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MINIDOKA WAR RELOCATION PROJECT
Hunt, Idaho

Speaker: Mr. Philip Schafer
Place: At the Volunteer Banquets
Time: March 16 - 19

I want to pay special tribute to the committee who guided this volunteer program and to the block managers. This night would not have been possible without them. This expression of faith in the future of America would never have occurred.

They were a group who with the boys and their parents assumed their responsibilities. No credit is due the administration. The credit is yours, all of you, and yours alone. And I am privileged and proud to be counted as part of this Spirit of Minidoka.

My speech can be brief. Brief because you boys have written a speech that will be heard with clear tones wherever there is Freedom. They have added something to America ---- they have proven in spite of the slander, beyond a doubt, that there can be peace and unity among all creeds and colors when the light s go on again all over the world.

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MINIDOKA WAR RELOCATION PROJECT
Hunt, Idaho

Volunteers' Banquet

Speaker: Mr. Mike Hagiwara
Place: Dining Hall 7
Date: March 16, 1943

Mr. Toastmaster, speakers, invited guests and fellow enlistees:

I suppose that being on the end of the program as I am, I should give a little bread and butter speech on behalf of the volunteers for this wonderful banquet. However, there are more things which I would like to speak on tonight. But before I continue I do wish to express our sincerest thanks to the administration and to all those persons responsible for this wonderful program and banquet. For I'm sure we will remember this for a long long time.

In looking back over the recent experiences of the Japanese Americans of the Pacific Coast, it reminds me of a story I read once when I was still in grade school. Name of this story is "A Man Without a Country". This story is about a Navy Officer who had been arrested in an affair which implicated him in the famous Aaron Burr conspiracy. Whether he was innocent or guilty, no one seems to know. However, the court ruled that he was guilty and when asked to make a stand for himself, he denounced the United States and expressed the hope that he would never again see the United States of America. He got his wish. The charge sentenced him to spend the rest of his days as a man without a country. He was shipped aboard a boat and went to sea and he was never allowed to step ashore for whenever a boat upon which he was sailing neared its destination, he was transferred to an out bound ship. This story ends tragically because this condemned person never saw the United States again, even unto death.

Again looking back over our recent history, I cannot help but think that we Americans of Japanese ancestry came very close to becoming a man without a country. If it was not for the deliberate work of a few ~~xxx~~ in comparison with the population of the United States, our lot would have been quite similar to that man who never saw his native land again.

At this time I would like to pay particular tribute to a few individuals, groups of individuals and others who had enabled us to say today this is **our** own, our native land. Concerning the situation, I believe the schools and the culture of America had given us a defense against the trying times which we faced

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Volunteers' Banquet
Mike Hagiwara

directly following evacuation. For it was the American ideals and culture upon which such men as our project director, Mr. Stafford, and his appointed staff and many such men had based their convictions concerning we American Japanese as true loyal citizens. And so it is on behalf of the volunteers I wish to pay tribute to the American citizens and the handful of able honest men who have been able to help us keep our faith in America. It was hard work against tremendous odds which enabled our friends on the outside to sway the public opinion and influence the Army Department in such a way as to make possible the volunteer army induction program to be instituted.

These people who have worked so hard for us up to now have been carrying on the fight on behalf of the Americans of Japanese ancestry. So in closing I would wish to direct these few words to the members of the appointed staff at the head table, with your permission. Mr. Stafford, Mr. Schafer, Mr. Townsend, you and many honest Americans have been working untiringly for us. You have been doing the bulk of the work for our welfare. The time has now come when we Americans of Japanese ancestry must do some ball carrying for ourselves. You and many of our friends on the outside have put lot of faith in us. Perhaps much more faith in us than we ourselves have, or deserve. However, in behalf of the volunteers and their families and friends, I wish to give this last word of assurance. We now have our chance and we won't let you down.

MINIDOKA WAR RELOCATION PROJECT
Hunt, Idaho

Volunteers' Banquet

Speaker: Mr. Kinya Okajima
Place: Dining Hall 13
Date: March 17, 1943

Mr. Toastmaster and friends:

I had the pleasure of speaking in the Japanese language at one preliminary meeting held in Block 15 or 17, I forgot which. When the meeting was over, a young man came up to me and said, "My name is Sakura. I did not understand every word you said, but I understood enough to see you expressed what Daddy was telling us children." I was so very glad that his father belonged to the group of men who had been brought up under the Japanese discipline code. According to Dr. Griffith of Cornell University, it teaches the higher law expounded by the great Teacher of Nazareth. "If a grain of wheat does not fall on the ground and die, it remains a single grain; but if it dies, it brings forth rich fruit." In other words, it teaches the doctrine of sacrifice and courage which is consonant with the law of the universe.

When the late Mr. C. T. Takahashi, father of Ted Takahashi who is here tonight, was the president of the Japanese Association of Seattle, we issei who regard moral principle above all expediency and utilitarianism, met and formed a plan to instill devotion for America in the hearts of our children. We did everything we could to bring our ideal to realization, although our sincere efforts often had been retarded by anti-Japanese agitators and also by the conduct of our own race. I am glad tonight so many of you young men are going to offer yourselves for your own country. I am so happy also, because it shall have tremendous effect, not only in the public opinion, but also on the destiny of this country and the future history of mankind. I am so pleased that you young men have been guided by moral principles to make your decision to take part in this greatest conflict of this world. I want to have you remember, young men, that you have in your blood the moral

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Mr. Kinya Okajima

code which your ancestors were very proud of. "Chi" -- wisdom, "jin" -- benevolence, "yu" -- bravery. I want you to remember also, that we place "honor" above everything else.

May God bless you and keep you well. May He guide you constantly to be brave and true for the glory of America which is founded on the rock of justice, liberty and equality -- the rock that cannot be moved by any power under the sun. I cannot sit down without saying a word to your fathers, mothers and wives, and other parents of boys already in the Army. You are making the supreme sacrifice for a principle which America holds dear. I don't know how to express myself, but I want to say we are very grateful to you. You are making a great sacrifice, not only for this country but for our posterity. May God bless you and may God be with you always and give you abundant blessings. Thank you.

MINIDOKA WAR RELOCATION PROJECT
Hunt, Idaho

Volunteers' Banquet

Speaker: Mr. Chester Sakura
Place: Dining Hall 13
Date: March 17, 1943

Mr. Toastmaster, friends and fellow volunteers:

They did not get me up here to speak because I wanted to. I just wanted another turkey dinner which is one of the highlights of the volunteer dinner. One of the biggest things of this volunteer induction was what took place on the inside from the Project Director all the way down to the last man. We got better acquainted with each other more than ever before. I don't believe many of the boys ever saw them before, and we learned a lot about them.

We learned that they are expressing the thoughts of our good Caucasian friends back home. During the Induction programs, we were told that many friends wanted a weapon to wave at the enemies of the so-called minority group. They wanted us to give them a big stick to wave at them. Mr. Stafford, Mr. Schafer and our many friends here shared that thought. And, believe me, they were all very frank and told us just where we stood. Mr. Stafford, of course, was a little bit quieter. In the last Irrigator, he expresses what I want to say. He puts in statistics of this Project and I believe he merely presented that as a record that he is proud, because the people here made it possible. Another thing I just found out, through personally contacting him, that he is a "ham". That is all right. I am a "ham", too. A "ham" is an amateur radio enthusiast, and he is not of the just the ordinary run of the mill. He is a "boiled owl". To be a "boiled owl", you have to be pounding brass in the wee hours of the night. Ask my wife, she knows, too. When we say he is a "ham", he has the interest at heart of many of the boys here. He has gone through quite a bit of operating with the boys in the shop where I work.

The toastmaster has mentioned that we are four brothers. We just happened to be four brothers. At the regis-

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Volunteers' Banquet
Mr. Chester Sakura

tration, after I got through with mine, Kenny came out and when I asked him, "Did you sign up?", he answered, "Yes, did you?" Then Ted came up and the same questions and answers were given. A week later, Howard said, "Well, boys, I signed up too". He had his personal reasons for going, and there had been no consultation with each other. The other boys deserve just as much praise and have as much right to have their pictures in the papers, too. The picture was very bad. At one time or another, I had wanted my picture in the paper. I am telling you boys--don't hope for it. You will be awfully disappointed. I was. One boy said, and he was a very close friend of mine, --"I was looking at the picture and thought the face was very familiar. Then I read the caption and said, "Why, that's Chet!" Boy, it must have been bad.

We are leaving behind wives, parents, brothers and sisters. To those, we have to ask certain favors. In the volunteer programs, Mr. Stafford stressed one thing and that is to carry the torch. He says it openly, to carry it for the other 100,000 Japanese in the country. We ask you people to give us a little help, a little moral support--morale for lots of little things. After we are in camp, we would like to see letters, newspapers and news from home. Especially from you people here in the Center.

We have another slant on this. Look at it in this light. When I was a little boy and went to Sunday School, there was a hymn which read, "Count your many blessings, name them one by one". After all, there is a lot of good things also. Many of us have not seen the good things. If we carry the torch, we need the fuel and we want you friends to supply the fuel and keep the home fires burning.

MINIDOKA WAR RELOCATION PROJECT
Hunt, Idaho

March 20, 1943

Volunteers' Banquet

Speaker: Mr. Hiroshi Sumida
Place: Dining Hall 30
Date: March 18, 1943

Mr. Toastmaster, Fellow Volunteers, Parents
and Friends:

I don't want to say very much, but just want to give you a kind of a reason why we volunteered. Most of you know, but I'd like to make a comparison for you. I had the opportunity to visit Heart Mountain just a short time ago; the surprising attitude and atmosphere as compared to our center here. It's strange and hard for anyone going from this center and coming into that atmosphere of dissension, and it might be called suspicion. It's strange to us who volunteered from this camp to find that, I don't know if I'm supposed to say it, but I'm going to anyways, that over there, they have only about 40 volunteers out of 11,000 people. We have a right to be proud here! Over there, the people are not quite as fortunate, I believe. We've got some fine men in our administration, one of our finest and best reasons for volunteering from this camp. Over there, they haven't shown that response. Perhaps it might be attributed to several reasons. Mr. Stafford once remarked that all he has to do is take care of his job and the job will take care of him. There are differences in the job...differences in the men themselves. There are few men who can do a job with understanding, sincerity and integrity. We are very fortunate to have those men in our staff - those men like Mr. Stafford, Mr. Schafer and Mr. Townsend, and all the others in the administration ~~are~~ and all over the camp. They are the people around us and we are fortunate to have them around us. Most of you haven't had the opportunity to talk to other men from other centers. In this camp we have a fence around us, and around those fence are towers, and they are empty. Empty because of men like Mr. Stafford and Mr. Schafer. I was over at Heart Mountain and they've got a fence and tower.....towers with soldiers in them.....soldiers with guns and orders to shoot if they wanted to, or maybe not to shoot, but the feeling is there.

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Banquet Speech
Hiroshi Sumida

That is another reason why we are proud to volunteer from this camp.

We have men here who look forward and look beyond. Several months ago when it was hard to get outside my friend and I wanted a breath of fresh air on the outside of the fence. We wanted to go to Twin Falls, and at that time I had the opportunity to go see Mr. Schafer for a pass. Mr. Schafer said, "No, sorry". Well, at that time I felt hurt. We wanted to go, and you can't hold us! You know, it's something that most of us don't know. He was waiting for a time when he knew the people around here were going to need our help. He wanted us to wait just a little while longer regardless of criticism and talk behind our back. When we got out they greeted us with open arms.....'we're glad you're here, we need you'. Mr. Stafford, Mr. Schafer and Mr. Townsend - those men were looking forward to this. It's kind of a providence to have men like those - we're fortunate and somehow for myself, and for other people who are here, to have the opportunity of attending this wonderful meeting and dinner with them. Let us all rise and give them a hand! (Audience rise and clap)

All of us can't express our gratitude for the sincerity, integrity and understanding for all these things that come to make this job well done. It's people like them who put their hearts into this job. We don't know where we're going, but we've taken a chance leaving our loved ones behind, because in our hearts we know that we're leaving them in good hands. Thank you.

MINIDOKA WAR RELOCATION PROJECT
Hunt, Idaho

March 19, 1943

Volunteers' Banquet

Speaker: Mr. Tak Okamoto
Place: Dining Hall 30
Date: March 18, 1943

It is my first time speaking before such a large crowd -- I really don't know what to say, it's such a privilege to be up here though words are few. We're thankful as we volunteer in being able to get together with our parents, with our project directors and honored guests, to have this fellowship before going on to bigger tasks ahead of us.

In behalf of the volunteers - we're thankful for this wonderful banquet; we leave with remembrances in our stomachs as well as in our hearts, the cooks and the waitresses. It's been such a long time since we've been served. And we're thankful for Mr. Stafford, Mr. Schafer and the whole staff. It's really been a pleasure and a privilege to work under them doing our part that we really feel the unity and fellowship working here at the Minidoka project. It has more or less been like a prayer carrying on our work until this time. . . . the things we call ideals that we like to work up to.

I believe that we are all going on to this great work with plans that we really look forward to, and I believe that with the help of those at home, with our dearly loved ones we leave behind, and with hopes and prayer and efforts, we should be able to attain that goal. I wish to say today that with God helping us, I know we will be able to get the peace and understanding we all desire. Thank you.

MINIDOKA WAR RELOCATION PROJECT
Hunt, Idaho

March 19, 1943

Speech: Mr. Kinya Okajima - Volunteer's Banquet
Place: Dining Hall 30
Date: March 18, 1943

Mr. Toastmaster and Friends:

My speech must be very brief because I am feeling too good being fed turkey for 3 nights. I am feeling so good as to lose my reasoning just like an Irishman I used to know in Seattle. He was a foreman of longshoremen working on one of the Japanese steamers on the Great Northern Docks. One day he looked down one of the holes and said, "Hey, how many of you men are down there?" One man answered, "Five, sir", and the foreman said, "How about half of you coming up on the deck?" I feel so happy tonight that so many of our young men are offering themselves for the service of our country, and I am addressing you young men, congratulating you from all of us because it shall have a tremendous effect not only upon the public opinion concerning ourselves, but also upon the destinies of America and the future history of mankind. I am pleased to know that you have been guided by moral principles to give yourself to your country. I am, as one of the isseis, very very proud of you. We isseis who regarded moral principles higher than utilitarianism or expediency formed a principle long time ago to educate our children to become loyal and true American citizens; and we did everything we could although our sincere efforts have been retarded by anti-Japanese and also, by the conduct of ill-principled persons of our own race, but I am very glad tonight that our efforts have not been entirely in vain because I see so many of you are guided by our principles. You know our people have certain moral codes. We first generations are supposed to be guided by the same principles. This principle or code teaches according to the late Doctor Griffith of Cornell University, the higher law expounded by the great teacher of Nazareth. If a grain of wheat does not fall on the earth and die, it remains a single grain, but when it dies, it brings much fruit or rich fruit....in other words, our moral code teaches our doctrine of sacrifice, of courage which is consonant with the law of the universe.

I want to say "thank you" to the mothers and wives of the enlistees, our parents of the boys already in the army. In accordance with the principle and moral code, you are making the supreme sacrifice for the country of your children and for your posterity in America. In behalf of the isseis I

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Volunteer's Banquet
Mr. Kinya Okajima

pay you our highest respect and sincerest gratitude. I want you to remember, young men, and enlistees, you have in your blood moral code which your ancestors were proud of. 'Chi' for wisdom, 'jin', for benevolence, and 'yu' for bravery. I want you to know we place honor above everything else. May God be with you and keep you well. May He constantly guide you to be brave and true for America which is founded upon the rock of justice, liberty and equality..... the rock that cannot be removed by any power. May God bless you and may he always be with you. Thank you.

MINIDOKA WAR RELOCATION PROJECT
Hunt, Idaho

Volunteers' Banquet

Speaker: Mr. Kinya Okajima
Place: Dining Hall 36
Date: March 19, 1943

Mr. Toastmaster and all friends:

I had the pleasure of speaking in my own language at one of the preliminary meetings held at block 15 some time ago. When the meeting was over, a young man came up to me and said, "My name is Sakura. I didn't understand every word you said, but understood enough to see that you expressed what Dad used to tell us children." I was very happy at that time because I knew his father belonged to a group of men who have been brought up in the strict code of Japan which according to Dr. William Griffith of Cornell University teaches the higher law expounded by the great teacher of Nazareth. In other words, it teaches the doctrine of sacrifice and courage. We isseis who regard principles higher than expediency or utilitarianism long ago met and formulated a plan to instill devotion for America in the hearts of our children so that they may become loyal and true American citizens. We did everything we could although we have often been retarded by anti-Japanese agitation on the Pacific Coast and the ill-principled and stupid people of our race. You do not know how glad I am this evening to see so many young men of our race offering themselves freely for the service of our country. I congratulate you young men and all of you on this occasion because your sacrifices, your services, will have and shall have a tremendous effect upon the people, upon ourselves and upon the destiny of the United States of America and the future history of mankind. I am so pleased to see the parents of boys already in the Army as well as your own fathers, mothers and wives. In behalf of both isseis and niseis, I express our highest respects and sincerest gratitude to you. You are making supreme sacrifices for the country of your children; you are making sacrifices for your children and your children's children. As I said to you in explaining the code under which we are brought up, your sacrifice will give you growth and we are fortunate to have you do it. May God bless you and give you abundant blessings. Young men, I wish you to remember that you have in your blood the moral code which your ancestors were proud of -- "chi", wisdom, "jin", benevolence, and "yu", bravery, and I want you to remember that we place honor above everything else. May God bless you, go with you, keep you well and guide you continuously so that you may be brave and true for the glory of America which is founded upon the rock of justice, liberty and equality which can never be removed by any power under the sun.

MINIDOKA WAR RELOCATION PROJECT
Hunt, Idaho

Volunteers' Banquet

Speaker: Mr. Claude Detweiler
Place: Dining Hall 36
Date: March 19, 1943

Mr. toastmaster, enlistees, members of the Armed forces,
honored parents and guests:

This night I shall remember always. The memory of this night will be replete with pleasure and sincere gratitude. I am gratified that my faith in you people has been justified. You are to be commended tonight. I only wish that the entire populace of this camp were here this evening. You are to be commended for the splendid manner in which you have adjusted yourselves to your conditions here. It is extremely unfortunate that you are here tonight, but your very presence here tells me what I have felt all along, that you are loyal Americans. That is a source of great satisfaction to me. As your patriarch has said to you, you are giving great sacrifices, out of which you will grow stronger. That is true. It seems to be a law of nature that we strengthen through adversity and I'm sure that you people, somehow, somewhere in the future, the law of retribution and the law of compensation will make of you a stronger better people. You are going through an experience that has been anything but pleasant. Let us hope that by virtue of this experience you are passing through, there will be a better understanding among the rest of the people so that we will wipe out this feeling that exists in our country. And you boys who are offering yourselves for the supreme sacrifice are doing a double duty, or rather, you are performing a double service. Not only are you going to fight for your own country, but you are also going to help wipe out the gap that exists between you and people of this country with whom you are going to live and your children will live, and I wish to say I want to encourage you to do this as we have been. Do not let yourselves become resentful, do not indulge in our sympathy; hard though your lot may be, by looking forward to a time in the future when this history you are passing through will make conditions better for you and your children--as Mr. Schafer has said--the time when the lights will go on again all over the world. I want to thank Mr. Bigelow and Mr. Stafford in inviting me out here. This night I shall remember always and it has been a pleasure to be here with you people.

MINIDOKA WAR RELOCATION PROJECT
Hunt, Idaho

Volunteers' Banquet

Speaker: Mr. Jaxon Sonoda
Place: Dining Hall 36
Date: March 19, 1943

Mr. Toastmaster, Mr. Stafford, Mr. Schafer, honored guests and fellow Minidokan:

I was very much relaxed to say a few words a few minutes ago, but however, after listening to the terrific beating (of the drums) I feel my heart beating faster and my knees shaking like of the WRA cars going up the main highway here.

However, I consider it a special privilege and an honor to say a few words in behalf of the volunteers from this section. First of all, in behalf of the volunteers I wish to extend sincere thanks to the appointed personnel and to others who have been responsible for this splendid banquet. When I first came in, I noticed that great pains had been taken to give this dining hall a banquet appearance and a patriotic atmosphere and that, we volunteers appreciate very much.

During the early stages of the volunteer enlistment program, there was considerable talk that enthusiasm was lacking among the nisei and that the nisei failed to grasp the importance and significance of this volunteer induction program. However, subsequent events and the fact that 300 have volunteered from this center have served to dispel such talk. The recent national release by Mr. Dillon S. Myers that 300 have volunteered from this center is something that we Minidokans can be proud. I am proud to be one of the volunteers in this group.

However, let us not lie supinely on our backs and rest upon our laurels. This is but the first step towards the recognition of niseis as American citizens. There are many today on the outside who do not believe that niseis have the making of good Americans. It is to them that we want to show that we are capable of being loyal true American citizens. And it is to the others who have faith in us, we want to justify that faith, that reputation, in us.

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Jaxon Sonoda

We are anxious to leave for training. As I stand here looking over the volunteers and their parents, I cannot help but feel there will be many a heartache, many a worry, many a tear among those who are left behind.--Our parents, brothers, and sisters and friends. But we are ardently looking forward to the day when we can leave this center for training, because it will mean we can contribute our share to the all-out effort America is putting up presently. No sacrifice can be greater than that which we can make towards the preservation of the American union and ideals for which it stands.

Just as other national groups have contributed in the past to the building of America, so we, too, Japanese Americans must contribute our share. This is our one big chance to contribute our share and demonstrate our loyalty. Wherever we may be sent, we must always think of America first, breathe America, speak America and live America, as Mr. Stafford mentioned. Let us be torchbearers to enlighten the public on the minority group so that when future historians record the ~~greatness~~ *climb* of the United States of American into an exalted and commanding position in the family of nations, these historians may be able to write -- 'when the United States of America sounded a call in her hour of need, the Japanese Americans responded unflinchingly and courageously.' I thank you.