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Nakanishi, Don J.

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ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES CENTER  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024

20 December 1980

Dear Prof. Wax,

Just a short note to let you know that I reviewed your proposal for NEH last year, as well as this year. I thought it would make a major contribution to Japanese American Studies last year, and I still think it would. In many ways, the importance and significance of your notes is even greater now because of the recent approval of a Presidential Commission to study the camp experience.

Frankly, I do not know why it was not approved last year. If it meets the same fate this year, please let me know and perhaps we can think of ways getting some funding for it. My best wishes, though, for success with NEH during this funding cycle. I would appreciate it, though, if you did not let them know that I dropped you this line.

My best wishes.

Sincerely,

Don T. Nakanishi, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of  
Political Science and  
Asian American Studies

June 5, 1981

Dr. Don T. Mekanishi  
University of California, Los Angeles  
Asian American Studies Center  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Dear Dr. Nakanishi:

I am sorry to report that NEH did not fund my project to edit, annotate, and index my fieldnotes on Tule Lake. If you can suggest any ways of getting some funding, I would be grateful. I would expect that these notes might be very helpful to the Presidential Commission to study the camp experience.

If you would care to communicate with me by telephone, I will gladly accept the charges. I usually work at home, and my number is Area Code 314-721-6848. I retire early, so it would be best to call before 9:00 p.m., St. Louis time. (I tried to call you yesterday, but I did not have your number, and the operator at UCLA cut me off. But better luck next time.)

Sincerely,

Rosalie H. Wax  
Professor of Anthropology, Emerita

RHW:sc



ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES CENTER  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024

16 June 1981

Dear Rosalie,

I am very sorry to hear that you did not get funding from NEH. You have a great deal of invaluable data on Tule Lake which should be shared with others. Oddly enough, I know of another project on Japanese Americans -- an oral historical investigation of Terminal Island -- which was also rejected by NEH this year. I guess that projects on Japanese Americans were not "in" this year.

Given the chaotic state of government funding, I really cannot offer too much advise at this time on where you might turn for funds. The University of California system is not in very good shape because it is experiencing the dual impact of Reagan cuts along with the projected impact of Proposition 13. I do know that the University of Washington Press is trying to build up a collection of works on Asian Americans, and perhaps they would be willing to provide you with an advance. You might contact Frank Miyamoto at UW. I know that he thinks very highly of you. Indeed, he was called upon to defend you and other Evacuation researchers at a recent conference on the tragedy at Whittier College. As far as the Presidential Commission is concerned, I would recommend that you write to them directly for possible funding. They are planning to contract some research projects. Paul Bannai, a former Assemblyman in California, is the Executive Director.

I will keep my eyes open for possible sources of funding for your project. Let's keep our fingers crossed.

Sincerely yours,

*one X11001*  
*JACK.*

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Don".

Don T. Nakanishi

June 23, 1981

Prof. Don T. Nakanishi  
University of California at Los Angeles  
Asian American Studies Center  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Dear Don:

Thank you for your sympathetic and helpful letter of June 16.

Keeping our fingers crossed has helped because I have received a fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation to help underwrite research in which I will prepare ten to fifteen longitudinal oral histories of the Japanese Americans who were my respondents in the Tule Lake Segregation Center. Concurrently, I am to interview the respondents today and ask them how the experience affected their lives and how it has influenced them as human beings. Which experiences were most traumatic? Which were helpful? And how have they fared since then? The fellowship stipend is modest but helpful.

Though my fellowship does not formally begin until September, I have completed several of the longitudinal case histories and have found it an enlightening experience. Somehow -- as one reads their words week after week -- these people come alive in a way that one finds in none of the books on the evacuation. One becomes acquainted with them as wonderfully complex human beings and as genuine individuals. Many things I have never been aware of have come to light. I have also located and interviewed (by telephone) two women I knew at Tule, and again, I am amazed by what I learned.

Though I have plenty of time, I would like to begin the process of locating more of the people who were confined at Tule Lake. Do you know anyone who was there who would be willing to be interviewed? I think it would be wise to interview some people who were not my respondents. Could you give me any advice as to how I might locate some of my respondents with whom I have lost touch? (With fingers crossed, I'm enclosing a list of people who I would very much like to talk to.) I shall, of course, also get in touch with Frank Miyamoto at UW.

Sincerely yours,

Rosalie Wax  
Professor of Anthropology  
RW:mw