

Wilson
Volume I

HEADQUARTERS SIXTH ARMY
PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

7 August 1946

Dr. Dorothy S. Thomas,
Giannini Foundation,
University of California,
Berkeley, California.

Dear Doctor:

Below are the actual questions that the field officers were directed to obtain answers upon from all individual excludées. The form provided for "yes" or "no" check marks only.

1. Desire citizenship revoked?
2. Signed application for same?
3. Son or daughter in Armed Service?
4. Approval of 3, above (If applicable).
5. Do you want to be sent to Japan?

It should be noted that the original instructions only required the first four questions, but after a few days the fifth question was added to the list.

I have done considerable checking relative to the operation of the Biological Survey camp just outside of Tule Lake during late February and early March of 1943. The story, as our files reveal it, principally in telephone conversations with Washington, is briefly, that the War Department directed the Ninth Service Command to augment their military police battalion at Tule Lake by one officer and fifty men for the purpose of guarding this camp when and if WRA requested that they do so. On learning this, General DeWitt objected to the general policy of opening sub-camps within the exclusion zone, and recommended that these people be sent to Moab rather than to this new proposed camp. After the discussion with the Assistant Secretary of War's office, they were able to obtain a promise from Mr. Meyer that he would not open this camp except under an extreme emergency and then only for a limited period not to exceed two weeks. Mr. Meyer apologized for not having made the request of General DeWitt, and stated he would move them to Moab just as fast as he could and further, that they were then negotiating for the Lueppe Camp in Arizona.

What I wish to emphasize is that all of the communications relative to this incident show clearly that this camp was not to be operated by the army but the army was only to furnish guards, because WRA made the demand under both Executive Order 9102 and agreement with

the War Department to furnish external security guards. There is not a word about the operation of the camp in any other sense being a responsibility of the army; in fact, all parties repeatedly state that the army's jurisdiction extends to the guarding of the perimeter only. Unfortunately, I am unable to find in my files any of the subsequent history after the people were shifted to this camp. If there is such a record, it would be in the hands of the Ninth Service Command who maintained the guard. However, the absence of any incident or any difficulty within the camp, which I am sure would have been reflected in our files, strengthens my belief that this camp was only under the jurisdiction of the army as far as external guard is concerned and had nothing to do with the internal administration.

I would like to suggest, unless you have some documentation of your belief that the military guard utilized forced labor, that it is rather a dangerous allegation.

If there are any more points that I can help you out with, please feel free to call upon me at any time, and thanking you for your very kind reception to my criticisms of your very excellent book, I remain,

Very sincerely yours,

Victor W. Nielsen

V.W.Nielsen,
Hq. Sixth Army, CAD,
Bldg. 39, Rm. 1,
Presidio of San Francisco,
California.

August 6, 1946

REMARKS AND CRITICISMS BY MR. NIELSON :

Nielson WDC had no informants in the camps. Received a few anonymous letters. Most of them were about domestic troubles and problems.

Nielson Why some people were picked up by military first few days: We did not know where to start. Had been built up in minds of people that one of the main trouble groups were the evacuated Hawaiians-- about 280. Pretty universally were bad boys who expressed allegiance to Japan. Quite expressive in hearings. Jerome one group, Topaz one group. Troublemakers from standpoint wouldn't work; causing trouble with girls. Didn't associate with anyone else. Single most of them. WRA thought at time they came into Tule Lake the group was troublemakers. Decided to pick up the group and find out what they were. Talked to Assistant Secretary of War and in agreement. They sent us out all records from Hawaii, went over them, and where there was any definite statement as to pro-allegiance to Japan, picked them up. Almost all this group ^{had} Hawaiian history.

[Remarks by Dick and DST re pick up in administrative area]

Nielson Other group picked up almost immediately. Were recommended by Best.

DST Best convinced thing started in Jerome. McVoy built up story that a plot had originated in Jerome.

Nielson Vague belief on everybody's part.

Dick Before the war people regarded Hawaiian boys as troublemakers. Disgruntled always.

Nielson Re Kibei: No way to get Kibei from tracer file. McFadden went down original ship's manifest and identified them by the bags they had. Found about 180 of that group appeared to end up in Tule. Austin felt he had to do something. If you look in the list of those in the stockade you'd find they were mostly Hawaiians. It was very early, the first couple of days after the fourth we started thinking in those terms.

Nielson Re contraband: People screamed about danger of weapons the Japanese had. Pressure caught on that military couldn't say it wasn't there. It is my understanding that it was the Navy.

Nielson Page 9, footnote: Reads.

Term of Japanese Americans, includes both Issei and Nisei?

DST Yes.

Nielson Page 9: Frozen assets and credits:

My understanding was that it was done only with those who had flow of money with Japan.

Dick All ordered closed for a day or so. Everything was closed. This done through newspapers quoting statements credited to Treasury Dept.

Nielson According to footnote, it looks as if they were kept closed. Those in communication and had any financial transactions with Japan were kept closed; those who had no transactions were not harassed. Expressing opinion, not criticisms. Difference of emphasis. Leighton and you recite picture prior to evacuation. My neighborhood, the Japanese group expressed to me what was happening to them. To me it seems this thing is entitled to more emphasis, if not dignity, than given it. My argument is that these things were very real and

were continuing, and a lot of things attributed to evacuation itself should not be attributed to evacuation. The process had started and they would have continued. Evacuation itself did not do all these things.

Re the frozen capital of the population as a whole: Our figures show \$22,000,000.00 deposits in Japan in 1941 were frozen. Have figure on it in both Japanese and English. Maybe high at \$22,000,000 but close on the basis of 25%. [Quotes yen figure]

Jimmy Was that deposited in Japan?

Nielson Fixed deposits originated in this country. The financial statement shows what banks in Japan. Several fixed deposits and head office deposits. Assuming the \$22,000,000 is high, it was pretty close. Terrific amount of money taken out of community; frozen before the war. Money frozen in Yokohama Bank in Sacramento, etc. \$3,000,000 deposits in the local banks frozen and not cleared today.

Dick Up to 1932, Japanese had deposits in small banks. Were hard hit and had heavy losses. Felt they couldn't depend on American banks and the trend then was to deposit in the two Japanese banks; were safest.

Nielson More than that: the Yokohama had agents illegally here; in cigar stores, etc.

Dick That happened very early in the immigration.

Nielson Very early, yes, before they came to this country. The financial situation had tremendous potentialities by itself. I am interested in seeing that we are not charged with every damned thing.

Nielson Page 24: Reads, "Practical policy of the . . . evacuee losses." (talking about setup of WCCA and Farm Security Admin.)

I was never instructed that that was the case (re protection of evacuee property). WCCA's function was protection of the property wholeheartedly. I want to protest, as we did not have it in mind.

DST I think their intentions to protect evacuee property were good, but practically it didn't work out that way. Went thro' Davidson's correspondence and it seemed clear there was a national fear. The freezing power was not used by Farm Security.

Dick Re confusion in So. California between WCCA and Rosecrantz.

Nielson Just want to get on record our intentions were good. Want to say WCCA was not unsympathetic. Wholeheartedly was leaning over backwards.

Nielson (No page given here) "A Jap's a Jap" -- quotation in footnote. Should add one more sentence on here. First sentence, "I don't want any of them here" came from one piece of testimony. "There is no way to . . . disloyalty . . . It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen" -- The next sentence: "Loyalty cannot be determined by citizenship." Release shows what he has in mind. I think the one sentence that follows this crucial statement should be added.

Nielson (No page given here) "Governor Carr of Colorado.":
Actually (everybody gives Governor Carr a gold star) Governor Carr kept people out of Colorado more than anybody else. If we asked any place in Colorado, they would say "No, ask Gov. Carr; he stated his position." He wouldn't budge, he would say "I have made my stand and I stand on it. What he was talking about was that if you send in an armed guard we would accept them. The largest group at that time

were going into Colorado and we couldn't get an expression from Colorado that they were acceptable. We asked him what was his position and he refused to answer. Student Relocation went back and asked his position and sat on his doorstep until he gave an answer.

[Dick shows letters re Governor Carr]

DST He would not recognize DeWitt.

Nielson Can't see him getting gold star when he did more harm for the Japanese people than good.

Nielson Page 42: Reads.

You use Tule Lake as an example. "The physical layout of relocation projects . . ." and I couldn't see where you ever broke out. As if there were policies established. My impression is that it never gets back to thinking of T.L. as being somewhat unique. Both Manzanar and Tule Lake were unique. I get the impression that it is creating too harsh a picture of the other centers. Let me amplify: I was not in these other places, but I did know that from our standpoint Tule was quite different, and Manzanar was different. They were operated quite differently.

DST In second volume going into the difference.

Nielson You start out that this is typical and you never show that it ceases to be typical. ?

Discussion re different centers: Granada, Minidoka and Topaz got considerable freedom.

Dick Set time element.

Nielson Page 45: Reads, " . . the movement of almost . . . from home communities began on March 21 and was not completed . . ."
Statement is technically accurate. Don't like it.

Correct

October 27 before we got them out of the area. Actually they weren't moved from the assembly center until October 27. I don't think there were any outside of assembly centers later than August, except institutions.

DST Footnote, outside of the area and into assembly centers.

Nielson Would like qualification they were out of Military Area No. 1.

Nielson Page 59: Censorship of mail. Letter from friend saying letter looked as if it had been censored. *OK*

Page 65 is missing in volume

Nielson Re statement made by Tanaka about Tayama. [About not recognizing any of his assailants] Tayama testified that he did see one of his assailants. Implication here is that WRA kept guy locked up.

Nielson Page 75: Tanaka statement in contributing some of the causes of the opposition to JACL leadership -- my first reaction was that that doesn't make too much sense in that Manzanar was taken over on June first. Then it occurred to me that some came in later. Actually there is a six month period there.

Nielson Page 78: Statement relative to FBI check. WRA had the advantage of an individual check by Naval Intelligence. Implication is that WRA had advantage of checks for both of those.. Navy told me they never did. Very touchy on the subject.

Dick Some evidence to show that WRA also submitted names of these people to the War Dept. and G.2.

Nielson I don't think so that early. If you meant students in assembly centers, but here you are talking about WRA leave procedure.

GTC

Dick We did not make clear there with respect to students.

Nielson No such thing as clearance. Just yes or no.

First people were not put before Joint Board. Cleared by G.2 and J.B. said let them go.

Nielson Page 80:

Regarding reinstitution of registration: "This action came as the result of continual prodding" OK

Actually, before Myer was with WRA the strong consensus of opinion was that it could be done but the first problem to be solved whether or not going to have segregation. The Kibei group was a disturbing element. Scared at the people who had gone over there and had come back. Worked with the War Dept. We gave enthusiastic support to it. Our recommendations were along those lines: first have segregation and then a joint policy. Washington wanted to get going. Question as to how they were to be dispersed: in a unit or in the Army. DeWitt's position was in favor of a unit. Used stock arguments

DST We can say WRA was active in the thing, but change it a bit.

Dick Drafting Nisei was suspended, when?

Nielson Instructions were just to let them sit and do nothing. Almost immediately after Pearl Harbor. Local Boards fair amount of discretion. Positive they were more or less frozen.

Nielson Page 88: re registration program. Recruitment number--3,500 volunteers expected, according to my knowledge. Dedrick made the study. Went through his material, and the figure is around 3,500. OK

Nielson Page 100:

I can't find the document yet, but it's about the three alien question at Manzanar. We never looked at aliens answer to

Question #28. I found that Bogardus, team captain, wrote a report on reason for high negative answers among aliens. Borgardus says that the revised question was used way before April, back in Feb. In Manzanar Free Press around Feb. 20 second question was still being used. I'm confused.

Nielson Statement in regard to the threat of imprisonment.-- 20 years. We didn't make the threats. I thought we had it straight that the threat was not because of lack of registration, brought out in Topaz, interference was the federal offense.

Do you know who wrote that questionnaire? The Navy! We raised Cain. Is your conclusion right? Question of interference.

Should this be 117?
Nielson Page 170: "Was operated a few weeks under Army operation..." What appeared as Army operation was often WRA. I don't doubt we guarded it and may have transported.

DST My impression is that for a few weeks WRA personnel was not concerned. *OK*

Nielson Who established the policy, forced labor? Let me check it back.

Nielson Page 119: Segregation.

The history of segregation actually went back before WRA was thought of. It went back six months.

DST Reads footnote #6 on page 122 -- should come after the word "expatriation" instead of "policy"

Nielson You talk about the policy was formulated, 1942, and then give the basis.

Nielson "In the disorganized and chaotic Tule Lake . . . were made daily." (This quotation from first page of a new Chapter) (Didn't get page number)

DST Loyal going out and disloyal didn't want to go in.

Nielson Implication this is still going on and contributing to the strikes and violence.

Nielson Page 208: You quote WRA report. After all, WRA was not making decisions about who was being picked up at that time. By your using WRA position in the thing, it was inconsistent from WRA viewpoint but not from our view point. OK

DST WRA claims that the early pickups were completed by the advice of the Army.

Nielson We tried to follow thro suggestions but on this particular point Austin did not see eye to eye with WRA.

Nielson Page 221: Report by high WRA official. (Spicer)

 In first car with Austin. Misstatement that troops came in first. Not true that we were trying to show military strength. It was agreed that if there was no meeting, the soldiers would disperse around the area. Picture of kids a very interesting one. Soldiers came in, other cars came in, and started to form in a circle. Those kids did not pay any attention. Not a single one made any indication that there was a soldier or anything in that place. Kept on playing, soldiers didn't push them out, and then they suddenly just disappeared.

DST Would like to put in a footnote.

Nielson Page 319: Thousand people got lost in Tule Lake that never got out of there. Made a special trip in October expressly to work out an easy way to get the people out that don't belong there. Checked and thought we had 500. Best said there was no thousand. Went to Washington in 1944 and raised question with WRA about getting the thousand people and was told that they decided they weren't there.

Nielson Page 468: Agreement regarding excludées. The dates are wrong. Actually in November sometime, but wasn't signed until January. Agreement was entered into before the program went into effect.

Nielson Page 470: Quotation from Newell Star. "No explanation of basis of classification of Japanese or are considered potentially dangerous"

Re story of group tried in Eureka. Stupid thing, as they were not acceptable. Selective Service Board was informed. They should never have been tried.

In the Fall of '43 the situation was they decided to reinstitute Selective Service. The task was given to G.2 to screen every one of the individuals (Nisei) whether or not they were acceptable. They generally took the Joint Board determination. All notices dated January 1 and mailed to S.S.B. I think the fact that a person was segregated was a determination. Bunch at Tule Lake acceptable. Spoke to Caldwell in Jan. or Feb. of 1944, then he finally decided because of the situation at T.L. to make them all unacceptable. I don't think any of them were taken out of Tule.

Nielson Page 499: Ennis tells Besig why they backed the Denationalization Bill. Dated August 1945. Actually you will see the absurdity of Ennis' statement. Much confusion re question of repatriate losing his citizenship. In Manzanar, a statement that a request for repatriation at time of registration, law was that you could not revoke citizenship in time of war. Dept. of Justice decided to set up an orderly procedure for renunciation and got a very free hand with that Bill. Did everything to discourage them. Bill was introduced in 1944, before these organizations came into being.

Nielson Page 474: You talk here that there were no women issued exclusion orders. Maybe true for Tule Lake. There were 4 to be exact.

Nielson Page 473: "There were a small number of cases . . . were withheld. These were very unusual cases . . ." You are partially right. Anybody who had a son was automatically not served. Officers often would not serve order to those who had brothers and sisters in service. Order was returned to us with their recommendations. Decided on individual's record. Policy was, if they had a son in the service.

Nielson Page 473: "Loyalty question asked by Army officers" Five basic questions. (Here a sheet was filled out by Nielson and a promise made to send copy of actual questions). Use of term "loyal" and "disloyal." "Disloyal" or "Potentially dangerous to military security." Loyalty or disloyalty was never a test. Trained to think in terms of that. Disagreed with WRA. True that often the same act would be termed loyal or disloyal by WRA, but we eliminated many thousands of persons from exclusion program. We tried to use reason by age factors, etc. Re "Emmons" plan. Drew up complete plan in May for removing general bar. Made alternate suggestions in 1942 on the segregation idea but in 1944 we were going to take it off the areas. It was agreeable to WRA and Justice. Theory of it was that ~~xx~~ the Joint Board had at that time examined 40,000 Nisei and we had a family record. With the family make it 80,000. We could immediately handle those people en masse. As we began to get into the questionable group we would have slowed down but there would have been 80,000 immediately to come into the area. Myer fought that on several grounds. The commanding general demanded the right to exclude who he thought should be excluded, not

WRA. Myer had turned out many people from the relocation projects who we might not let back in. War Dept. told Myer to jump in the Bay. Put it up to the President and the President stopped it. Myer had done good job in selling the President on his relocation program; that they were getting out of the Centers and being relocated throughout the country. The President asked a delay in the mass exclusion and his theory was that if distributed throughout the country it solved problem of assimilation. President asked that we assimilate more back into the coast. We were already letting them drift in rather rapidly. President met Bonestell here and President went on at some length and reiterated his theory that this was an opportunity to see if we could completely assimilate what was looked on as an unassimable group. Myer unquestionably was going to put this relocation program over or bust, and instructed his people to have as few Intelligence records as possible. If he didn't know ~~he~~ he could conscientiously say it was all right.

Back to this loyal and disloyal: we never thought on these terms. Being loyal to Japan was no test. We were interested in what kind of a leader he was or how he was in the community. Never bothered about the old farm hand; not interested in kids of 17 and 18 who answered "no" unless the family picture was black.

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HEADQUARTERS SIXTH ARMY
PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

31 December 1946

Dr. Dorothy S. Thomas,
Giannini Foundation
University of California
Berkeley, California.

My dear Dr. Thomas:

My apologies for not having earlier acknowledged the receipt of the copy of your book that you so kindly sent me. I have been away from the office for some weeks and have only recently returned.

It is a very handsome job of printing and composition, and is a justice to the contents of it.

We are racing towards completion of our report, with a deadline of January 15. I had hoped to be able to submit parts of it to you for your personal consideration before completing the entire report, but, as it was done in the most disjointed fashion, there never seemed to be a time when enough of it was in final form to make sense to anyone other than ourselves. I expect to retain a copy for my own files so that if you are interested in reading it, I will be happy to let you have my copy after we close on the 15th. I am afraid I was unsuccessful in keeping out a lot of repetition, for it looks now it will run close to 1,000 pages without the appendices. However, due to the time element, I have not been able to as thoroughly edit and re-write parts of it as I would like to have done.

Before you decide you would like to read it, I repeat again that it is completely biased and at times probably quite harsh in treating critics of the evacuation and continued exclusion. However, as this was a confidential document to the War Department and not intended for publication, I did not feel that I had to temporize, for that job would be up to any person who had to utilize the material.

Thanking you again for remembering me with a copy of your book, and with Season's Greetings to yourself and your staff,

Very Sincerely Yours,

Victor W. Nielsen

January 3, 1947

Mr. Victor W. Nielsen
Headquarters Sixth Army
Presidio of San Francisco
San Francisco, California

Dear Mr. Nielsen:

Thanks for your letter of December 31. I certainly do want to read your report and look forward to the opportunity with great eagerness.

I am disturbed to note that you are "closing" on January 15. There will certainly be questions Professor Chernin and I will want to ask you in connection with our political monograph. Preferably these questions should be asked after I've had a chance to go over your report. Will you be available? Since it is so difficult to reach you by telephone, may I ask that you phone me?

Another question: What are the chances of adding your nonrestricted material to the U.C. files as part of our permanent and very valuable collection?

With cordial regards,

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy Swaine Thomas

*Copy of above sent to Nielsen
on 1/9/47*

January 17, 1947

NOTES BY MR. V. NIELSEN

Appendix III

Tab A, D and E can be used freely.

Appendix II

Tab A--Definitely confidential information from other intelligence agencies.

Tab B--Will usually show where the information comes from and must be considered as confidential. The bulk of it--~~if~~^{unless} it shows any reference to intelligence information, ~~as~~^{is} a product of our own research, ^{and} is only restricted.

Tab C--You won't be interested in this.

Appendix I

Tab A--Treat all this information as confidential, except such as is already published.

Tab B--Has to do with individual Caucasians. *(first sheet), The rest is open.*

Tab C--This is confidential; information as to mechanics, ~~not confidential.~~

Tab D-- To do with instructions to the field teams and ~~should be declassified.~~ *is confidential*

Tab E-- Different forms of Exclusion Order.

Tab F-- Definitely confidential. Summary of the history of the exclusion program.

Tab G-- Documents you are familiar with.

Tab H-- Provost Marshal's reports at time of registration, confidential.

Tab J-- Individual exclusion program of Caucasians. *(Confidential)*

Tab I-- Report by individual in Manzanar.