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Tom Hiraashima letter

April 6, 1942

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Summerland, California  
April 6, 1942

Dear Burr,

I thank you for your letter. Believe me I was very happy to learn that you think of me. In these hectic uncertain times good friends are one of the strong pillars we lean against.

As you know the effects of the war on the Japanese, aliens & U.S. citizens residing here have been & are considerably more difficult than for the other racial groups which make up the populace of America. For the duration of the war my rights of citizenship have been taken from me; there are now certain restrictions which I must observe & the time will soon come <sup>when</sup> ~~that~~ I must evacuate with my fellow Americans of Japanese ancestry. Although most of us feel that the action taken against us is both undemocratic & unnecessary, we are not bitter and are making every effort to cooperate with our government in this great undertaking of moving some 130,000 Japanese inland. The taking away of many of my rights has only made me more appreciative of the freedom that I had <sup>heretofore</sup> enjoyed as a U.S. citizen; freedom which I had heretofore accepted as the natural thing — just like the air we breathe. Freedom is no longer just a pretty word to me; it is life to me now. Man is now able to move from one part of the world to another part in a short time. No country

can now remain isolated from the people of the world. Today, we realize that part of the world cannot be slave + part free. It must all be free if ever we are to realize a brotherhood of man. The issues in this war are the greatest of all man's issues, and as I think of it in these terms, the temporary position in which I am placed is a small matter. The important thing is that we must win this war + since it has been ruled that we must pull up roots + move to government camps for the duration we shall do it cheerfully and with continued faith in America, her principles, institutions + people.

My two brothers are in the army. One will soon complete his training in an intensive 6 months course of study at Presidio. The other is in Arkansas.

I leased my ranch to a very good party. Leaving it in good hands is a great comfort to me and I am thankful that I have it and can continue to hold it as it means we will have a place to return to after the war.

Do you remember the rootstock seedlings you obtained for me? ~~I had the buds on them~~ They made ~~for~~ a good lemon nursery + we were going to set out the trees now, but because of evacuation was forced to give up the planting of them. The lemon trees were 1-A, and the necessity of not planting ~~now~~ them

sadden us a great deal. I often thought of you  
as I cared for the trees.

I am very glad to hear about you. You must be  
happy in your family & work life. I'd like very  
much to see you, Eva & little Janet. Little  
Janet 2 1/2 years + 1! How time flies! And here  
I am — still a bachy.

We are all well. Mother & dad asked me  
to ~~send~~ give their regards to you & your  
family. Please give my regards to Eva.

Sincerely,

Josh Hirashima



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