

Tomi Shibutani  
Tule Lake, California

September 16, 1942

First Educational Conference Between Administration and Colonists on

July 22, 1942

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In reply to the many questions asked by the colonists, we found out the following things: A library was being planned; the Sacramento state librarian was consultant to the W.R.A. for the selection of books. All work done in the Tule Lake schools would receive full credits in other schools; all records were being kept in fireproof vaults -- same as in outside schools. The State Board of Education was interested in seeing all California citizens have a California standard of education. Elementary school teachers would be paid \$1620 and high school teachers would get \$2000. From kindergarten to the sixth grade there would be 1,500 students, while the high school would have 2,000. All teachers



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September 21, 1942

Mass Meeting of Strikers on Sunday, August 16, 1942

Large groups of men began gathering at the firebreak about 7:30. The Christians were holding their meeting at which Rev. Foote was the guest speaker. Since the Christians held the outdoor platform and had the P.A. system, the agreement was that they would leave at 8 and that the strike meeting would take place there at that time. If the Christians were not through, then the strikers would meet at the sumo ring.

Since the Christians started their program late, as usual, the meeting was far from over at 8. In fact, the main speaker had not even been introduced. The men disgustedly walked over to the sumo ring but found that they could not hold a meeting because no one could speak loud enough. There were thousands of men present by this time. The crowd was made up virtually entirely of Issei and Kibei; there were very few Nisei present. The whole group was milling around restlessly. The atmosphere was tense and people were ready for everything. Small groups of ten or fifteen men got together and angrily denounced one thing or another. Some men went from huddle to huddle to see what was going on. It was quite obvious that the men were angry and wanted to get the P.A. system and get started. The strike committee members stood in the sumo ring pleading for order, but they were not heard. All the members of the committee seemed a little nervous. Agitators were going from group to group spiling about the ills of the camp.

The Christian meeting dragged on and on. In spite of the pleading of the leaders the men gradually began walking over toward the platform. Hoots, claps, and boos could be heard. Issei spoke in Japanese, "That's enough! That's enough!" Agitators began yelling for the men to storm the platform and take the mike away. The men started forward en masse, but stopped short



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at the end of the street and angrily glared at the speaker. One old man declared disgustedly, "Keto no yatsu was yelokonde kitoru to omote, ishokome ni yali agateru." (Thinking we enjoy it, the damn keto is trying so hard.) Finally, at 8:45, 45 minutes after the appointed time, the Christians called their meeting to a halt even though it was not over yet because the yelling was almost unbearable. The chairman apologized profusely to the speaker, and the group left.

The man with the P.A. system had not been told about the second meeting and started taking his equipment away. He was stopped by some of the farm group, which had rushed up immediately before all the little Christians left. The man in panic asked over the loudspeaker for the leader of the group to come up. Mr. Katsuyama of the construction crew was still at the sumo ring trying to hold the men back so the man had to ask again and again. He also pointed out that since it was getting dark, additional bulbs would be necessary. He spoke three times and the fourth time he opened his mouth, one man yelled in Japanese, "Nihon go de yale!" (Speak in Japanese!) The young Nisei immediately quieted down as dozens of people began yelling the same thing. The Issei were utterly disgusted. They could not see why Nisei (whom they consider to be Japanese) should speak the hated language.

Mr. Katsuyama came rushing up to the platform as the men started grumbling and started saying that they ought to beat up anyone who speaks English. Mr. Katsuyama immediately started speaking in Japanese and calmed the men down. He then explained that bulbs were needed. Men angrily looked around for bulbs when they learned that that was what was holding up the proceedings. People sitting at the nearby houses immediately took bulbs off of their porch lights and little children dashed up to the platform with them. They were immediately put in place, and the meeting began.



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Mr. Kato of the farm group was the first speaker. He spoke very well in polite Japanese and seemed like a very sensible man. He outlined the efforts of Mr. Shirrell and asked for a sensible solution. While the men listened to him, it was quite apparent that they were not in complete sympathy with his views. When Mr. Kato remarked that the greatest complaint against the present committee was that it wasn't doing enough, he was greeted with hearty applause.

Mr. Katsuyama then outlined the proceedings of the day. He told how the committee had met with Mr. Cook, Mr. Hayes, and Mr. Stults and explained the demands that had been made upon these three. Apparently the Caucasians had agreed to do everything asked for. He then gave a very poor translation of Mr. Shirrell's telegram saying that shoes had been purchased in S.F. Then, he presented the demands that had been made by the City Council (demands which Shirrell had taken to S.F. with him). Since his Japanese was so poor, it sounded as if he were saying that the following were the things that the committee would hold out for rather than something that the Council had asked for weeks ago. The Council had demanded: (1) pay increases to \$30, \$35, and \$40 a month; (2) clothing for everyone in the camp; and, (3), a \$5 monthly allowance for everyone. Thinking that these were the demands that Shirrell had taken to S.F., the men applauded wildly.

With this, the meeting broke up at 9:40, but some remained to complain. Most of the men had started on their way home when a handful of hotheads rushed up to the platform and challenged the men who had spoken. Words got hotter and hotter, and some of those who had started for home started running back shouting "Nagure! Nagure!" (Beat him up!) thinking that there was a fight. The men did not know who was fighting or over what issue, but they all came running back, and in a few minutes thousands of people were back, this



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virtually surrounding the platform. Mr. Katsuyama desperately tried to control the mob and asked them to sit down again and then started the meeting all over again.

Apparently the chief cook in mess 26 had started the trouble. He kept insisting that in spite of the promises of the keto, his kitchen did not have enough food for breakfast tomorrow morning. When Mr. Katsuyama learned of this, he pledged that he would take the matter up with the keto tonight. He said that the keto had promised him that there would never be a shortage of food and that he would hold the keto to that promise even if it cost him his life. The men were still not satisfied, and when he asked which kitchens other than 26 were without food, many numbers were shouted.

By this time the chairman discovered that all the men in his committee had deserted him and that he was facing the crowd alone. Fully realizing that his life was in danger, he appealed to the men that if any of them had complaints to make would they please come on the platform. No one moved. The men who had yelled the most were called upon by the fellows to get up on the platform, but they shrunk away and backed down. Finally after much confusion one Issei in overalls got up on the platform amid huge applause.

The speaker was very clever. He had the reputation of being an actor and after hearing him talk no one would question the fact. He spoke very distinctly and in excellent Japanese (excellent for workmen); he quoted ancient sayings and tied them up with the points he was trying to make. He held the crowd at the tip of his fingers following with their gaping mouths every movement that he made. He began by saying that the people on the outside were suffering and were having to do without many things that they had always had; however, since the Japanese did not come here of their own accord, there is no reason why we should suffer. This was greeted with great applause. He went



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on and tied up the food situation with the canteen and said that the canteens were an evil because it forced Japanese to spend money.

Another man got up and severely scolded all the men. This man was reputed to be a former soldier in the Japanese Army and was apparently respected by the men because no one dared to oppose him. He angrily bawled out the men for not upholding the spirit of the Japanese "yamato damashi." He told the people that they were acting like a bunch of women and children, crying simply because they were a little hungry. He ended by saying, "Let's show these damn keto that we are true Japanese and that we can live and die like true Japanese." The crowd quieted down and did not say much.

By this time all Caucasians were referred to as "anoyatsu." Thus far the only appeal that had worked was appealing to the men's racial pride. Some of the leaders capitalized on this and went on. They explained that the Nisei were finally getting to realize that they are Japanese and that the keto was not to be trusted. There were many mumbles but no more people got up to speak.

Since no one else was saying anything, the chairman put up the final question for a vote: shall we go to work tomorrow? He said that his own construction crew would have to work because they were putting up sheet rock and that if they stopped working the keto wouldn't care, but the Japanese would suffer. The other vaguely agreed to appear for work, and the crowd went home.

After the meeting a small group of farm leaders conferred in front of the platform, wondering what they should do the next day. The problem was this: if some should stay home, should the others go to work? It was quite apparent that there was a great deal of confusion in the minds of everyone present in spite of the fact that the entire thing had been carried on in Japanese. The antipathy toward any Caucasian was equally apparent.



Shibutani  
9/15/42

#### NEW ARRIVALS

Groups had been coming in from Pinedale now for some time. By July 20, most of the people were already in. This was the last group of people to come in, and the system for receiving them had been pretty well worked out after some trouble with receiving people from Arboga and Wallerga.

The S.P. train which was due at 8:30 came in about 8:40. Mr. Shirrell was out across the tracks to meet the people as they came in. Trucks were all lined up and soldiers with repeating rifles were standing all around. About 75 people, mostly young, stood behind the barbed wires searching for their friends who were due on the day.

The train consisted of fifteen cars including three diners and three freight cars. Four cars of passengers were unloaded at a time and the people were led directly to the waiting trucks and taxis. The Negro porters and dining hall waiters all stood by waving good bye to the people as they left the train and disappeared into the gate. About this time a gruff soldier came by on the other side of the row of barbed wire stretched on four by four posts. Many of the Nisei merely gave dirty looks and stepped back until he passed and they went right back and leaned on the fence again.

There was a regular nurse on the train. One patient on a stretcher was shoved through the window directly to the ambulance (two were on hand). There were soldiers with big guns standing on every car. The first group of three taxis and nine trucks left and the passengers from the other cars had to wait for a while. The group was dressed in all imaginable ways. Some wore dresses, hats and heels; whereas others were dressed in slacks. Some wore suits and others wore sport sweaters.

The engine left with the freight cars and left the passenger cars on the track. In the meantime the first trucks that left returned and picked up the remaining passengers. The last truck left at 9:07. The whole procedure had taken exactly 25 minutes.<sup>1</sup>

The evacuees were then taken to a registration office located somewhere near the barracks that they would occupy. They were there assigned their rooms. A few days later Mr. Shirrell would address them and tell them of the general nature of the camp life. All newcomers are required to take physical examinations.

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1. Taken from field notes, July 20, 1942



A Report on

THE TULE LAKE RELOCATION CENTER

as of

June 21, 1942

The following is nothing more than a rough sketch of the facilities at the Tule Lake Relocation Center for Japanese evacuees. It does not entail any careful research; rather it is nothing more than a brief summary of the things that came to our attention during our first week in the Center. While we feel that most of the data presented are reasonably accurate, some of the details are subject to checking. It must be emphasized that some of the details included in this report pertain only to block 4, and the details in the other blocks may be different.

Please do not quote any portion of this report for any purpose whatsoever. This is nothing more than a summary of first impressions, and everything contained herein must be checked and rechecked for accuracy. Careless use of material of this nature forms the basis for many wierd and unfounded rumors, and such a state of affairs is not conducive to a happy and well-balanced camp life.

Tamotsu Shibutani

Tule Lake Relocation Center  
Tulelake, California



The Tule Lake project is in northern California, a few miles south of the Oregon border. It consists of 30,000 acres of land owned by the Federal Bureau of Reclamation. The camp is huge with seemingly never ending rows upon rows of uniformly built barracks. The farming area is separated from the living area by a mountain, and it cannot be seen from the Center. The climate is moderate and sometimes fairly warm. Reports are that the temperature ranges from 93° to 11° below zero. Some snow is expected in the winter. The lake itself is by now rather small and out of sight from the living quarters. The area is not too windy, although dust accumulates rather rapidly, partly because of the abundance of soft ash in the soil.

The administrative personnel is kind, courteous, and helpful. They are unusually attentive and sympathetic to the evacuees. There is a large staff of Caucasian workers, most of them well trained for their work in camp. All suggestions from the camp residents are considered, in fact, the administrative personnel live with the evacuees in the camp. The facilities enjoyed by the administrative men and their families are not much better than those of the residents; their rooms are slightly larger and the partitions are built in, but that is about the only difference. All of the W.R.A. men seem to have a very democratic and Christian attitude toward the evacuees and their problems. Everything possible is being done to improve the camp.

At present, there are 36 completed blocks in the Center. More are now in construction, and the capacity of the camp is to be in the vicinity of 18,000 inhabitants. The blocks are grouped together into wards (nine blocks in a ward) and the wards are separated by huge firebreaks. In each block there is a mess hall, a recreation hall, an ironing room, a laundry building, two men's shower and toilet buildings and two women's shower and toilet buildings, and a special office and supply room for the block manager. In each block there are twelve barracks with four rooms (20 by 25 feet each) for families of four or over. There are also two barracks in each block with six rooms of about 16 by 20 feet for couples and families of three. Bachelors live in the regular rooms for large families, six to a room.

The houses are built somewhat along lines of those in the Assembly Centers, but they are built for more permanent use. Each room, when completed (many rooms are not yet finished) has firtex linings on the walls and ceilings (not roof bottoms). Larger rooms have either five or six windows apiece (all can be opened) while the smaller ones have three or four. Some of the rooms have screens to keep out the flies and mosquitoes, which are plentiful. The doors in the larger rooms are double, but those of the smaller rooms are single. Each room has a stove (wood and coal) and each room has a box in front where coal and wood can be delivered in the winter. The cots in the rooms are canvas, but the mattresses are thick enough to take out the hard feeling. All mattresses are cotton. All other furniture must be made by the evacuees unless they wish to send for their furniture left in storage (expenses paid by the W.R.A.). Huge warehouses are now in construction to keep material for the residents. Huge wood-piles over 100 yards square can be found in various parts of the camp, but the lumber is disappearing so rapidly that it is doubtful if those who come later will get any choice wood. Small pieces of wood are being collected by trucks to be stored for winter burning.



The basic sanitation facilities are the same in all the blocks, but the care and upkeep depends largely upon the block manager and the residents in that particular block. Some blocks have recruited workers and have improved their basic facilities. In block four both the men and women latrines have partitions; the showers have wooden floors with blocks for shorter people; the showers are adjustable for hot and cold water; and there is a perpetual supply of hot water because there is a man on duty watching the boilers and cleaning the latrines all day. The supply of toilet paper is plentiful and the latrines are clean. All toilets have running water and a flush system. Anticipating the winter snow, some blocks have built porches in front of the toilet and shower buildings and covers for the coal and wood boxes. Some individuals have even gone so far as to make porches in front of their homes.

The mess halls, like other facilities, differ from block to block. In block four the food is served family style. Seats are assigned and food is brought to the table by waitresses. Everyone is given all the food he can eat. Meat in some form or another is served almost every day. Fresh vegetable salads are served about every other day. Some dessert (usually pudding) is served with lunch and dinner. Apparently the food supply is ample. Everyone has a choice of drinks: milk, tea, or water. Sugar is served in bowls in the morning, and butter is usually available whenever bread is on the table. Sometimes, when there is a shortage, milk is restricted to those under 12. The serving plates vary in size--those for the main course are about 10 by 15 inches while other foods are served in smaller plates. All plates and utensils are provided by the kitchen and no one is required to wash his own dishes. Meals are served in one shift for the mess halls are large enough to accommodate more than the people living in one block.

The employment office is operated under the direction of a trained man. All placements made now are temporary, and workers sign up with that understanding. This arrangement was necessitated by the condition of the camp. Workers had to be recruited immediately to perform various tasks, but if employment were permanent, those who came later would not be able to get desirable jobs. Therefore, arrangements have been made for shifting about the personnel later when more qualified men are in camp.

The recreation division is now in full swing. With a relatively large staff they have already organized softball teams, ping pong games, wrestling and boxing, and other sports. Tennis enthusiasts are now planning to make a clay court. Dances are held weekly. A library is also open. Recreation for both young and old are now being planned. A number of playgrounds are in construction in the various firebreaks.

Religious groups are given complete freedom of worship in the camp. Naturally the expression of pro-Japanese sentiments would be frowned upon, but otherwise, in line with democratic tradition, there is no censorship of any kind in the camp. As yet there is no church building, but special rooms have been set aside for services and Sunday schools. Caucasian ministers are allowed to come in as guest ministers. Young people's groups have already begun organizing.

The education department is one of the largest and perhaps the most important in the service division. It has trained and experienced men to supervise all phases of a comprehensive educational program. Among the activities are: vocational education, training in typing and stenography, sewing and practical



arts, Americanization, English classes, adult forums, as well as a primary and high school formal education. It is hoped that schools will begin in earnest by September 1. Arrangements are also being made in connection with higher education, but details have not yet been released.

The social welfare work in the camp is closely tied with the policing of the Center. If offenses are committed, welfare workers are assigned to cover the case. Prevention of crime is the keynote. Once something has gone wrong, correction rather than punishment seems to be the aim. Since there are no qualified Nisei welfare workers in the camp, additional men and women are now being trained for the work.

A large, well-equipped and well-supplied hospital is to be found in Tule Lake. It is doubtful if many outside hospitals are so well equipped since so many of the items can be acquired only by the Army. The staff has several Caucasians now because of the scarcity of Japanese medical men and women. Doctors are so few that only one is usually on duty at one time. Supplies are coming in every day; ambulance service is available; a fully equipped pharmacy laboratory is attached to the hospital. The hospital already has several hundred beds and more are expected shortly. Supplies are plentiful, but trained workers are lacking.

There is no direct postal delivery service in Tule Lake; mail is received and distributed by the block managers. Some managers pass out the mail during meals, while others distribute them from house to house. Mail leaves camp twice daily. There is absolutely no censorship of mails; this is a W.R.A. policy. Only incoming packages are opened for contraband inspection, but nothing else is touched.

For the convenience of residents an attorney has been appointed to handle all legal problems. A representative of the Bank of America calls in camp twice weekly to cash checks (even personal checks) and to perform other financial transactions.

There is one camp newspaper in Tule Lake--The Tulean Dispatch--which is a biweekly. The paper is still in its embryo stage and needs much improvement both in content and technical work. The staff is temporary and will be revised when the camp is full. Occasionally an extra is put out if there is an urgent announcement. While printing in Japanese is frowned upon (it is allowed if the matter is of sufficient importance), there is absolutely no censorship of the press. Regular newspapers from San Francisco, Klamath Falls, or from Portland are available in the canteen daily. Newspapers are indispensable because the only radio station that can be heard clearly at all times is Klamath Falls (Mutual Broadcasting System).

The canteen is fairly well equipped. Besides the expected tobacco, soda water of all kinds (even Coca Cola), ice cream and newspapers, there are hardware, tools, cloth materials, canned food, cakes, biscuits, magazines, small books, magazines of all kinds, toilet paper, drugs, electrical appliances, and miscellaneous items such as shelf covers and fly swatters. Sears Roebuck catalogues are available and someone is on duty to assist people in their ordering. The canteen is community owned and the profits go back into the community projects. Clothes, hats, and even buckets can be bought or ordered in the canteen. All



transactions are in cash.

There are general rules and regulations but these are not too strict. At present, there is no curfew or lights out time, but no one is allowed off the living area unless accompanied by some member of the staff. Some change in this regulation is expected as soon as the construction work is completed. Visitors are allowed to roam about the camp at will, provided they get a permit from the military guards and leave camp by 8 in the evening. The only restriction on visiting is that no insurance or other salesmen are allowed to come into the camp for business.

The morale of the people in the camp seems to be high, although not all of the residents are cooperating with the administration. Those who had come from the various Assembly Centers (Puyallup, Portland, Sacramento, and Marysville) seem to be better adjusted than those who came directly to Tule Lake. While everyone seems to be determined in spirit to make Tule Lake the best Relocation Area, there is a shortage of farm labor, and even experienced farmers refuse to do heavy farm work. At present there is a danger of \$80,000 worth of potato seeds going to waste because of the shortage of farm labor to plant them. In spite of the fact that agricultural peoples are here, there seems to be a shortage of farm hands.

Most of the rural peoples are very naive and curious. Apparently many of them had never before had the facilities that they have now (such as running water in the latrines) and they carefully explain everything to all newcomers, even to city people accustomed to such things. The people seem exceedingly shy, and gossip and rumors travel rapidly. One of the surprising things about Tule Lake residents is the extent to which they are still Japanese. While many can speak English, they seem to be more expressive in Japanese. This would seem natural for Issei, but it is odd that so many Nisei speak English so poorly. Japanese music can be heard everywhere, and every young people use Japanese slang. Many people seem to have difficulty eating with forks and knives in the mess halls, and some actually bring their chopsticks with them. The problem of Americanization will be a large and essential one in Tule Lake.

The nature and extent of self-government has not yet been clarified; in fact, it would be difficult to set down definite rules before half the camp is full. A group of temporary block delegates have already been elected, but they are to be replaced later on when the camp is full. Only American citizens are eligible for office, but all adults, regardless of citizenship, are allowed to vote.

Taken as a whole, life in Tule Lake cannot be said to be too pleasant in comparison to the life which the evacuees from the cities had led prior to the evacuation order. For many Japanese, camp life is better than their former living. Under the circumstances, however, the War Relocation Authority can be commended for the fair and democratic way in which they are handling the entire matter. Supplies are coming in regularly; there is no censorship; competent and trained men are taking responsible positions. The kind treatment which is conducive to the perpetuation of democratic ideals in the hard times to come can be found here, and many will leave camp convinced of the justice of democratic ideals in practice.



Tom Shibutani  
Tule Lake, California

September 15, 1942

### Bon Odori

The Issei and the Kibei in Block 4 had decided that they would contribute to the Fourth of July program by having a Bon Odori and when the administration approved they mustered the resources of the block and started practicing. The services of the block manager, who was considerably Americanized, were secured and the preparations began in earnest. By July 1, a huge platform, 12 by 18 feet was set up opposite the women's latrine and the practice was well under way. A phonograph with a loudspeaker and lights were secured and the block manager was put to work playing the records. A ring of dancers, mostly amateurs, gathered about eight o'clock and began dancing around the platform. By nine there were hundreds watching the proceedings. There were Issei, Nisei, and Kibei in the audience. In the dancing group there were many young people who spoke predominantly Japanese. There were children eight or nine years of age to a few Issei in the dancing group. There was one humorous old man in the crowd. The whole thing was reminiscent of the bon odori that went on in central California before the outbreak of war. The phonograph, the costumes, and the dances were exactly the same.

Suddenly the whole show stopped and Shimbo announced the name of another song in terrible Japanese. Two attractive girls then went up to the platform to demonstrate the new steps. They were very rhythmic, graceful, and very much like the real odori of Japan. They walked around in a circle, the movements of their hands and wrists synchronizing with their body movements.

It was quite apparent that the former religious significance in this dance was now gone. One could recall the former practice of exchanging teachers between Cortez and Lodi and the huge tournaments they used to have in Stockton. It was amusing to note that many of the Nisei girls in the ring were chewing gum.<sup>1</sup>

The bon odori and other Japanese activities in Block 4 were so intense that the place was known as "Ginza Dori."



Tom Shibutani  
Tule Lake, California

September 15, 1942

On July 4, a man was sent around each barrack in the block and the individual asked for donations from the individuals to pay for the expenses of the entertainment. Apparently the two girls who were teaching came from other blocks and had to be paid. Whether anyone was interested in promoting the odori or not was irrelevant; whether anyone had the money or not was also irrelevant. Everyone in the block was asked to contribute some money.

At noon, some of the young men on the block got together and moved the platform out from the block to the firebreak nearby. They connected the electric wires and made preparations for the festivities of the evening. Before the evening program began someone wet the ground so that dust would be kept down. In the evening, in the crowd awaiting the beginning of the bon odori there were many women and young children. A large number of young girls were present. More English was used but the sentences were broken by Japanese words. The program did not start until 9:30, about one hour late. The teachers seemed to be the only decent dancers in the group. There were a few comic individuals but most of them were dancing for the fun of it. In the audience, there were comments about specific dancers, but most of the younger people seemed to be preoccupied with other things. There were several boys snooping around looking for pretty girls, and there were several girls doused with cosmetic, looking about very coyly for company.

Most of the dancers were <sup>Japanese</sup>kimonos. Some were comic with cowboy hats, ties, slacks, dresses, and towels. Bandanas were quite common, and men were wearing women's dress and ukatas. One girl was dancing in a flowing evening gown.

About midnight the people were still dancing around by themselves. There was no one left in the audience, but the people were still seriously dancing away to music blaring forth from the loudspeaker.<sup>2</sup>



Tom Shibutani  
Tule Lake, California

September 15, 1942

On July 18, another entertainment for Issei was held. The outdoor platform was used, and this time it was for the entire community. The platform was beautifully decorated with chochin. Nine girls in kimonos were on the platform, and music came from a phonograph and loudspeaker. A ring of other dancers went around the platform. In the ring off the platform there were people in Japanese and American dress. There were small children 6 to 9 years of age. There were thousands in the audience, most of whom were young. Many of the people in the audience spoke Japanese. Several rowdies were there; they seemed only passively interested in the proceedings. The announcer spoke in Japanese. A girl played an accordion solo (an Italian song), but there was not much applause. When another girl sang a Japanese song, however, the applause was so great that she had to be called back several times. The audience was definitely Japanesey. It seemed that the sex distribution in the audience was about equal, but most of the people were under 30 years of age. The gangs of small boys, cliques of girls, and rowdies were quite noticeable in the crowd.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Field notes, July 1, 1942

2. Field notes, July 4, 1942

3. Field notes, July 18, 1942



The University of California Club

The idea of having a Cal Club here in Tule Lake probably originated with Jobo Nakamura (a junior student in journalism who had dropped out of school just after the outbreak of war) or with one of his close friends. Soon after they had arrived in Tule Lake from Walleriga they began approaching some of the U.C. students and alumni of influence to see whether such a club were feasible in the camp. Mas Sakada, former president of the Japanese Students' Club in Berkeley (1940-41), agreed that having such a club was a good idea and became involved in the whole thing rather early. Mas was not quite as keen over having the club as was Jobo but he cooperated very well.

On June 27, the following announcement was made in the Tulean Dispatch:

**"U.C. STUDENTS TO REVIVE 'OLE SPIRIT'**

All residents who had at sometime attended the University of California and are interested in organizing a club to revive 'good ole Cal spirit' are encouraged to contact Mas Sakada or George Nakamura."

The first formation meeting of the club was held on the evening of July 1. Unfortunately, Mr. Schmoee of the Student Relocation Council came to Tule Lake on the same evening and many of the students were at the other meeting. The group met in 3020 at 7:30.<sup>2</sup> The business meeting was called to order by the temporary chairman Mas Sakada. The official meeting had been preceded by pep songs and a talk by Mr. Fleming of the Community Services Division. There was some discussion over what the club ought to be called. Since the feeling of sectionalism was rather high at the time, some felt that the mention of "California" in the name might lead to some antagonism on the part of those from the Northwest. Some of the names proposed were: University of California Club, Golden Bear Club, and Blue and Gold Club. After some discussion it was decided that the University of California Club would be the new and official meeting of the organization. Plans were made to get recognition from the University and to contact Mr. Sibley of the California Alumni Association. It was decided that the elections should be postponed until the next meeting since there were not enough in attendance. The meeting ended at 8:30 with the singing of "All Hail."

Between the time of the first meeting and the second on July 17, Jobo and some of his friends went around personally contacting several of the Cal men and women that they knew and asked them to come to the meeting. This time more publicity was given in the Tulean Dispatch about the time and place of the meeting and several people attended.

The second meeting of the group was held in recreation hall 3008 on July 17 at 8 o'clock. As usual many people were late to the meeting.<sup>3</sup> The program began with the singing of Cal songs, with Jobo Nakamura leading. The first

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1. Tulean Dispatch, June 27, 1942

2. Minutes of the Cal Club meeting, taken by May Sato (temporary secretary) on July 1, 1942.

3. Taken from field notes, July 17, 1942



speaker was introduced after some yells and songs.

Dr. George Iki felt that we should not be bitter about the life in camp. He pointed out that we should not raise any fuss about the infringement of our civil rights, and pointed out that to argue about the citizenship status of the Nisei was childish and silly. "The whole forum the other night was silly.<sup>4</sup> We should not make a fuss about it because the people on the outside will organize to oppose us." "Don't feel sorry for yourselves. There are lots of nuts in the camp, but don't make fun of them...." "We must not think of monetary returns but in terms of service. Unless you watch yourselves, you will revert to savages." He referred to rowdism and asked that at least the "educated" like those in the Cal Club should retain some of the niceties of life.

Walter Tsukamoto was the second speaker. He began, "I expected a vacation when the evacuation came along, but it has not turned out that way. I suppose one of the basic truths is that those who are 'endowed' are always called upon to take the leadership. I have regretted that I was selected for the Council, but I am glad now, because I have a chance to hear of all the problems that are existing in the camp. We educated ones who can see through the clouds should take the lead. I have been in the J.A.C.L. for some time, in fact since the days when I was at Cal. I feel that we are better qualified than others to do the work for the Nisei because of our contacts. You all know that Harvey Itano left for St. Louis. This was all due to the efforts of Mike Masaoka our field secretary. The J.A.C.L. should be the biggest in the United States. Some people have cast unfair remarks against the J.A.C.L. I can say that we have never been selfish. We have never formed cliques to maintain leadership, we have never been dictatorial. The Nisei have but one organization in the country to represent us--the J.A.C.L. I hope you will all investigate us and get behind us." He went on the mention absentee ballots and said that the J.A.C.L. would handle the matter. He ended with "I hope the time will not be long before we will be able to see Cal Beat Stafford again."

The third speaker for the evening was Sumio Miyamoto. He pointed out that he had a job in the camp that he never could have gotten outside. He said that in some ways he was rather thankful for the opportunity that he is being given. He then advised everyone to make the most of their life in the camp.

Jun Miyagawa, the last speaker, had very little to say. In fact, he rather resented the fact that he was called upon to speak without any warning. After he had adjusted himself to the situation he pointed out that it would do not good to be sour about being here.

The behavior of the group was not very much like that of an 'intellectual' group. Stale jokes and attempts at incidental facetiousness were common. There was much yelling and hissing whenever someone said something out of place. Whenever someone came in late there was some derogatory remark made by someone and much laughter--sometimes very boisterous.

Bill Fujii then sang "Rose Marie." Eleanor Nakagawa was called upon to sing and she finally came through with "Tangarine." Helen was rather hesitant about singing, but after much coaxing he sang, "Always in my Heart."

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4. On July 13, the Community Forum had discussed the topic, "Nisei Citizenship--How Can We Preserve It?" and no complement had been made of the J.A.C.L.



We then heard a report of the Cal Club baseball team. Apparently it was not faring so well. Some songs were sung and then the official business meeting was called to order by Mas Sakada.

Sakada pointed out that Mr. Frank C. Smith (head of the Housing and Employment Division) and former U.C. slumms was supposed to speak but that he was too busy and could not come. He pointed out that one of the functions of the club was the get prominent people to speak to the group. He then read a pamphlet in which Mr. Sibley had writteen that one of the characteristics of Cal alumni was that there were "scholarly and in quest for learning." This drew a laugh from the group. Some guffawed volaiferously.

It was then decided that officers would be elected. Nominations for chairman, vice-chairman, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, historian, athletic manager, songleader, and public relations man were made from the floor. Mas Sakada was nominated for chairman but he declined. The group would not hear of it, however, and even when Mas himself nminated Sakae Hayashi, everyone put Mas in by acclaim.<sup>5</sup> Ted Shigeno, May Sato, and Jobo Nakamura were nominated for vice chairman. Ted objected that he was too busy but no one would hear of it. May Sato was finally abated.

In the race for recording secretary, Hisako Ishii, Tomi Shibutani, Helen Nakagawa were nominated--inspite of the fact that they all objected. Tomi was elected by a narrow margin. Hisako Ishii and Jobo were nominated for dorresponding secretary and Jobo won.

Sakae Hayashi, Henry Omachi and Bill Fujii were nominated for Song and yell leader and Hayashi won. Eugene Okada beat out Tom Hiraga for the post of athletic manager. The meeting closed in great confusion.

Every stood to sing "All Hail." and when the singing was over, the group jumped up and started milling around. Apparently some of the people had not seen each other for some time and they were anxious to talk to their friends before they left. Mas was yelling at the top of his voice for everyone to sign a slip of paper before they left so that they would have a membership roll.

By this time, the Cal Club was becoming a growing concern. Most of the members were interested in what was going on. It was recognized by the recreation department as one of the interest groups.

The first cabinet meeting was held at the home of Mas Sakada on August 9, at 3213-D. Mas, May Sato, Jobo, Sakae Hayashi, and Eugene Okada and Tomi were present.<sup>6</sup> It was decided that meetings would be held once a month with special gatherings when necessary. The third meeting would be held on August 18. Eugene Okada was asked to get a room with a piano. It was decided that Smith would not be a good speaker; that Elbersen was too dull; Harkness and Mrs. Shirrell would be O.K., but that Jacoby would be preferred. Tomi was asked to contact Jacoby to ask him to speak. It was also decided that the meeting should be publicized in the Forum and the Dispatch.

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5. One might say that among the many characteristics of Japanese and Nisei Clubs are: the large number of useless officers and the modesty of people who are nominated. Even when one wants to run, he always declines with, "Too busy."

6. Minutes of Cabinet meeting of August 9, taken by Tomi Shibutani



Sakae Hayashi was put in charge of all entertainment. When the subject of refreshments came up, there was some discussion. Since it was so hot, it was decided that something cool ought to be served. However, there was no treasurer in the organization because the club was not supposed to have a fund. Everyone felt that with the limited amount of money in the camp, it would be rather difficult to collect dues. Some one suggested that they might serve Kool Ade but others objected that there was no sugar. It was finally decided that sodas would be served.

Some discussion took place over the types of meetings to be held. It was finally decided that there would be speakers for business meetings. A Big Game Rally was planned--just before the Stanford game. Finally, an invitational dance was planned (as soon as a hall was open). It was decided that the traditional Cal custom of coat and tie for me, and slow music would prevail and that the dance would be strictly invitational. Euguen Okada was put in charge. It was also decided that in keeping with Cal customs all corsages would be taboo.

A suggestion was made that Walter Tsukamoto, Dr. Iki, Sumio Miyamoto, and Jun Miyagawa be made an advisory committee. However, the objection from some people was so great that it was decided to include them merely as members.

At an entertainment held a few days before the Cal Club had presented a skit and a trio of singers who had done very well. The Sanitary corps. had helped out the members in putting on the skit and it was decided that such outsiders who help should be invited to the dance and to some of the meetings. It was further decided that the male trio should be continued.

By this time, the active member increased to about 35 people and the roster included 83 names.

The third regular meeting of the group was called to order by Mas Sakada on August 17, almost 40 minutes late. Mr. Jacoby--the speaker--was apparently the only one who showed up on time. Songs were led by Sakae Hayashi and then Dr. Jacoby was introduced. He talked about the problems being faced by the wardens in his charge. He spoke of the welfare and fire division too, but put his emphasis on the police work. He pointed out the prevention was the motive behind the work. After the talk, Mas assured him that the members could be counted upon to cooperate with him and Jacoby seemed rather pleased.

The meeting was then turned over to Sakae Hayashi who led more songs. The trio sang, and some yells were given. Then the business meeting was called.

The Big Game dance was discussed seriously for a while. A letter from Mr. Sibley secretary was read. Ted Shigeno then announced that the recreation department was planning a big program on Labor Day and that the Cal Club ought to participate. He asked if the club would not enter a float and everyone agreed that a float like those they had entered for the Big "C" Circus would be appropriate. Ted announced that the maximum amount to be spent would be \$5 and the club immediately gave out that amount. Henry Omachi was selected with Paul Matsumura to take charge of the float. Ted also suggested that the Club might enter a girl for the Queen contest. Everyone looked around at the girls seated on the right hand side of the room and laughed.



This naturally led to a discussion of dues. There was considerable wrangling over the point. Many felt that 10 cents a month would be too much to pay. Others felt, however, that 5 cents a month would not net enough money. Some suggested that it would be better to collect little dues than to have people owing the club much money. After much struggle of parliamentary rules--people objected to a motion that was already passed--the motion was retracted and finally a 10 cent month due was decided upon, much to the dissatisfaction of many.

Everyone agreed that members could invite their friends--provided they pay for their refreshments.

Eugene Okada then gave an announcement about the dance. He announced that the hall #720 was available only on August 28--the same night as the oratorical contest. He stated that the affair would be strictly invitational; May Sato would be in charge of the bids; outsiders may be invited; sanitation crew who helped with the program would be invited; Sakae would be in charge of decorations; and then asked for volunteers for "general arrangements."--clean up. Several boys volunteered and the issue was settled immediately. The problem over who was to watch the door was brought up but soon disposed of; it was decided to watch in rotation.

Refreshments were then served. Mas had paid for the cases of Coca Cola and he had a rather difficult time seeing that everyone who took a bottle paid for it. Mr. Jacoby good naturedly joined in the fun. The meeting closed with "All Hail."

This meeting, which was held in 2508--the music building--led to some trouble in the next week. Apparently some Cal boys had gone to the music department asking if they could use the room. When the music people asked if they would not get the room dirty, they had replied, "Oh no, we're intellectuals!" In spite of this, however, the room was left in a mess and the floor had to be mopped by the music teachers. There was considerable grumbling over this matter for some time.

On September 11, Labor Day, the U.C. Club became rather active. Three members on bicycles went back and forth with placards advertising the U.C. Club float. "You Haven't Seen Anything Yet!" "Watch our Float." The float was nothing more than a dirty outhouse. The idea being--a big buildup and a let-down; but apparently most people did not catch on. The same idea was well received in the Big "C" circus some years back. In the huge extravaganza that was held that evening some of the U.C. men put on a skit. The male chorus began by singing Cal Songs and (very much like Fred Warings' programs) Jobo played the part of the announcer as they lowered their voices. After a skit, a man imitating Hitler in Charlie Chaplin's Great Dictator. "Hitler" spoke in poor German and Jobo translated, "There is a nice program in Tule Lake." The whole episode was presented as a flash broadcast from Berlin. In fact, the whole program was in the form of a radio program, "Fifteen Minutes of Eternity." People laughed hilariously and forgave the off-key singing.

The club is progressing rather well and may become a significant factor in the camp life--politically as well as in recreation.