

THE COLLECTIVE ADJUSTMENT OF EVACUEES TO THE
TULE LAKE RELOCATION CENTER

(A proposed program of field study under a pre-doctoral field
fellowship of the Social Science Research Council)

Shotaro Frank Miyamoto
Tule Lake Relocation Center
Newell, California
January 27, 1943

(a) Brief description of plans for Ph.D. thesis and later research.

Since I hope to use the material gathered in my present study for the Ph.D. thesis, a detailed account of my proposed dissertation is presented under item (b) below. Plans for later research center about the problem of post-war readjustment among the evacuees.

(b) Proposed field program.

Objectives of program Since I am applying for the renewal of my present pre-doctoral field fellowship, a brief account is offered of the work accomplished thus far.

The Tule Lake Relocation Center (War Relocation Authority), located east of Mt. Shasta in California, is a community of some 15,000 evacuees and 300 administrators, teachers, and their families. The center is designed like a cantonnement; straight rows of barracks and buildings are divided off by streets and firebreaks in a checkerboard pattern of blocks and wards. Most of the community functions are centrally administered by the W.R.A., but with a degree of decentralization in the blocks. The natural political and social unit is the block, composed of about 250 persons each or roughly 70 families plus bachelors, and this unit is served by a messhall, laundry and ironing room, shower and washroom, and recreation hall. The family dwelling unit is a single room, initially provided with steel cots, mattresses, and a stove, but most families have screened off their room in sections for privacy. The main industry is farming, while most of the remaining employment goes into the sustenance of the community.

The initial phase of the investigation was concerned with the general features of adjustment and social organization in the community. In collaboration with several students working under the supervision of Dr. Dorothy Swaine Thomas, a progress report has almost been completed describing these general features, in which my contribution is the chapters on (1) social structure, (2) political organization, (3) economic organization, (4) recreational organization, (5) collective behavior, and (6) other minor items. A brief summary of the chapter, "The Social Structure of the Community," is offered to indicate the nature of my findings.

The chapter deals with the major groupings of people that provide the framework of social relationships within the Tule Lake community. The forms of relationships are discussed under several headings. (1) Caucasian-Japanese Relations. For the sake of brevity, the term "Japanese" is used to mean persons of Japanese ancestry, both aliens and American Citizens. The evacuation removed certain privileges which are guaranteed all other law-abiding people in the United States, and caused the segregation of Japanese from Caucasians. A semi-caste relationship between Caucasians and Japanese has resulted. Since the evacuation places Caucasians in a definitely superior position, attitudes of superiority and dominance that may have existed previously have

been aggravated. On the other hand, feelings of inferiority and damaged self respect characterize the evacuees, and these feelings give rise to attitudes of resentment and hostility toward Caucasians. But resentment is intermixed, especially among Nisei (second generation), with the desire to identify themselves with the majority group, (2) Social Stratification. The conditions of the relocation center require a relative uniformity of wages, housing, clothing, and meals, that eliminate the usual symbols of class differences. Class structure, such as existed formerly, has been largely obliterated by evacuation, but new methods of expressing class differences are developing. (3) Rural-Urban Relationship. The placing together of rural and urban people creates a problem of adjustment between them. The expectation that rural people might gain positions of superiority in a project where the main occupation is farming has not been fulfilled. (4) Sectional Differences. California, Oregon and Washington evacuees are placed together, and in-group feelings are apparent. Slight differences in the degree of assimilation are noted, depending on the degree of anti-Japanese agitation that has marked the history of the respective areas. (5) Generational Structure. The Issei (first generation) were formally subordinated under the Nisei (second generation) by the WRA policy, but the Issei have broken through to their former position of authority in the community. Formal subordination of the Issei only caused them to rebel and to assume a domineering attitude over the Nisei. The techniques by which the Issei have obtained control, and the part played by the Kibei (Nisei educated in Japan) in these tactics, are analyzed in detail. (6) Bi-Sexual Division. Because of the intimacy of neighborhood life, a greater conformance to the conventional roles of the respective sexes seems to exist. (7) Total organization. Unlike other American communities, the life in the relocation center is completely centralized under a single administration. For instance, recreation, messhalls, employment, housing, all have their respective supervisors, and the 15,000 people must conform to the departmental regulations. Conflicts appear where individual demands are in opposition to regimentation.

While the social structure has been described for the purpose of facilitating research, actually, a condition of flux is the prevailing characteristic of the community.

Having acquired an account of the general organization of the community, I now intend to embark upon the investigation of a special problem, while continuing my contribution to the larger study under Dr. Thomas; and it is this part of the program which I wish to continue if my present fellowship is renewed.

The statement of my problem is: to ascertain how evacuees of the Tule Lake Relocation Center collectively select certain forms of behavior as adjustments to the crisis of evacuation and relocation. The study involves the analysis of (1) the collective adjustments made by persons of Japanese ancestry, both aliens and American Citizens, to their historical and persistent experiences prior to the outbreak of war; (2) the unique situation; and (4) the factors in personal predispositions determining the collective selection of their means of adjustment.

*confronting the evacuees following
evacuation and relocation*

There are various reasons for treating the process of adjustment after evacuation as a form of collective behavior, or social movement. In several projects administered by the War Relocation Authority, a notable similarity of developments has occurred in the reaction to WRA policies and programs, the conflicts that appear, the dominant collective symbolisms employed, and the conditions under which cooperation is given. This suggests a uniformity of experiences and predispositions among Japanese prior to evacuation, as well as of experiences during evacuation and relocation. The discrimination of the Japanese as the one group to be evacuated, their confinement within the narrow limits of a relocation center, the uniformity of life conditions and the centralized administration which tend to create common problems of the group, and the regimentation of lives that reduces personal responsibilities, all serve to identify the evacuees as a collective body.

The outstanding characteristic of the Tule Lake community during the first six months of its existence was a condition of disorganization and unrest. Rumors, intra-block conflicts, Issei-Nisei conflicts, feelings of insecurity, discontent and frustration, and considerable opposition to the administration, were all markedly present. But increasing organization and stabilization of the community are also apparent, and the problem that is raised is: what adjustments are serving to bring organized collective action out of the condition of discontent? Of special interest to my problem is the trend of collective political action, for the evacuation raised acute questions of national political identity, status, and future, as well as of political control in the community. I shall, therefore, lay particular stress upon an analysis of such factors as the evolving political organization, shifting authority and control, formation of dissident groups, conflicts between groups, personal roles and leadership, and dominant collective symbolisms. The effort will be to identify these political adjustments which are new, and different from the political adjustments of Japanese prior to the outbreak of war.

If any new trend of political expressions has been set in process, it is probably as a response to the unique situation created by the evacuation. My interest is in relating the collective situation following evacuation to their collective political adjustments. To accomplish this, however, it is further necessary to determine how the unique situation following evacuation has affected the predispositions of evacuees so that they are predisposed to accept certain forms of adjustment. It is felt that these changes of predisposition may best be studied in the changed self conception of individuals, that is, the conception of his rights and privileges, his duties and obligations, and his political identity and status.

There will undoubtedly be individual variations of personal adjustment. The Issei, Kibei, and Nisei, differ in their interests and views. Some individuals and groups will have more influence than others over the political trend of the community. It is hoped that these and other factors may be taken into account and inter-related in the study.

Place of work If my fellowship is renewed, my plan is to spend the year, 1943-44, at the Tule Lake Relocation Center to continue the present investigation. However, this program may be subject to change in consultation with Dr. Thomas and the Social Science Research Council.

Since I intend to spend the latter part of the present year of field study at the University of Chicago, to gain further advice and training in field research, there will be a brief break in my field investigation.

Methods and procedures In gathering material for the general report on the community, no special method of investigation was used. Techniques such as the casual interview, personal interview, participant observation, spot study, keeping of a personal journal and notebook, collection of statistics, historical documents, newspapers, diaries, letters, and life histories, were all employed. The selection of data was determined by the problem of study, and by the "hunches" developed as I pursued the investigation. In other words, my method has been simply that of frequently testing my "hunches" against the data gathered, and of testing my data against the "hunches." A further check has been possible through collaboration with the other investigators on the study. Dr. Thomas has carefully read all my documents and has prepared written questions on the gaps and obscure points. I also work closely with the other investigators at this center, and have used to advantage their different findings and points of view. Particularly interesting has been the comparison of my data with the findings of investigators at other relocation centers. No refined techniques of investigation are possible because of the delicacy of the evacuation situation.

In the investigation of my own problem, I shall use the method described above to study the evolving political organization of the community. In determining the political adjustments unique to the period following evacuation, I have the advantage of a previous study of a Japanese community which I made in Seattle, several investigations carried out by others, and information which I may get from the evacuees here. The dominant political trends of the community may be isolated by the use of data from elections, discussions in the City Council and Planning Board, the two major legislative bodies whose meetings I may attend, meetings of voluntary associations, interviews with the administrative personnel, other personal interviews, and spot studies of outstanding political events.

For the study of the changing predisposition of evacuees, I hope to use personal interviews on a selected sample of the population. But it is in determining the sample that the greatest difficulty arises, for because of the evacuee's experience with the F.B.I., suspicion is aroused by any investigator, and it is virtually impossible to determine a representative sample before asking questions. To insure some degree of representativeness in the sample, it is hoped to construct a stratified sample as the interviews proceed, by the use of such natural groupings of people as have been illustrated in the chapter on social structure. The personal interviews will be supplemented by letters, diaries, and life histories.

A STUDY OF COLLECTIVE INSECURITY
AMONG EVACUEES AT THE TULE LAKE RELOCATION CENTER

Problem: What was the nature of the restrictions that disturbed the evacuees of the Tule Lake Center, and how did they attempt to maintain personal and social organization under these conditions?

I. Introduction: to consider the WRA's selection of the site, general physical setting, and the characteristics of the population.

II. The nature of the restrictions that disturbed the evacuees.

A. The administrative organization and policies of the WRA.

B. The influence of the restrictions on the main channels of community life, and the resulting disturbances and conflicts.

1. Family activities. *Housing, mess hall, etc.*

2. Economic " .

3. Political " .

4. Recreational " .

5. Religious " .

6. Educational " .

C. The influence of the restrictions on the main lines of cleavage in the community.

III. The forms of collective action with which the evacuees attempted to cope with these restrictive conditions.

A. Predisposing conditions in the definition of the relocation center situation.

1. The historical experiences of people of Japanese ancestry in America before the war, before evacuation, at the assembly center, that influenced their adjustments. To consider the image of the world as related to themselves of the issei, nissei and kibe.

2. Insecurity as the outstanding characteristic of the relocation center situation.

B. Some typical modes of adjustment among the evacuees.

1. Satisfy individual interests.

2. Satisfy desire for a good time, and creative impulses.

3. Organize the community, and get along as well as possible.

4. Seek vengeance for injured self esteem, and regain rights.

C. The process of achieving a collective definition of the situation.

1. Modes of communication.

2. The evacuee formulation of the issues.

3. Pressure groups and their techniques.

4. Polar definitions: trust and distrust.

D. The function of collective action in release from frustration and control over insecurity.

IV. Typical careers of experience of evacuees in their effort to maintain personal organization.