK
SECOND DISTRICT
HAWAII

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS
AND RECREATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

October 10, 1973

Honorable Marshall Wright
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations
Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Wright:

I am writing with reference to the use of the word
"Jap" by the Department of State in its Biographic
Register.

Japanese Americans find this term derogatory particu-
larly after its use during World War II as a term of
hatred and contempt. I do not believe it is proper
for an agency of the United States government to use
a racial epithet termed derogatory in an official
publication and vehemently protest its inclusion.
Your continued use of the term implies that it has
official sanction in government publications, which
I know not to be the case.

Your response to this would be most appreciated.
Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

PATSY T. MINK
Member of Congress



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

OCT 27 1973

October 25, 1973

Honorable Patsy Mink
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mrs. Mink:

I am replying to your letter of October 10 in which you state your concern over the use of the word "Jap." in the Department of State Biographic Register.

The abbreviation "Jap." in the Register is short for "Japanese" and is applied to the language only. No identification of personnel by ethnic origin is made in the Register. The language qualifications of each officer are listed in abbreviated form e.g. Fr. for French, Ger. for German and similarly Jap. for Japanese. Considerations of space and cost forbid the spelling of the language qualifications in full.

Please continue to call upon me whenever you believe that we may be of assistance to you.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marshall Wright".

Marshall Wright
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations