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Issa Tanimura

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Issa Tanimura

MAY 2, 2019 BY [PAMELA G SMITH](#)

185
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Issa Tanimura is believed to be Dickinson Law's first international student. Tanimura was born on May 1, 1866 in Hagi, Japan. He attended school in Tokyo before leaving Japan for the United States, where he attended the Centenary Collegiate Institute in Hackettstown, New Jersey.



In 1887, Tanimura met the Rev. Dr. George E. Reed, who would become President of Dickinson College. It was this meeting that led to Tanimura's decision to devote his life to promoting Japanese-American relations. Tanimura went on to attend Yale, before making the decision to attend Dickinson Law, likely having been influenced to do so as a result of his meeting with Reed.

Tanimura was secretary of his class during his senior year at Dickinson Law. While attending Dickinson Law, Tanimura also organized a Japanese-themed carnival to raise funds for the Law Library. The carnival was a huge success, expanding the Law Library's collection to over 800 volumes. The new additions to the Law Library were inscribed, and considered to be a part of the "Japanese Memorial Law Library."



Tanimura graduated from Dickinson Law in 1892 and received his Certificate to Practice Law in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. However, it appears that he never actually practiced law. Instead, Tanimura returned to Japan, where he was appointed Commissioner of Commerce in 1893. Tanimura continued, during his lifetime, to travel throughout the United States and Europe. He also continued his lifelong goal of promoting Japanese-American relations, by unofficially serving as a resource, in Japan, of information regarding the American people.

At some point, Tanimura developed an interest in agriculture, specifically sheep husbandry. He attended a Sheep Fair in 1908 in Ogden, New York, where he met the president of the Wool Association, who had first introduced sheep to Japan. At this gentleman's recommendation, Tanimura went on to become an Honorary Fellow in Agriculture at Cornell University. The first sheep ranch opened in Japan in 1917. By 1919, there were five ranches in existence. However, due to a lack of interest on the part of the Japanese government, all but one sheep ranch was ultimately closed. Nonetheless, Tanimura remained an authority on the topic of sheep husbandry, both in Japan and abroad. Tanimura also successfully introduced Jersey cows and American grasses to Japan.

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Tanimura was a successful author as well, co-authoring and editing many works. Tanimura is probably best known for authoring *General Horace Capron, The Friend of Japan*, comprising of his research on the life of General Horace Capron, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, who introduced many modern farming practices to Japan.

Issa Tanimura passed away on February 4, 1961. He was 94 years old.

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