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Note to researcher:
Evacuee names may not be disclosed without their express permission.

Restricted File

Access is provided to the following item(s) with the understanding that the identity of the evacuees mentioned therein will not be disclosed by the researcher without the express permission of the evacuee. This restriction is in effect until 2015 or until the death of the evacuee named, whichever occurs first.

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WH, the Project Director, was the most experienced in community management. He was a man of forty, married and with two children. Born in Arkansas, the son of a country doctor, he was brought up in Oklahoma. Graduate of a teachers' college, he began his career as a high school principal. He spent a number of years in the Philippines as director of an Agricultural School for natives, where he learned to speak a little of the local dialect. He then served as Superintendent of Schools on the Papago Indian Reservation in Arizona, and later took the post of Superintendent of the Reservation, where he was serving when called to take charge of the Poston Relocation Center.

WH was friendly, easy to talk to, and extremely informal in manner. He always used simple language, whether in a formal meeting or not, and spoke in a personal, direct way. His simple, informal manner and apparent frankness were a source of popularity with evacuees. He enjoyed working with individuals in a one-to-one fashion and did not care for formal staff meetings, preferring to discuss policies and programs with individual members of the staff and evacuees alike. It was habitual with him to make sudden decisions, apparently impulsively, certainly not after having given indication to others of the trend of his thinking. This independence of action kept him in a certain isolation from others and led to resentments or mistrust on the part of others working with him who were accustomed to greater sharing of plans with their superiors. (slow speech, not aggressive)

WH had been regarded in the Indian Service as one of the young and coming superintendents with progressive ideas on Indian education and self-government. He had fostered the council of the Papagos organized under the Indian Reorganization Act, had worked with it closely, and under him it had carried out constructive enterprises such as the Papago Annual Fair. He had gotten to know personally the older leaders on the reservation as well as the younger ones, had sat with them informally in their homes, and had apparently gained their confidence through such intimacies. As early as May 28 in Poston, WH made a speech to the evacuees

promising self-government and saying that he hoped that the administration would ultimately "need to act only in an advisory capacity to your community." His attitude towards the evacuees showed no feeling of superiority. He mingled with them easily in their homes as well as in public gatherings, danced with the Poston Beauty queen, and talked with them in meetings on a basis of equality. His manner in meetings, in fact, was generally one of asking for advice rather than one of ordering or commanding. One of his favorite ways of referring to evacuees was as "fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters", rather than as Japanese or even evacuees.

The role of WH in connection with self-government in Poston was that of spokesman for WRA policy and official representative of the administration as a whole to the evacuee groups. He appeared before the council only occasionally for special events, such as swearing in councilmen or presenting news concerning the project. He, however, often sat with council committees and advised and was advised by council officers. The details of guiding the council and keeping in close touch with its work were turned over to the Project Attorney.

TH, the Project Attorney, was a native of New York City, 38 years old and a bachelor. He came of a Jewish family, but was a freethinker in religion. A graduate of New York City College, he took a law degree at the same institution. He practiced law for a short time and then entered the Department of the Interior, becoming a specialist in Indian Law. He was a member of the Lawyer's Guild and chairman of its committee on Law and Economics. He had considerable experience in practical politics within the Lawyer's Guild. His hobby for many years was government and world affairs.

TH was a voluble talker, constantly active. He worked at high tension always, was rarely to be seen without a brief case stuffed with papers, and habitually slept less than six hours a night. In public meetings he adopted a florid speaking style, raising his voice and giving the air of making an important speech on the simplest matters. At other times he was approachable, friendly, and ready to talk.

The briefest speech was filled with constant reference to minor details concerning himself and tended to focus on the personalities of others rather than on events or ideas apart from personalities. His attitude toward other Caucasians was extremely competitive. As a result his actions and speech were often interpreted as being antagonistic and he created for himself a little world of antagonisms toward others.

TH was a liberal in politics, that is, he had been a member of the American Youth Movement, had been an active champion of labor unionism and especially the CIO, had voted the Socialist ticket once or twice, and was an enthusiastic New Dealer. He was also enthusiastic about the WRA policy of self-government in the relocation centers. He felt that he stood for a more thorough-going democracy than did others on the staff. He said, after two months experience with the council, "A few officials do not seem to understand the difference between paternalism and self-government." In a report to his superior in the WRA regional office, he wrote, "I believe that too often the suggestions of officials at the outset will have too marked an influence on the thinking of intelligent residents... I favor democracy to such a degree that I believe in securing the views of the governed. I have always been willing to express my own views, when asked, but I have encouraged the residents not to seek my opinion until they have thought out the problem themselves." His behavior in council meetings was in strict accordance with this statement. TH mingled freely with the evacuees and was proud of having numerous intimate contacts with them. He wrote, in the report referred to above, "Members of minority races are quick to learn those who regard them with a superior attitude and those who will work with them...A member of a minority race which has been subjected to discrimination (and almost all have been) responds readily to sympathetic understanding". This indicates his basic attitude towards the evacuees; he was always conscious of them as a minority group which had been discriminated against and felt a bond of sympathy with them. It made

his relations with them quite different from his relations with the administrative staff. He assumed the role of champion of them against the other members of the staff who were associated with the council.

The work which TH undertook as adviser to the Temporary Community Council involved attendance at every meeting. In such meetings he acted as interpreter of WRA rulings. He was called on frequently, several times during each meeting, to discuss current events in the project and points of law or WRA regulation. To him also fell the job of working out election regulations, organization details, definitions of committee functions, etc. He worked closely with the council officers, the Permanent Organization Commission, and each of the other council committees.

The ASSISTANT Project Director and Poston I Administrator, JGE, did not work directly with the Temporary Community Council, but was an important influence on it. He was the son of a wealthy family, a native of New York State. His father had made a fortune in copper and his mother was a nationally famous literary figure. JGE was about 40, married and the father of two children. He had lived in various parts of the United States, Mexico, and Europe and had some twelve years before developed a serious streak which made him turn away from the frivolities of the wealthy set with whom he had grown up. After this he began to live in the west, at Santa Fe, wrote two psychological novels, and engaged in various businesses. Just before coming to Poston he had served as a foreign correspondent for Newsweek. JGE staid in Poston, after coming first merely for the purpose of making a brief observation tour, because he was profoundly affected by the miseries of the evacuees and wanted to help in allaying them.

JGE was tall, dark, and rather imposing. In groups he was somewhat silent, especially in public meetings. In the latter if he were the speaker, he made an effort to get into a sort of personal touch with someone in the audience. He did not try to make a speech, and yet there was always something formal and far-removed about him. His language was that of an author, carefully chosen words

and rounded phrases, not the language of the street. He gave the impression of great sincerity and profound emotional force. There was a kind of brooding seriousness about his manner most of the time. He talked with most evacuees in the manner very much of a father who knows what is best, but is willing to listen to the end to any difference of view. He enjoyed person-to-person contacts with the evacuees and spent much time with individuals in conversation. He was regarded as somewhat withdrawn by most of the administrative staff, but as accessible, sympathetic, and understanding by the evacuees. He helped evacuees financially and in other ways and many individuals developed a deep loyalty and devotion to him. (play-boy dress incongruity-Santa Fe)

JGE's interest in the block manager system is probably a key to his attitudes to both self-government and the evacuees. He did not think out and develop this system. It seemed to him the means for maintaining contacts between the people and a benevolent administration. He conceived it "as a finger of the government reaching out into each individual block". He was not sensitive for many months to the resentments which such a system gave rise to in the blocks. He saw it as admirable because he was convinced that he himself as well as the administration had the interests of the evacuees at heart. He conceived it perhaps somewhat in the terms of a company union and did not believe that it was necessary for the people to have any fundamental control in such a system. His own sensitivity would be sufficient. He was not antagonistic to the self-government program, but felt from the first that it would probably do less good and have less importance in the community than the block manager system. Although he would have denied it vehemently, he was probably thinking in terms of benevolent dictatorship for the community. He was convinced that he knew what was good for the evacuees and regarded as wilful or stupid any action or belief which went against his fundamental views in this respect.

JGE as administrator of Unit I and assistant to the project director was constantly interested in self-government in each of the units of Poston. He followed

developments closely, but only occasionally attended a council meeting. He gave the first welcoming addresses to each of the Temporary Community Councils and outlined suggested programs for their activities. His major activity however was confined to attendance at the block manager meetings. He was instrumental in arranging the joint council and block manager meetings for good will purposes.

VK was a native California, educated at the University of California. He was Deputy Commissioner of Labor for the State of California before coming to Poston. He had spent his life in labor activities, working with the Philippine Commission in the 1920's, where he had experience with Japanese laborers. He held a CIO organizer's card and had wide experience in labor organization, with strikes and labor arbitration in the west.

VK was heavy-set, with a large and bony face. He had good platform presence, spoke easily and fluently in meetings, and ran meetings with a skillful hand. He often seemed to have spent his life as chairman of a meeting and knew all the tricks of political manipulation. He spoke slowly and forcefully and in an impersonal, rather heavy manner. He was direct and outspoken. He was approachable, though rather forbidding physically, and would argue and talk endlessly about anything from poetry to politics.

VK, like TH, was a liberal, as indicated in his CIO activity, support of the New Deal, and reading habits which included the New Republic, PM, and Carey McWilliams. He came to Poston as Chief of the Employment Division and with the vision of building an ideal sort of cooperative community in the desert. It was his dear desire to see the evacuees organized effectively into labor groups who would stand up for their rights before the administration. He favored things like community trust funds and similar collectivistic enterprises. VK's forceful, direct meeting techniques tended to intimidate evacuees in his presence and roused antagonism behind his back.

VK was closely connected with the council Work Projects committee and often spoke to the council in behalf of the various WP.

Relationships of the Administrative Staff. WH and JGE worked closely. It was part of JGE's philosophy to accept a chief and then to follow him to the letter. In the early days of the council their ideas coincided in the tendency to regard the council as somewhat trouble-making and to look askance at its investigating activities. They were both willing theoretically to give it a free hand, but they could not hide the fact that they did not like anything which smacked of interference in administrative policies or programs.

Similarly TH and VK worked closely with each other. They, especially TH, regarded themselves as championing the council and self-government against a somewhat unsympathetic administration. TH conceived personal antipathy for JGE, which made him see most of JGE's actions and views as antagonistic to the self-government program. He and VK made special efforts to bring the council into close working relationships with the administrative departments. VK's department of Employment was the first actually to come into such close relationship. VK, more than any other administrator, presented policies and discussed plans in council meetings during the later period of existence of the first TCC.

JGE and WH were supported in their attitudes towards self-government by the other unit administrators, MB and JC, both of whom like WH had had experience in working with Indians in the United States. VK and TH were supported in most of their views by members of the community services division who were for the most part political liberals previously unconnected with Indian problems, but with experience with Japanese in Hawaii. Clear-cut opposition to the self-government program came only from the administrative division.

The Chairman of the Work Projects Committee was SK, 29. He was born in Los Angeles, educated at the University of California and Cal tech. He earned a Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering at the latter institution. He had a very difficult time getting established in his field, taking miscellaneous jobs as domestic servant and salesman before he finally secured a place in the Caltech Astrophysics Laboratory and became an engineer in the construction of the 200 inch telescope. He was highly respected by other evacuees because of his success as an engineer. He was a Presbyterian. He had no affiliations with any Japanese organizations.

SK said that he hoped to learn something about human beings as a result of taking a job as councilman. He explained that human beings were a very different matter from telescopes or other mechanical contrivances. He worked hard at his job as chairman of the Work Projects Committee, but not very successfully.

SK was slight in build, never forceful in manner. He wore a wispy moustache. He spoke little Japanese and understood it imperfectly. His command of English was poor, or at least his manner of speech made it seem so. He spoke tersely, often in rapid short bursts with pauses between statements. Speaking before the council, his talk did not flow, but was disjointed. He did not follow along with the flow of other person's rejoinders, but continually came back to propositions which he had already stated. He several times built up strong antagonisms in the councilmen to positions which he was maintaining through this trick of reiteration without persuasion or elaboration of argument. Despite the respect in which he was held by councilmen and people generally he was not influential in the council. However, as advocate or presenter of many plans, programs, and ideas on the council floor, he was an important figure, even though never personally influential.

SK was earnestly attempting to develop community government. He approached the idea of self-government through the means of the council as a desirable and possible thing. He thought that a working relationship could be established between administration and community. He believed that it required simply a

rational presentation of problems and their solutions and that people on both sides would respond. He approached the matter much as an engineer approaches any problem of construction. It was a matter of putting things together in a certain way and they would work, SK said himself that he found human material recalcitrant.

He said increasingly that he did not understand how to handle it. He became discouraged as time went on and developed a "what's the difference" attitude. He felt that neither community nor administration were behaving rationally and did not know what to do about it.

HO, the Vice-Chairman of the first council, was a young man of 29. He was born in Los Angeles (El Monte) and educated at Santa Ana Jr. College and the University of Calif., where he took a bachelor's degree in Economics. He was an honor student and member of a Caucasian fraternity and star tennis player. At twenty-four he became manager of a 250 acre farm near Los Angeles, and continued in that capacity successfully up to the time of evacuation. Right up until evacuation his chief contacts were with Caucasians and he had grown steadily away from his Japanese contacts. He used the language only with difficulty. He did not belong to any Japanese organization of any kind.

HO was emotionally upset by the evacuation. He was cut out of a promising career suddenly and, it seems, for the first time made aware that there was any sort of cleavage between himself and Caucasians. Up until evacuation he had been accepted socially and in every way by Caucasians. The evacuation produced in him an uncertainty of manner, not only in relations with Caucasians but at least equally in relations with other Nisei. Periodically he seemed to become of himself, hesitant of speech and manner, and self-depreciating. He carried this manner on to the council floor. When acting as chairman, he carried on the meeting with a nervous speed, assuming the responsibility himself for accomplishing each point of business on the agenda. He participated in, rather than dominated, each discussion as though all depended on him alone. He did this, however, in a manner much less dictatorial than did TI. His manner was in fact that of a monologist who is only dimly aware of the existence of others, while TI's dominance always rested on a fully comprehended set of reciprocal relations with the other councilmen. HO usually gave the impression of a very serious young man intent on the presentation of a proposition to a highly critical seminar group.

He seems to have been unplaced in Japanese life before he came to Poston. In Poston he took over the difficult job of directing the procurement department of the Educational division and handled the job successfully. He got along easily although not intimately with Caucasians and did not seem to arouse antagonisms among

the Japanese with whom he worked. He gradually took an interest in the community under stress of his position on the council. Feeling the need for greater contact with the people in his block, he secured text books in elementary Japanese and studied them. Completely unoriented in Japanese politics or ways of behavior, he complained often of the gulf between himself and the others and sometimes maintained that the only thing which "kept him going" was the friendly letters which he continued to receive from his Caucasian friends in California.

The council members were almost evenly divided between Buddhists and Christians, with a slight preponderance of Christians, there being nineteen Christians and seventeen Buddhists.

There was only one woman council member, although a number had been nominated in three of the blocks.

The influential members of the council were the following: TI, the chairman; HO, the vice-chairman; SN, the chairman of the Law and Order Committee; SK, the chairman of the Work Projects Committee; HA, who later became chairman of the Community Enterprises Committee; RO, who served as acting chairman of the Food Committee frequently; and MK, chairman of the Social Welfare Committee. Others in the council had influences of various kinds, but these seven may be selected as most important to present in some detail. We shall discuss the others less fully in connection with the actions of the council and its informal organization.

TI, the chairman, was born in San Francisco, educated in Oakland and Berkeley. Married, 39. His father was a fairly well-to-do ticket agent. TI graduated from the Univ. of Calif., in optometry and began to practice in Los Angeles immediately after graduation. He was moderately successful in Los Angeles and became very active in social welfare and organization activity. He worked with the YMCA, the Boy Scouts, Japanese Childrens Home, Kendo Association of America, Japanese Athletic Union of Los Angeles, and the Community Chest. He was chairman of the Board of Directors of the Japanese Childrens Home of Southern California and Vice-Chairman of the Kendo Association of America. He was also active in the Japanese American Citizens League and was a member of the Anti-Axis Committee of that organization.

In the pre-evacuation period, he of course lost his profitable optometry business, but seems to have suffered little, if any, beyond that. Instead of finding himself subjected to rebuffs or discriminations, he found his importance enhanced. As an individual with a number of contacts with Caucasians of some influence, he found himself sought after by Japanese for guidance and help. In

his efforts to settle the affairs of the Orphanage with which he was connected, he also came into contact with officials who were involved in the evacuation preparations. He nourished such contacts and seemed to enjoy them. The major unpleasant contacts during the pre-evacuation period for him were with other Japanese. It was rumored that every member of the Anti-Axis Committee of the JACL was pledged to turn in the names of five Japanese to the FBI. Thus TI along with others on that committee became the object of distrust and suspicion on the part of many Japanese.

He was evacuated first to Santa Anita Assembly Center. In his activities here, some of his major personality characteristics appear. His ability to immediately find a public and prominent position was shown in his becoming a member of the Food Committee of the center. He was outspoken in regard to food inadequacies, had an open dispute with Caucasian members of the steward's department in which he accused one of lying, wrote letters of protest to Under Secretary of War McCloy, and was soon ordered to leave Santa Anita for Poston. He himself believes that this last was a result of his activities on the food committee.