

BLOCK SURVEY - Block 64

Mr. Hikida; Resident of Blk 64
Mr. J. Sakoda
Mr. Spencer

History of Resettlement

S: Let's begin with the history of the Resettlement in Block 64.

H: On October 21 of last year, about forty evacuees from #1 camp moved into Block 64. Most of these forty people were crew members of the camp #1 who volunteered to work in the Mess #64 in order to provide for the volunteers from Tulare Assembly Center number in 250. Block manager, Mr. Sakae Morodomi was the leader of the group who came from camp #1. In other words, out of 500 people of the first group, the first 250 were assigned to Block 64 and the next 250 people were assigned to block 57.

due to lack of mess hall facilities, Mr. Morodomi tells of many difficulties encountered in regard to water, food and equipments. For example, water had to be brought in from Camp #1 daily.

S: Were the washroom facilities in operation,

H: No, it was not in operation until about ten days later. Also around that time, valley fever and diarrhea cases increased and made it rather difficult.

Block 64 at that time was the center of all activities.

S: Do you know how mess crew and the chief cook were appointed,

H: They were appointed in Camp #1 and came here.

S: Did the chief cook retain the position very long,

H: He held the position for about two to three months. He is a kibel of twenty-seven years old, who was a mess cook in the U. S. Army but was discharged at the outbreak of the war because he was a kibel.

S: What were the living quarters like, how were the divisions of the room to a family made (made) when they first came?

H: It was very crowded and many families had to double up in a room. But as soon as other barracks were set up, ready to take people in, they made their own adjustments. This, however, was not permitted until about two months later. At present, there are 270 people in this block.

S: These people were from the Turlock Assembly Center,

H: Forty from Turlock and 250 from Tulare.

S: The two hundred fifty from the Tulare were the advanced group who

came to build up for the coming people. What capacity were they engaged,

H: Many were connected with the warehouses, such as distribution of mess supplies, beddings, baggage, etc.

S: When did the population become stable in the block,

H: About two months later. I think it was sometime in October, 1942.

S: As the block began to function as units, stoves were distributed in these blocks in the latter part of December, isn't that right. Before that time you had considerable cold weather. What were the rumors and fears that were spreading about the block in regard to people,

H: Such rumors, particularly the ones coming from older people made it difficult as the councilman and block managers were criticized as being incapable of negotiating with the administration.

S: When did the linoleum come in,

H: Linoleum came in March 31 until May 2.

S: Did you have your linoleum laid for you or were they laid for you,

H: The assigned crew laid them for each apartment.

S: When did the partitioning began,

H: Partitioning began around/^{the}first part of 1943 or the latter part of 1942.

J: It's nice how they partition 4 in a family rooms as well as 6 in a family rooms. In Tule Lake, they only partition 6 in a family rooms.

Family Distribution in the Block 64 (Also See Appendix)

S: Would you say that in most cases, with the exception of the single men's dormitory, that the families remained in tact,

H: Yes, they were in tact. When the partitioning began, matters of two in a family living with another couple were soon solved and settled. I don't know of any case where the two different families are living in the same apartment with the exception of few special cases where a single man staying with another family and a couple staying with another family.

Definition of Kibei

S: What is your definition of kibei?

H: Not one who has been in Japan one or two years, but one who has gone through grammar school and middle school. Also the family background has lots to do with kibeï, and the culture they have attained.

S: That brings up the point of block activity which adds in identifying a typical nisei or kibeï.

Moving In and Out of Block of the family

S: Were there any families moving out of the block,

H: Yes, there was one case. Rev. Izumi, 30 years old, a kibeï Christian pastor. Reasons for his moving out are as follows:

1. Locate himself nearer to the church.
2. (personal opinion) did not have very many friends in this block.
3. His educational background and being a young married couple he had little friends who shared his interests, and of his level.

J: Many young couples have difficulty adjusting themselves if the block has too many isseis and their young children. It is very rare for a Nisei couples to make adjustments with the isseis.

S: You then had very little movement from this block?

H: Yes, very few. About a week ago, there was a gradual movement in the next door. The family consisted of five children with no parents.

1. brother - resettled in Cinn., Ohio
2. brother - volunteered
3. brother - only one left in the project so moved in with his other friends in another block
4. sister - resettled
5. sister - resettled

In their place, a man of 55 by the name Nakashima moved in. He is a very ardent Christian and could not get along in Block #55 where Buddhist group predominated.

S: What would say is the approximate ration of Buddhist and Christian in this block?

H: I would say about 4 Buddhists to 1 christian.

Block Personnel

S: Who is the block manager?

H: Mr. Sakae Morodomi is the block manager. He is formerly from Concord, California, near Berkeley. He was evacuated to Turlock Assembly Center. He is 56 years old, Issei, Buddhist, and is a widower. He lives with his married son and two unmarried daughters.

He was a former president of the Japanese Association. He was not interned. He was appointed by Mr. Henderson, former head of the Housing Department and has been the block manager since the initial settlement. He gets along very well with the people, approved by the Administration staff and gives equal consideration to all people, whether they come from Turlock or from Tulare. He is very well received and has great ability of getting along with people. He probably obtained this experience through being the president of the association and where he learned to use tact in handling people. As for my personal opinion, he lacks one thing -and that is, he lacks aggressiveness.

S: Who is the assistant block manager?

H: He is a young nisei boy, 28 years old, Albert Yamamoto. Altho he is a nisei, he gets along well with Issei--very different from the typical nisei. He is very quiet, hard working, speaks Japanese fairly well and does things that Issei would consider proper.

S: Is he married,

H: He is still a single man, and lives with his parents and sisters and brothers.

S: Do brothers and sisters act different from this boy?

H: Yes. He is the eldest. The rest of the brothers and sisters act like a typical nisei.

J: Does he go dancing?

H: He isn't that kind of fellow.

J: He must be very submissive type, satisfied with very little which is considered a perfect type by the Issei.

H: As far as block manager personnel is concerned, it is a very good combination.

S: Aside from mess personnel, block manager personnel, how about other personnels - do you have janitors?

H: We used to have two couples take care of washing room and washrooms but one man and a woman is now assigned, on same work two couples formerly did. This was necessary as they cut down number of workers in all departments.

S: They were all Isseis?

H: Yes.

S: For what purposes is your ironing room being used?

H: For the extension of mess hall. They used it for vegetable store room.

S: How many members are there in the mess hall?

- H: About thirty-six. Mess hall crew were originally made up of Turlock volunteers but was gradually taken over by the Tulare group.
- S: How about the chief cook?
- H: Tulare.
- S: How many changes did you have for chief cook?
- H: Three.
- S: What has happened to your original Turlock mess hall crew?
- H: The first five or six months, we have had no trouble but now, we are having considerable troubles.
- S: Do you find that Turlock people tended to band together to the exclusion of Tulare people?
- H: It is not caused so much by sectional feeling but more or less by personal grievances.
- S: Many of these mess people seem to be very cliquish. Do you find that to be true in your mess hall?
- H: No, not very much.
- S: Does Turlock people stay in the block after they quit their mess hall work?
- H: I think they have moved out because most of these people were singlemen, and they they get another mess hall work, they would move into that block.
- J: Do you know if they have gone back to Camp #1?
- H: No, because it is forbidden to move back to Camp #1 which is overcrowded.
- S: Once having volunteered to come here, they had to stay here. What are some of the cause of friction?
- H: Main friction in the mess hall is that wife of the supervisor uses her authority when she has no right to do so. She gets so bossy that workers become rebellious toward the supervisor and quit.
- S: Has there been a desire on the people to get mess hall job?
- H: At the beginning, everyone was fighting for the mess hall jobs. Now, they say they rather work in some other block's mess hall in order to stay away from troubles.
- S: Has there been object on the type of menu you serve? Does that have anything to do with ousting of supervisor or cooks?
- H: No, not in this block.

S: In block #54, the cooks tend to cook almost everything in shoyu.

H: As far as menu is concerned, there is no criticism against cooks or supervisor but we do have personal feeling against a crew and have been forced to resign, but not ousted.

S: They would resign because of pressure against the block supervisor. Are the menu satisfactory? Are there emphasis on Japanese type of cooking?

H: Yes, greatly on the Japanese type of cooking.

There is a good deal of rivalry between two crews. On one crew the supervisor is the chief cook, and on other crew, the chief cook is the head. One of the worker in the crew with which supervisor does not take part, happened to serve two teaspoonfuls of sugar at a breakfast for coffee. This was welcomed by the people but made the other crew very unpopular. The following day, the wife of the supervisor called down on this young man and inquired why he had served two teaspoonfuls of sugar when he was instructed to serve only one. This was the cause of the friction, as the boy grew very angry and said "you have no authority to tell me what to do."

S: At the time of the opening of the camouflage, they wanted to get the Issei into the mess hall and get the young people out of it. Is that true in this block? What was the reaction in this block?

H: They were very strongly against it. They were not an organized objection but one of the arguments was that even if such step was taken, no one would go into camouflage. They were originally against the camouflage net factory.

S: Was that noted in this block?

H: Yes, they argued, "why do they pick only on the mess hall divisions? What about the office staff, the farers, the warehouses, etc."

J: What type of people work in this block's mess hall? Are they mostly Isseis?

H: Relationship between Niseis and Isseis in the mess hall crew were pretty sharp at the beginning. When the Issei women, mostly waitresses began to work in the mess hall to replace nisei, there were many feelings against each other. Some of the complaints I heard against the nisei were that nisei were not very competent, and would carry no responsibility. When inquired further to this question, they stated that nisei would rest whenever it pleased them and would walk off, if there should be a movie or dancing going on that evening without completing their assigned task. I understand that the mess crew held a meeting one night in regard to this question and put up the question quite strongly against the Nisei and since then, the relationship has improved.

- S: What are the different types of mess hall workers, and the type of work?
- H: cooking and dishwashing is done mostly by Issei, predominantly singlemen. Most of the kibeis are cook's helper and some are dishwashers.
- S: Could you give approximation of number of of nisei, kibeis, and issei in the mess hall crew?
- H: I would say about 60% issei, and about 20% each of nisei and kibeis. The nisei that work in the mess halls are more of the Japanese type so they get along well with the issei and kibeis.
- S: What would you say is the approximation of the percentage of kibeis and nisei in this block?
- H: About 60% issei and 40% nisei.
- S: Does mess supervisor enjoy any particular privileges?
- H: He sits with the block manager at the block council meeting. The first supervisor was a kibeis, and thesecond and third were issei.
- S: councilman, who up to this time, has been a nisei, I suppose?
- H: Not exactly a nisei. He is a citizen-issei who has served in the World War, an ex-serviceman, Mr. Umeda. Election was held sometime on the latter part of October or November. There were three candidates, names, Mr. Umeda, 47, Mr. Miyamoto (Hawaiian born, 40), and Ernest Iwasaki, nisei. Mr. Umeda was elected on an one-sided score. He got most of the vote. He has had more association with the block people prior to election, being an issei, who speaks Japanese well. There was another group backing up Mr. Iwasaki pretty strongly but he did not get it.
- J: Was there any difference in the group that backed Mr. Iwasaki and Mr. Umeda? On what basis were they separated?
- H: Not so much against the candidates themselves but somewhat strong reaction was shown toward people supporting the candidates. More Americanized people were supporting Iwasaki while more Japanese people supported Umeda. Mr. Umeda seemed to have most of the Tulare people's support. It seems that during pre-evacuation days, the group supporting Iwasaki and Umeda had some sort of friction.
- Of course, Mr. Iwasaki did not accept candidacy at the beginning but some of the supporters of the Iwasaki persuaded him to become a candidate. These people went around asked for his support.
- S: who were Iwasaki's constituent as opposed to Umeda's? of whom were they comprised?

J: Were there any feud prior to evacuation or sectional reasons?

H: I think it is of economic reasons. One party came from the same town as Mr. Umeda who has not been well off in prior days of evacuation and had begrudged him. Iwasaki was victim of circumstances.

S: Was there issei and nisei vote?

H: I think issei were supporting Umeda and nisei supported Iwasaki.

S: Has Mr. Umeda been attending meeting regularly?

H: No, but he is a man of good character, easy to get along with, and likes people. He also lacks aggression and leadership. Whenever problem rises and brought for discussion by some group with pressure, he does not have the ability to solve it.

S: How about his ability to handle English?

H: Not very good.

J: Then he is very weak on council floor?

H: I don't think he is very strong. Altho I have never attended the meeting, he could not be very strong due to his speech.

S: Block Council, how is it?

H: There seems to be a majority and minority differences carried over from days before relocation to Gila. Funny part is that there is a definite break geographically and psychologically. On barracks #1 to seven, the residents are from Santa Barbara, Oxnard region and were united strongly from the Tulare days, which constitutes the majority. On barracks # 8 to 14, the residents are from various places as Los Angeles, Lompoc, San Francisco, etc, and constitutes the minority group.

S: Who constitutes the council?

H: Each councilman is a representative of each barrack, the block manager and the mess supervisor.

S: How are the councilman selected?

H: Usually a group of men of the same barrack would be gathered and during discussion would pick a man whom they think would qualify for the position. When the rest agrees, they would call on the approved man, and would have him accept the position.

J: Are they mostly issei?

H: Yes.

J: That's how issei gain control. The council itself has no power. That group elects the chairman, and who is he?

H: Mr. Kono of Santa Barbara.

S: His function is to direct the meeting of the council. do they have a secretary?

H: No, because minutes are not kept. If it is necessary to do so, the block manager usually acts as secretary.

S: what are some of the exact issues that has come up to the block council?

H: Usually when any new administrative announcement or request comes from block manager or councilman, they take up the matter and discuss it. If they cannot decide it for themselves, they would bring it up to the block mass meeting and ask for their reactions. Any mess hall problems or block problems are taken up by the block council.

S: do they meet regularly?

H: All other blocks are meeting once a week regularly but in this block, they usually meet once every two week.

S: For example, you have a proposal of camouflage net factory. I gather from your previous remark there was a opposition to the net factory. Is that advised by the block council?

H: No, the matter was brought up directly to the mass meeting instead of discussing at the council.

S: did the council take a stand at the registration of men and women? Significant issue which affects everyone is taken up at the block mass meeting?

H: Yes, and insignificant matters are discussed by the block council meeting.

Block Activities

S: In relationship to block activities, who had an elaborate plan or anized for the formulation of the activity within the block? How did you organize that plan?

H: As far as issei's activities are concerned, it was functioned throu district and not through the block. we held two lectures, and one movie. Each district comprises of five or six blocks. block 64 is a member of the District #6. community Activity Services did not receive very good support from the Block 64 because such intellectual activities as organized by the CAS did not suit so well to the resident of this block who are mostly hard working farmers. They do not appreciate these things.

J: They are predominantly rural people.

H: GAS performed one sanitation lecture, and a juvenile delinquency lecture and placed great effort in putting it over but the response was not very good. Delicious meal was cooked for them but they did not know how to eat it.

young people had also organized a block activity but it did not go over well. To date, they had three or four dance practices in the laundry room. They were refused to use the mess hall for dancing party purposes by the supervisor. The 64 recreational hall is occupied by the internal security Department.

S: There is a great deal of resistance to allow the use of mess hall for social purposes. It is almost may be said a policy.

H: He is willing to let people use it for everything aside from dance party. He is against the idea of dancing.

S: Is there any opposition or resentment of the use of recreation hall by the internal security Department?

H: No. They think it cannot be helped.

S: Does people prefer to seek activities in the block or as community?

H: In the community.

S: Then the block is not too well solidified.

H: We had a pretty good Christmas party and a New Year party but others did not go over. I try to bring up some social activities from time to time but people are just not interested at all. There are always three or four issei who object against social.

J: Is the objection on the part of wholesale or small part?

H: On the small part but others do not take interest.

S: Does the object come from any particular group?

H: No, it is not in any sectional group. Majority of the people in this block probably had limited social life prior to evacuation and are not interested in association with the people only within their own group. When proposal was made for Xmas and new year party, there were some opposition, arguing "why spend so much" and were not very agreeable when they had to contribute their parts. It is purely pre-evacuation background.

J: you have a Haiku club on this project. How many people take part in this club from this block?

H: Very few. Myself and two other friends who were also formerly of city.

S: There is no rivalry in the block concept?

H: No.

S: There is then a maintenance of pre-evacuation ties. That is clearly demonstrated. Do you find much interest in such games as "go"?

H: No, not very much in "go" but many in "shogi".

J: It is indicative of rural state.

H: One of the common shame of the block is the after-meal gossip or talk. Ten to fifteen issei group would sit down in front of someone's porch after meal and would discuss the various current events of the world as well as of the project.

S: What do they talk about mostly?

H: About the war mainly.

S: What sort of people get together to talk?

H: Not exactly a leader. While returning from meal, they would have a spontaneous gathering and you would find one or two person who would lead into various discussion. Passer-by who is interested in the subject would stop, listen, then add his worth in the discussion. Then this would go on and on, each expression their point of view.

J: Again, do you find division of block?

H: No.

S: Do you find very many single man activities?

H: No, not very much gambling in this block. But we do have pretty good number of them.

S: No gathering of prostitution?

H: No, do they have such things in this project?

S: Yes, we have had one or two places. What are the outstanding topics of this after-meal talks?

H: Among those are ones who are always quoting resentment against camouflage or registration.

J: Was that attitude in general?

H: In general but usually among the same group. This after-meal talk had a psychological effect - a man who has little better knowledge than the group on some subject would helplessly lead the people into discussion and the people with same interest would naturally become interested in the conversation and would express his opinion.

S: Is there interest in reading American papers as against the Rocky Nippo and Colorado Times?

- H: Among those who gather after-meal talk are readers of Japanese newspapers. You can count persons who reads American papers (6 or 7) but they do not gather around to talk. Mr. Abe, a friend of mine, subscribes to Los Angeles Examiner but have never saw him join their discussion group.
- J: Do you have a tendency for a certain family to keep themselves apart from the rest of the block? More or less isolated - maybe 4 or 5 families by themselves?
- H: There are few.
- J: On what basis are they isolated?
- H: Simply because of the past community background. They think themselves of being higher in the social status. In pre-evacuation days, they were more or less different from the rest of the people who are from the rural sections. City people take more indifferent attitude towards those who come from the rural sections. Two or three from city would ignore the rural people.
- J: I wonder if there were any evidence of maintaining of pre-evacuation association such as ken organization?
- H: No.
- S: Is there any recognition of such thing?
- H: No, no organizational association but there is a close contact among same ken people. Among the children of ten to fifteen years old, there is a tendency of grouping up from pre-evacuation period. I come from San Francisco and am more or less stranger in this section and feel that my children are left out of some of the things. Whenever something comes up, even children seem to take sides. I, coming from San Francisco and being secretary of the Japanese Association do not know what the general attitude of the people would be toward my family but this may have something to do with it. Of course, we have no particular ill-feeling but there is that strain of feelings.

Problem of Military Registration and Englishments

- S: What was the block attitude?
- H: ^a It is/very difficulty statement to make in regard to a definite conclusion toward military registration. I attended many public meetings in regard to this registration. Anyone who advised in answering "yes" to the questions #27 and #28 were very unpopular.
- J: Were there very many people who stood for answering "yes" on 27 and 28?
- H: No, because they were very unpopular if they did so.
- S: Do you know of any particular family who stood out definitely for answering "yes" and who became isolated from that consequences?
- H: No.

S: Was the block unanimously against answering "yes"?

H: No, because there were some people who made no definite stand answered it "yes". The people did not make definite stand in answering either "yes" or "no" at the block gatherings, but I do know some who did make a definite stand at the public meetings held by the community.

S: As a block it did not have any definite influence?

H: No, I know some parents who held a closed-door affairs and discussed the problem. I did not attend the meeting so I do not know the result but as I came in contact individually, there seems to be quite a few "no".

S: Similar attitude would have taken place for enlistment?

H: When there was that recruitment for the language school, one of the boy from this block left for Camp Savage. The feeling was very high against him at that time. The block manager, one day, proposed a farewell party for this boy and they responded "What's the use of having a farewell party for a fellow like that!" and the manager was placed in an embarrassing position. The mother was quite badly shaken by that attitude.

J: What are some of the arguments they gave against their volunteering?

H: Fight against your fatherland.

J: They also say that if we have not been discriminated and did not have to evacuate, we would have gladly sent our sons to fight for their country, but as we are under present circumstance, they do not see why they must fight for it.

S: How about resettlement?

H: About the same attitude. But on this issue, the young people of this block took a very aggressive attitude. If the individual family seem to have had some resentment against such issue as registration and camouflage net factory, they eventually seem to take active part in the end through the influence of their sons or daughters.

S: During the camouflage net factory and registration, did the nisei go when issei put up oppositions?

H: No, no definite stand was made. It was very quiet but many nisei took part in working in the factory. Father at first would be very much against it but when his son comes home with a large check, the parents' attitude would change gradually and in the end entirely favors the idea.

J: Same would be true with resettlement, wouldn't it? If would if the family is in good position to resettle, don't you think?

H: Yes. In regard to this block, in conclusion I would like to say that there are four or five people who are continuously bringing up arguments upon any issues which refers to evacuees, and the block is never able to make any united stand on an issue.

S: Were there anyone who were apprehended by the FBI?

H: No.

J: Could you trace the background of those who are always causing trouble in your

your block without naming them?

H: They come from a family who are having difficulty with their own domestic affairs - perhaps the wife does not get along with him, or he is separated or divorced.

THE END