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Okikiro, Gary Y.

1980-1982



HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY · Arcata, California 95521 · (707) 826-4329

Ethnic Studies

June 27, 1980

Professor Rosalie H. Wax
Department of Anthropology
Washington University
Box 1114
St. Louis, Mo. 63130

Dear Professor Wax:

Thank you for your letter of June 20, 1980 and your kind invitation to work with you and Professor Hansen on your Tule Lake fieldnotes. I consider them to be extremely significant particularly since the archival record is notably deficient in direct testimony from the Japanese internees themselves.

I can appreciate your dilemma with our request to view a sample of the fieldnotes. Still, it is my feeling that we would have a clearer idea of our potential role and ability to assist you if we first had a look at them. Should it be feasible and should you agree, I would like to view selected interviews with George Kuratomi. Of course, the ideal situation would be, as you suggest, to meet, review the fieldnotes, and discuss the project.

Once again, I thank you for your invitation and look forward to working with you. As noted by Art, my new address beginning July 13th will be: Department of History, University of Santa Clara, Santa Clara, California 95053.

Sincerely,

Gary Y. Okihiro, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

GYO:df

July 7, 1980

Professor Gary Y. Okihiro
Ethnic Studies
Humboldt State University
Arcata, CA 95521

Dear Professor Okihiro:

Thank you for your letter of June 27. I will be very happy to send you copies of my interviews with George Kuratomi. Since I have many things to do this week I will probably be sending the interviews (with a few comments by myself) to you at the University of Santa Clara.

I look forward to your response. Some of the things turning up in the notes are fascinating and I would like to share them with you and with Professor Hansen.

Sincerely,

Rosalie H. Wax
Professor of Anthropology

RHW:sc

Department of Anthropology

copy



WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
IN ST. LOUIS

July 14, 1980

Professor Gary Y. Okihiro
Department of History
University of Santa Clara
Santa Clara, CA 95053

Dear Professor Okihiro:

I am happy to send you copies of my interviews with George Kuratomi. Somewhat to my surprise they come to about 75 pages. I have much more extensive interviews with many other respondents, most of whom talked to me with less reticence and caution than did Mr. Kuratomi. There are other marked differences which I should explain.

I begin the notes I am sending you with September 8, 1944 when I learn that Mr. Kuratomi had been arrested. As you know, Kuratomi, Rev. Kai, Tsuda, Matsuda, and Wakayama were at this time threatened with indictment for the murder of Hitomi. A number of the subsequent interviews are taken up with Kuratomi's detailed explanations of the minutes of the Daihyo Sha Kai. (Some copies of the minutes had been given me by Mr. Akitsuki and by Mr. Yoshiyama.) These pages might make more sense if you had a copy of the minutes at hand -- but I hope you find some of the interesting. It is noteworthy that even at our first meeting he guardedly predicted a split in the Resegregation Group.

I include an Oct. 9 interview with Mrs. Matsuda (Tsuchikawa in THE SPOILAGE and my book) who gives me her opinion of Kai, Kuratomi and Tsuda, I also include an Oct. 27 statement by Mr. Yoshiyama.

I did not visit Mr. Kuratomi during November because I did not think it wise or safe. On November 21 I left Tule Lake for a conference at Berkeley and did not return until December 7. My Dec. 11 interview with Kuratomi is very interesting, but, unfortunately, the "block 54 battle" in which a man who had been expelled from the Resegregationist Group attacked the head of the Hoshi-dan again put a temporary stop to my visits. I did, however, attend the trial and I have 50 pages of verbatim notes which (for economy's sake) I am not sending you.

On December 26 I was able to resume visits and from that time our relationship was much more relaxed.

Mr. Kuratomi did not renounce his citizenship. On leaving Tule Lake, he visited Berkeley, where he made or prepared a statement which may be in the Bancroft files. He then visited me at the U. of Chicago where I had begun graduate work. He settled in Coudersport, Pennsylvania, where, I believe, he was employed as a farm foreman. We exchanged

Professor Gary Okihiro
July 14, 1980
Page 2

Christmas greetings for many years, and I enclose a copy of the letter he sent me after I had sent him a copy of my book "Doing fieldwork". Three or four years ago his daughter wrote me a sad note, telling me that he was dying of cancer.

If you have any questions about the notes, please let me know. If you send me your telephone number and suggest a time, I can call you from the university.

Sincerely,

Rosalie H. Wax
Professor of Anthropology, Emirita

RHW:sc

Enclosures

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When above is on every page, mail to

Professor Gary Y. Okihiro
Department of History
University of Santa Clara
Santa Clara, CA
95053

mail first class



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

September 18, 1980

Professor Rosalie H. Wax
Department of Anthropology
Washington University
Box 1114
St. Louis, Mo. 63130

Dear Professor Wax:

I have, at long last, finally read your notes of conversations with George Kuratomi. They were revealing, and as you note, increasingly candid; I was particularly tickled by the interview with Kuratomi and Tsuda in which the interviewees grew progressively bolder with saké.

I must apologize for my tardiness in replying to your letter of July 14th and thank you for your kindness in permitting me to see portions of your fieldnotes. The move from Humboldt was most disorienting and we have just recently returned from a vacation which was thoroughly enjoyable but not otherwise productive I am afraid. Thank you for your patience.

Where do we proceed from here? Art Hansen wrote saying that the project now is likely to consist of both an archival and creative scholarship dimension. How can I help? I am not as concerned with the intricacies of the leadership's maneuverings (only insofar as they reflect the perceptions of the majority) as with the ordinary people, particularly the Issei, and their coping strategies by which they survived in Tule Lake's stressful environment. However I would be open to any suggestion from you; you certainly have the clearest notion of the fieldnotes' contents and possibilities.

Please feel free to write or call; my office number is (408) 984-4472. I am in my office M-F from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (PDT) except when on some errand or meeting. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Gary Y. Okihiro, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

Oct. 6, 1980

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
Dr. Gary Y. Okihiro
Professor of History

Professor Gary Y. Okihiro
Department of History
The University of Santa Clara
CA. 95053

Dear Professor Okihiro:

I am delighted that you enjoyed reading my notes of conversations with Mr. Kuratomi. At a later interview, Mr. Tsuda ~~xxx~~ gave me distilled sake and I noticed that my handwriting grew larger and larger as the interview progressed.

I too must apologize for the ~~xxxxxxx~~ slow response. I was asked to resubmit my proposal to NEH with about ten days notice. I did submit a more sophisticated proposal in which I asked for funds to visit ~~xxx~~ California for consultations. But, of course, I will not know the outcome until next June.

I had hoped to have a talk about strategy with Dr. Hansen last month ~~6~~, but he was unable to make it to St. Louis. ~~Meanwhile, in~~
~~you and Dr. Hansen would make many suggestions about a joint application~~
~~with him to help in this area.~~ If you and Dr. Hansen would like to undertake a joint application with me, you, as historians and ~~xxxxxxx~~ humanists could probably frame a ~~nonappealing proposal~~ ~~in~~ very fine proposal. I am open to suggestions ~~from you.~~

Sincerely,

Rosalie H. Wax
Professor of Anthropology, Emerita

Department of Anthropology



WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
IN ST. LOUIS

October 9, 1980

Professor Gary Y. Okihrio
Department of History
The University of Santa Clara
Santa Clara, CA 95053

Dear Professor Okihiro:

I am delighted that you enjoyed reading my notes of conversations with Mr. Kuratomi. At a later interview, Mr. Tsuda gave me distilled sake and I noticed that my handwriting grew larger and larger as the interview progressed.

I too must apologize for the slow response. I was asked to submit my proposal to NEH with about ten days notice. I did submit a more sophisticated proposal in which I asked for funds to visit California for consultations. But, of course, I will not know the outcome until next June.

I had hoped to have a talk about strategy with Dr. Hansen last month, but he was unable to make it to St. Louis. If you and Dr. Hansen would like to undertake a joint application with me, you, as historians and humanists could probably frame a very fine proposal. I am open to suggestions.

Sincerely,

Rosalie H. Wax
Professor of Anthropology, Emerita

RHW:sc

The most recently published comprehensive book on the "evacuation" is "Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps," by Michi Weglyn, William Morrow and Co., Inc. N.Y. 1976. (Ms. Weglyn retells much that has been published in earlier works, but hers is a thorough and well written book with some interesting and hitherto unpublished materials.)

Of the number of books by people who experienced the evacuation and detention, I prefer "Nisei Daughter" by Monica Sone. First published in 1953, this book has been republished in paperback by University of Washington Press, Seattle (1979).

A very impressive and detailed description of the legal and constitutional aspects of the evacuation and detention, including an excellent historical section on the anti-Japanese heritage on the west coast, may be found in "Prejudice, War and the Constitution," by Jacobus tenBroek, E. N. Barnhart, and F. W. Matson, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1970.

A number of anthropologists were hired by the Department of the Interior to assist in the administration of the centers. Their point of view is well presented in "Impounded People" Japanese-Americans in the Relocation Centers," Edward H. Spicer, et al., The University of Arizona Press, Tucson, Arizona (1969). (By the way, Japanese Americans do not like the hyphen and to this day they call them "camp's", not centers.)

Several Japanese Americans have told me that my account of how I did my field work at the Tule Lake Segregation Center is the "best account there is on what life was like in the camps". You might enjoy it as an introduction. It appears in "Doing Fieldwork" Warnings and Advice," The University of Chicago Press, Chicago (1971). It is still in print, selling well, and appears in paperback. I did not work for the government but for the University of California Evacuation and Resettlement Study, located at Berkeley.

November 19, 1980

Professor Gary Y. Ohikiro
Department of History
The University of Santa Clara
Santa Clara, CA 95053

Dear Dr. Okihiro:

Thank you for your courteous letter of October 31. I continue to hope that some kind of joint proposal may be worked out. I also keep finding fascinating, unpublished material in my notes which I look forward to sharing with you.

I have procured and read a copy of your paper, "Tule Lake Under Martial Law" and find that I agree with all of your fundamental points. I particularly liked your concluding paragraph in which you state, "Their disagreement was in the method of resistance."

Unfortunately, as Kuratomi pointed out in his letter, I was not able to get into Tule Lake until February of 1944 and did not experience many of the phenomena you discuss. In addition, it took me some time to get on good terms with some of the Old Tuleans. Nevertheless, it may interest you to know that virtually all of my respondents kept telling me during February, March, April, and May: "The only thing that will help is to get the "Yes-Yes" out of camp. Nobody, said - "Get the Old Tuleans out."

From another perspective, I would be inclined to emphasize that every Japanese American in Tule Lake "resisted" but that, at certain times, they differed as to the manner in which they sought to resist (your point). For example, near the end of the strike, I was told, there were some who argued that voting against the status quo would help the Japanese government. If people went back to work it would cost the U. S. more money.

During my stay in the camp there were two occasions in which the people were genuinely "united in mind". The first was the period in mid-May, 1944, when the people refused to nominate a representative committee. Almost everyone I talked to expressed a genuine satisfaction in having put the administration down. (See my book, pp. 128-30.) The second period began with the shooting of Mr. Okamoto on May 24 and continued for

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Gary Y. Ohikiro
November 19, 1980

several weeks. It was, I would say, characterized by a powerful and tragic consciousness of ethnic unity. I doubt if there was anyone who did not feel that if Okamoto can be shot just like that - so could he or she. This state of helpless anxiety (and ethnic unity) contributed a great deal to the subsequent wave of hatred against the inu, real and imagined.

Again, in late December of 1944 and January of 1945 everybody expressed resistance against the policy of forced relocation. There was even talk of organized law suits. I do not think that Thomas and Nishimoto give an adequate presentation of these expressions of resistance.

Meanwhile, I'm editing my notes and getting the first few months properly typed. I hope NEH will fund my project for next year, but if not, I'll get the job done somehow. Meanwhile, if you or Dr. Hansen have any specific questions I'll be glad to try to answer them.

Sincerely,

Rosalie H. Max
Professor of Anthropology, Emerita

RHW:sc

cc: Professor Arthur Hansen



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

October 31, 1980

Professor Rosalie H. Wax
Department of Anthropology
Campus Box 1114
Washington University
St. Louis, Missouri 63130

Dear Professor Wax:

I wish you the best on your most recent NEH proposal.

I would be happy to work with you and Dr. Hansen on framing a joint application. I shall be contacting him shortly and will broach the subject. Hopefully something can be worked out despite the geographical separation. Please feel free to include me in that undertaking.

I've written a paper on Tule Lake and would like very much for you to read and critique it. Would you have the interest and time? The paper could clearly benefit from the insights you could provide.

Thank you for your kind interest, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Gary Y. Okihiro, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

GYO:vv



ETHNIC STUDIES PROGRAM

June 22, 1982

Professor Rosalie H. Wax (Emeritus)
Department of Anthropology
Washington University
St. Louis, MO 63130

Dear Professor Wax:

I write on behalf of a friend of mine, Dr. Robert A. Hill, editor of the Marcus Garvey Papers at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Robert is working on Japanese contacts with Afro-Americans during the 1930s; more particularly, he is trying to gather information on Naka Nakane, interned during World War II at Livingston, Santa Fe, and Crystal City, and finally confined at Tule Lake. (Please refer to attached document.)

Though a longshot, I thought you might have run across Mr. Nakane while at Tule Lake (I am not certain when Nakane was transferred there). Can you provide any leads?

Thank you for your kind attention. I trust all is going well with your editing project of your fieldnotes. Please keep me informed of its progress; I shall be grateful to use them when released.

Sincerely,

Gary Y. Okihiro
Director

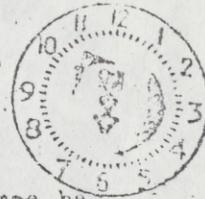
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ALIEN ENEMY REGISTRATION HEARING BOARD
TULE LAKE SEGREGATION CENTER

Yoshij
NAKA NAKANE, *with 15 cases*

MAR 18 4 46 PM

File No. 43-18
January 22, 1948



Mr. [unclear]
CHAIRMAN:

The Board having considered this case in conference, has unanimously concluded that the subject's application should be approved and that he should be released without hearing.

This subject was born in Japan in 1875. He emigrated to Canada in approximately 1900 and in 1921 moved on to Tacoma, Washington. He remained in Tacoma until 1926 when he is said to have disappeared in financial disgrace. In 1930 he appeared at Detroit, Michigan, using the name Takahashi, where he became active in promoting a negro organization called "Development of Our Own". In 1934 he married Mrs. Pearl T. Sherrod, an American-born negress, who was active in the same organization. He was deported to Japan by the United States later in that same year. He reappeared in Canada some time later and directed the affairs of the negro organization from Vancouver, Windsor and Toronto. In 1939 he entered the United States illegally under the name of Kubo and after coming to Detroit reorganized his negro followers into the "Onward Movement of America". Later in the same year he was arrested for illegal entry and attempted bribery of an immigration inspector, was convicted of attempted bribery in a federal court in Michigan and was sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

It is unnecessary to summarize his activities in subversive organizations since they are sufficiently set forth in a Memorandum to the Chief of the Review Section of March 25, 1942, which is to be found in the file. He applied for repatriation on October 9, 1945, and for non-repatriation on November 28, 1945. In the latter application he gave his age and ill health as reasons for his desire to remain with his wife in this country.

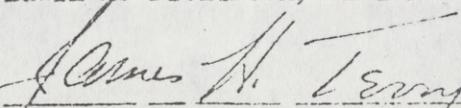
We are satisfied that he was clearly a leader or active participant within the meaning of Standard I. We are further satisfied that he is clearly within the hardship exception to this Standard. It is noted in a report to the Officer in Charge

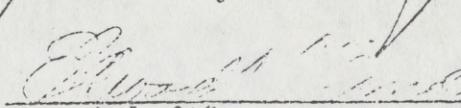
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at Santa Fe, dated April 25, 1945, that his physical condition at the time of his delivery to the War Department in 1942 had been reported as: "Tertiary Syphilis; Tabes Derralis; General Arteriosclerosis; Cataract both Eyes; under observation for Gastral Intestinal Pathology". In the same source it is noted that he was reported in February, 1945, as "confined to a wheel chair and the degree of senility is great". These reports of his physical condition, together with his advanced age, seem clearly to present a hardship case within the meaning of the exception. On that ground alone we recommend that his application be approved.


Edwin D. Dickinson, Chairman


James H. Terry


Edward J. O'Connor

Ella B. Mitchell
Reporter
U.S. Immigration & Naturalization Service
458 So. Spring Street
Los Angeles 13, California

June 30, 1982

Professor Gary Y. Okihiro, Director
Ethnic Studies Program
The University of Santa Clara
Santa Clara, CA 95053

Dear Professor Okihiro:

I'm sorry, but I never heard of Mr. Nakane while I was at Tule Lake. Nor does his name appear in any of the documents in my possession. If he was sent to Tule Lake from Crystal City, he may not have reached Tule Lake until the fall of 1945.

My work is progressing very well, and I will surely let you know when my fieldnotes are available.

Sincerely,

Rosalie H. Wax
Professor Emerita, Anthropology
and Sociology