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Tulare Co.

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Kern County Synopsis  
(Interviewing, Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, 1945;  
Katharine Luomala, Community Analysis Section)

At least two different groups of people in Bakersfield differ regarding the best way to reintegrate Japanese into Kern County. One group, of which Mayor Siemon, Acting Chief of Police Knight, County Sheriff Lustalot, and Rev. Christenson of the First Methodist Church are members, believe, as the Mayor put it, that organizations working expressly for the return of evacuees can generate more friction than by the problem alone and that the less said about it the better. The more noise that can be avoided is the best course to pursue, the Mayor told the interviewer. He advises evacuees to register with the police, to avoid cockiness and congregating with other Japanese, and to keep in the background for a while.

Some but not all of those listed as belonging to this group feel it a mistake to have rescinded the ban before the end of the war. The loyal and disloyal should be separated and when the war is over, the loyal should have their full Constitutional rights, they say. For those evacuees, however, who do return, this group feels it can best help through the individual influence of their office, personality, and contacts. They tend to tell how liberal, how proud of being law abiding, and how friendly Bakersfield is. "Live and let live" is the community mood, they say. Many in this group belong to Christenson's church which has a membership of about 1000 and another thousand of less formally associates. Included are several members of the city council.

The second group of friends of evacuees is militant and really consists of two subdivisions with some of the same people in both. The Interracial Council is the older subdivision. The County sheriff, who belongs to the first group described above, says that the nucleus of the Interracial Council is made up of Rev. Throckmorton of the East Bakersfield Methodist Church, Rabbi Jack Levy, Mrs. Edna Tillyer, and a Negro USO man, name not given. It has "lousy standing", the sheriff said; Rev. Christenson said more politely that it has a title too big for what it is. A local Jewish woman, several respondents stated, gave \$5000 for inter-racial cultural relations under the inspiration of Miss Tillyer. Group 1 feels it is better not to meddle in interracial matters, "better to let these things alone." The second subdivision which was organized expressly because of the Japanese return is the Committee on American Principles of Fair Play. Rev. Christenson did not know there was such a committee in Bakersfield and said he would be opposed to it if there were. American principles he takes for granted here, he said. To it



belong Rev. Throckmorton, Miss Emma Buckmaster (cousin of the Mayor; she has an evacuee, Phyllis Tinoshita, living with her and going to Bakersfield J. C.), Lottie Phillips (who lost a job in a county office for her evacuee sympathies and visit to Poston), Flossie Mills, Mrs. Richards (law librarian, Court House, and secretary of CAPFP), Bill Leask (YMCA sec'y), and Mr. Henderson(?) chairman who is a lawyer said to have radical leanings. Miss Buckmaster for one is doubtful of the impulse which lead the group to appoint him chairman because as a self-employee, he had no job to lose. Thus far, the Committee, which was started with the aid of Davis McEntire, has had two meetings, at one of which the Mayor put in an invited appearance.

There are no organized opposition groups, according to Reverend Christenson. Trouble, if any, said the Acting Chief of Police, will come from (1) some of the 100 families in the county with boys who are in Japanese prison camps or were in the March of Death from Bataan; several of the families and their threats to kill Japanese were mentioned; (2) the 4-F hoodlum type, colored or white, found in any western community, that wants to kill "a Jap" as an easy way to win glory; some liquored up people belong in this group; more than half of the weekend arrests for felony are from the thousand ex-convicts employed at a Naval Ordnance station on eastern Kern County; (3) Filipinos, and perhaps Koreans, especially in Delano which is a "hotbed" ~~against~~ dead against the Japanese; both economic and war motives would inspire them to make trouble; (4) Negroes, not the oldtimers but those who have come into Bakersfield since the war and taken over much of the former Japanese community; the Acting Chief of Police is apprehensive about the possibilities of a Negro uprising with the property damage that follows; Kern County has had a 30% increase of colored people; (5) selfish interests, including farmers who benefit from Japanese being away and businessmen who have taken over shops in town; Jews are in the majority in town although Mexicans as a rule have taken over the restaurants.

The Acting Chief of Police spoke of how law abiding the Japanese were and how highly they were regarded by their former employers who would be glad to have them back if sentiment would change. He feels Bakersfield had a higher type of Japanese than for example Los Angeles. He deplores the attitude of the Los Angeles Examiner <sup>which is very hostile</sup> for much local anti-Japanese feeling and suggested more articles like that in Saturday Evening Post about good treatment of Japanese prisoners by Marines on Saipan. The Bakersfield Californian is no longer negative; Jim Day, columnist on it, has always been friendly, it is said.



The Acting Chief of Police says if a Japanese were attacked and killed, there would be no conviction because one could not get a jury. Consequently, others would try to get away with attacks. Arvin and Delano would be good places to stay away from. Lamont feeling is high too. Shafter and Wasco districts would be fine because they are off the highway and many Mennonites, against whom feeling has died down, live around there. Taft, which allows no Negroes to stay overnight, also has "No Japs Wanted" signs. The sheriff, however, thought Taft over on the west side would take its former Japanese back but not a few hundred new ones.

No one took threats of economic boycott seriously. Rev. Christenson pointed out that people tend to beat certain familiar trails as far as shopping goes and will continue to do so; many of the Japanese shops did not have much Caucasian trade in the past. The sheriff said the Mexicans and Negroes would trade with the Japanese.

"The schools are level headed," said Rev. Christenson, but, he added, the white youngsters are afraid of the Negroes who play rough. The Negro enrollment has caused all the trouble, every one said. "There has been no serious trouble," the Acting Chief of Police said, "because it has always been nipped in the bud." When the Hawaiian Nisei batfalion was in Bakersfield for five days, the high school children, he said, treated the soldiers well, but kids like his own high school boy are restless waiting to go in to the Army, and start in "hunting Japs" at home.

County Sheriff Lustalot summed up county sentiment in percentages. Thirty per cent of the people want Japanese back; 40% don't care, while 30% are against the return.

#### U N F R I E N D L Y

1. District Attorneys Gill and Tom Scott, Scott has son in the Pacific.
2. Principal of Wm. Penn Grammar School.
3. About a hundred families in county with boys in Japanese prison camps; some were in "March of Death."



F R I E N D L Y

1. Emma Buckmaster, teacher at Wm. Penn School, cousin of Mayor, taught Japanese Methodist Sunday School, bought an evacuee house.

2. Lottie Phillips, receptionist City Hall Information Desk, retired bank worker, Methodist, lost job in County Auditors office because of visiting Poston on her vacation.

3. Flossie Mills, teacher, shares house with Lottie Phillips. These three are friends, especially 1 and 2.

4. Rev. Throckmorton, E. Bakersfield Methodist Church, sympathetic with 1 and 2, and like them considered extremely pro-evacuee.

5. Miss Richards, Law librarian, Court House, secretary Committee on American Principles and Fair Play, to which above 4 belong.

6. Mr. Henderson (?), lawyer who is Chairman of the Committee, is considered a "radical."

More conservative friendly people are:

7. Mayor Siemon, cousin of 1, member Christenson's Methodist Church.

8. Rev. N. A. Christenson, First Methodist Church, was a chaplain in World War I, Scandinavian born.

9. Acting Chief of Police Knight, newly took job to replace Chief Powers who was appointed to another job by Governor Warren; Knight is a Baptist, or at least his wife is. Hobby is studying Communism in order to eliminate it. A sincere, plain kind of person, straightforward, has well organized comments on Japanese problem, will try to do his duty to the best of his ability in his new job. Has son overseas in Pacific.

10. Sheriff Lustalot, former truant officer and high school coach; acted and talked cagey in contrast to 9; professes to be disillusioned with Japanese because young evacuee friend mistranslated Japanese document. An evacuee quotes him as saying, "You can't trust any of them, even little children." Now, as part of his duties, will do what he can, he says, to prevent trouble for returning Japanese.

11. "Bill" Leask, secretary of YMCA, said to have started ball rolling for Fair Play Committee.



12. Grace Bird, principal of Bakersfield Junior College, good friend of evacuees and respected by conservative respondents.

13. Frank Heron Smith.

14. Jim Day - author of column "Pipefuls" in Bakersfield Californian, has always been friendly to evacuees; prints stories of Nisei soldiers; recommended by all respondents as a good person to talk to.

15. Dr. Thomas Nelson.

16. Leo Hart, County Superintendent of Schools.

17. Interracial Council (Rev. Throckmorton, Rabbi Jack Levy, Mrs. Tillyer, Negro USO man, Miss McAdams).

Attitude not known: City Superintendent of Schools, <sup>Mr.</sup>Compton.



Interview with  
Mr. Siemon,  
Mayor of Bakersfield  
Jan. 31, 1945

K. Luomala  
C Analysis Section

### Thumbnail

Rev. Christenson, Methodist Church, made an appointment with the Mayor for me. I went to his law office where I felt a little as if I were at a state audience. At one point the Mayor rose, paced the floor, and gave me what was, I presume, a piece of a speech he was planning for his coming campaign to be re-elected mayor. He was pleasant and tried to make an appointment for me with his cousin, Miss Emma Buckmaster, who has an evacuee girl living with her and going to Bakersfield Junior College.

### Summary of Interview

Mrs. Richards, Law Librarian at the Court House, is on a committee recently formed to aid in the return of Japanese, the mayor said. He could not recall the name of the committee though he attended one of the first meetings as a guest. (It is the Com. on Amer. Pr. & Fair Play). The mayor recommended talking to her and tried to get her on the phone.

The feeling about the Japanese return balances, He said. He has talked the matter over in the various civic organizations he belongs to like the Defense Council. He has not the slightest apprehension that there will be any trouble but he would advise returning evacuees to avoid cockiness and prominence. Also it is in advisable for them to congregate together. If they will follow this advice, there should not be the slightest trouble. The Mayor who spoke in a friendly and sincere tone said it would be helpful if returning evacuees would register with the police, let the police know they are back so if people call up the police station and say they saw a Japanese and feel suspicious, the police can say they know this Japanese is here and explain that it is all right for him or her to be in Bakersfield, etc. The Mayor thought this would also make things easier for the evacuee. If the evacuee will do this and then unassumingly keep out of the limelight everything would be all right.



People, he continued, are not just ready yet to accept Japanese back so it is well to keep in the background a little. (I tend not to doubt the Mayor's sincerity in making the above suggestions as I do not recall that at any point did he recommend that evacuees not return for awhile. This is truly remarkable, as he was one of the few respondents who didn't make such a recommendation. He just talked about what they should do as they come back.)

Only a few firebrands would be disposed to treat them unfairly. Sproul's address helped a lot (Pres. Sproul.U.C.) I think the Mayor was here referring to the published welcome of University of California to evacuee students.

"As for the H.S. children, the Mayor continued, I don't know but usually in our town the students are successful in ignoring racial differences." (This seems to be the general town attitude as well.) Leave them alone, keep away, is what they do. It is the best method, he added. The Pasadena experiment, he went on, shows there was a bad reaction at first to this girl (Esther Takei) but later she was accepted. If handled diplomatically, there wouldn't have been the first response.

The mayor then told of the Bakersfield experiment comparable to that in Pasadena. His cousin, Emma Bukmaster, who used to teach in the J. Methodist Sunday School and teach grammar, has a Japanese American girl living with her now. The girl, Phyliss Kinoshita, goes to Bakersfield Junior College, and has recently come. The Mayor said he questioned the advisability a little of what he cousin is doing but said it was her business. He said his cousin has always had a missionary streak. She lives at 1826 -2nd St. (2-8832). Lothie Phillips who works in the City Hall is also much interested like Miss Buckmaster in helping evacuees.

The Mayor then said that he felt that organizations (to help evacuees) can generate more friction than the problem alone does. The less said, the better, he feels. "The more noise that can be avoided is the best course to pursue," he declared. (This is also Rev. Christenson's attitude.)



The Mayor then went on to say that Bakersfield is and has been always a liberal and friendly city -- too friendly sometimes, he added as an afterthought. His later remarks, some of which he made on his feet almost as if from a platform, are of interest in understanding Bakersfield spirit. The Mayor has been in Bakersfield for 36 years. He remembers that the second time he met, as a newcomer, one of the leading citizens this man greeted him, a young man, with a very friendly, "How do you do, Mr. Seimon." (The Mayor told this with as much pleasure as if it were yesterday not 36 years ago.)

Bakersfield has always prided itself on its friendliness. Only one man, the Mayor said, has ever held against him his fight years ago against vice, prostitution, and gambling. Even the underworld leaders did not act like the editor of the Bakersfield Californian who did not speak to Mr. Siemon for 25 years because the editor's brother had been caught in the clean-up dragnet. Finally the editor sent word thru a mutual acquaintance that he thought it was the younger man's business (that is, the Mayor's) to make the first friendly move. The olive branch was accepted, and now the editor who would not even print Siemon's name in the paper all these years (except perhaps to criticize) now embarrasses the Mayor by his over frequent flattering references.



Tulare County Synopsis  
(Interviewing, Jan. 29 and 30, 1945;  
Katharine Luomala, Community Analysis Section)

The visit of about 30 ranchers and businessmen of the Dinuba-Orosi district, former center of Japanese population in Tulare County, to John Yamamoto and K. Tashiro, returned evacuees living on Yamamoto's Orosi ranch, led feeling against the return of the Japanese to run high, according to the Dinuba Sentinel on January 26. Evacuees were advised that their return before the end of the war might lead to trouble and they should leave before January 30.

Though it is said Tulare County newspapers generally do not print county news about other than their own town, the Visalia Times-Delta carried a front page story (Jan. 27) based on the Sentinel account. There was no editorial comment, however, while the interviewer was in Visalia.

Mr. Worrell of the County Farm Agent's office told the interviewer that the county feeling was not against individual Japanese but against Japanese as a group. "You either like them or you don't like them", he said. Both Tashiro and Yamamoto were highly respected residents before evacuation. Tashiro, for example, has been a lay Presbyterian preacher in Hanford (King County) and a lay Methodist preacher in Orosi.

Mr. Oscar Hemphill, County Agricultural Commissioner, who was interviewed, stated that the county felt it a mistake to rescind the ban before the end of the war because the evacuees who returned to their California homes were exposed to danger because of hostile public sentiment aroused by losses of relatives in the Pacific war. He criticized the OWI for releasing the "March of Death" story about the Bataan captives, saying that more than anything else it had inflamed the public against the Japanese. He said evacuees should be kept in relocation centers, as long as there are such centers and the Japanese were removed to them. When the interviewer asked what he thought about the cost of maintaining such centers, he said the cost was nothing if one life could thereby be spared. "How can a life be measured in dollars and cents?" he inquired. Friends of the evacuees are advising them to remain in the centers, he said, and cited the example of a Visalia lawyer, unnamed, who handles evacuee property and writes them to stay away until after the war. Mr. Hemphill quoted the sheriff's office as saying when the ban was lifted that it was a mistake since that office had more work now than it can handle.



Sheriff S. B. Sherman and Deputy District Attorney John R. Locke, Jr., who investigated the visit of the 30 ranchers and businessmen, reported, according to the Fresno Bee, (Jan. 27) that, at the request of WRA there was no violence. Locke thought the county would have none except from "individual hotheads who might be aroused by liquor or brooding over capture or slaying of their sons in the war with Japan." Mr. Worrell had much the same feeling, saying that 99% of the people were O. K. but the 1% of irresponsible citizens would cause trouble.

Worrell quoted a rancher as preferring Japanese to the Mexican, Filipino, and Negro farmers who have moved onto Japanese farms. These other groups, the rancher thinks, have an even lower standard of living than the Japanese. Of ranches formerly occupied by Japanese, Worrell and this rancher figure that the whites got 8/16, the Filipinos 4/16, the Mexicans 3/16, and the Negroes about 1/16. Some Filipino tenants, it is thought, might resist Japanese owners trying to regain leased land. Though men in the County Agent's office quoted others as criticizing the Japanese standard of living and seemed to concur with these criticisms, they also told of families with good homes. Just before evacuation, Nisei were increasingly taking part in community activities. Some were agricultural college graduates.

Though the county went Democrat in the last election, most of the more vocal and established citizens of the county are violently anti-New Deal. The Visalia Times-Delta, nearly every day, carries an anti-administration editorial and uses the style of the Hearst papers in putting certain sentences into capital letters. It has been printing stories of negative incidents involving evacuees. On Jan. 23, a front page headline recommended "Government should care for indigent Nips" and quoted a California legislator's opinion. On January 20, it reported the presence of armed guards at the Doi farm in Auburn and the ransacking of an evacuee home at Hanford presumably by a child. While the Dinuba Sentinel has been very negative, it carried, much to Mr. Worrell's amazement, a story about a County boy getting a Purple Heart and mentioned other Nisei soldiers. The Fresno Bee has Tulare County in its radius of influence and county people send letters pro and con to the Bee.



As in other counties, Tulare County anti-Japanese feeling goes back to three or four decades ago when the Japanese started to come into the area. The high degree of hostility can be judged from the fact that respondents in Merced and Stanislaus Counties would talk about anti-Japanese feeling in Fresno and Tulare Counties, as if it were easier to describe the clearly defined hostility there than the hazier and less intense bad feeling in their own present community.

Lindsay and Exeter (Tulare County), according to a Merced respondent, have had no use for the Japanese ever since two big Caucasian ranchers many years ago fired their other help and took on Japanese. The displaced workers hitched up their wagons and ran the Japanese out of town.

In later years, the closely knit and financially successful economic organizations of the Japanese were greatly resented by non-Japanese ranchers and businessmen. The same complaints were made in Tulare County as in Merced and other counties. The Japanese bought all their farm supplies, seeds, and other equipment through Japanese brokers and produce houses who financed them and then bought the crop. Caucasians lacked as efficient an organization for their ranchers, and the businessmen were indignant because they lost Japanese sales that they, being established in the county, felt they should have. Furthermore, as the people in the County Agent's office said in continuing their account of this history, the Japanese kept among themselves secrets of raising more and better produce. Besides the disadvantages to the rest of the county resulting from the exclusive economic arrangements, non-Japanese felt that these cooperatives kept Japanese and Caucasians from getting to know each other better.

No Tulare County town was large enough to have a clearly marked Oriental shopping district. Visalia has a short block of Chinese and Japanese shops, but, as Mr. Gillfillan, County Agent, pointed out they catered to no particular race. Many non-Japanese ranchers traded at the H. Sumida store because it often carried supplies lacking in other general stores.

Tulare County lags behind any other Valley county visited in efforts to work for better public acceptance of returning evacuees. There are more of the friendly "less said the better" people. The time is not yet ripe, the County Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Nickel, thought for open efforts to counteract the negative feeling. The government, he said, should speak more courageously and bring pressure so that people can speak out without fear for evacuees. As far as the interviewer was able



to determine, only one public statement has been made by a friendly person. According to the Fresno Bee (Jan. 27), Miss Vanya Oakes told the Tulare Adult Weekend School at Tulare that mistreatment of evacuees will have an adverse effect on Asiatic relations. Asia would judge the sincerity of our democratic ideals by our treatment of evacuees, she declared. Reverend E. V. Hezmall, First Presbyterian Church, Visalia, skirted the subject of returning Japanese in a talk before the Visalia Kiwanis Club a day or two before the interviewer arrived. He attempted, he said, to discuss racial prejudice in general and to use the Negroes as an example. He hoped, he told the interviewer, that the listeners would apply the general principles to the local Japanese problem. The interviewer had from Mr. Hemphill exactly how one listener applied these principles. Mr. Hemphill at great length declared that Tulare County felt exactly the same way about the Japanese as the Southerners did about the Negroes. His sympathies with the South have risen as a result of the lecture.

Tulare County, like Fresno County, has many little towns which are very independent in spirit of each other. Consequently, each town would probably need to be worked on separately to develop a friendly spirit toward returning evacuees. However, unlike Fresno County, a strong friendly group in Visalia might lead the way for other towns by setting an example. Mr. Hezmall will be glad, he said, to have a WRA representative speak at one of the biweekly Ministerial Union meetings to which he would invite local leaders. Mr. Worrell and Mr. Robert Pontius (the latter is past president of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce and at present district FSA supervisor in Fresno) would probably recommend the most suitable people to be invited to such a meeting. Tulare Junior College people were not contacted and no respondent mentioned them.

#### F R I E N D L Y

1. Mr. Worrell, County Farm Advisor on Truck Crops for 7 years; got to know many Tulare County Nisei at Davis Agricultural College; knows many Japanese families intimately and has successfully increased the truck crop acreage in the county especially among Japanese. He seems to have done more to integrate Nisei farm boys and girls into county life, through the medium of the 4-H Club, than any other person. He knows the county, is energetic, and talks about the Japanese with friendly objectivity. Home & office in Visalia. YMCA leader, active in church (Hamilton's Methodist?).



2. Mr. and Mrs. Guy Huston, Sultan cross-roads store owners, "big church workers," said to have had confidence of Japanese more than any other Caucasians; are now advising evacuees not to come back till after the war. Mrs. Huston, expert tomato packer, used to work for Mr. Sakaguchi.

3. Rev. E. F. Hezmall, First Presbyterian Church, head of Ministerial Union, member Kiwanis, see above. Comes from around Bay Area; interested in racial problems.

4. Rev. Hamilton, Methodist Church, Kiwanis, elderly, recent newcomer from Lodi where he knew many Japanese. Feels they shouldn't come back for a while as return will create problems. Would probably lend moral support but would not be a leader. Interviewed.

5. Rev. Theo. Nickel, Co. Supt. Schools and Pentecostal minister, very cautious but is all for Christian ideals if not too much pressure from the other side. Was interviewed.

6. Miss Doris Brown, said to be on Co. School Board; on WRA list. Out of town when interviewer was in Visalia.

7. Mr. Gillfillan and Mr. Moore, County Farm Advisors, are diplomatically non-committal about their own attitude but are not rabid; would probably help friendly people if there was a swing in public sentiment. Interviewed.

8. Mr. Robert Pontius, FSA Supervisor.

U N F R I E N D L Y

1. Mr. Oscar Hamphill, Agricultural Commissioner of Tulare Co. Interviewed, Visalia.

2. Judge Floyd, elderly Dinuban, who, however, is said to be well informed on county attitudes and influential. He does not like Japanese and feels they should not return.

3. County Farm Labor Board. However, they are said to be quieting down and do not argue vehemently if it is suggested the county might be glad this year to get evacuee labor.



Attitude Unknown

1. Mr. Davis, Supt. Schools, Dinuba, Rotary, attitude unknown but said to be well informed on county sentiment, etc.

2. Lester Kiggins, rancher who handles Japanese-owned property.

Mr. Paul Fischer of WRA, Fresno, probably has many more names pro and con. The above are people I personally heard about.



\*Interview with Mr. Worrell,  
County Farm Advisor on Truck Crops,  
Tulare County, Visalia,  
January 29, 1945.

Katherine Luomala  
C Analysis Section

#### Thumbnail

Mr. Worrell is a young man who went to Davis Agricultural College where he made many Japanese friends whom he kept in contact with when he met them again in Tulare County. Like him, the Nisei specialized in Agriculture which made a strong bond between them. He has been in the job about seven years. He suggested the names of Rev. Hamilton of the Methodist Church and O. Hemphill, the County Agr. Commissioner. Mr. Worrell is active in Y.M.C.A., 4-H, Junior Chamber of Commerce, and would be a good person to get in contact with in regard to sentiment in Tulare County. Mr. Worrell is enthusiastic, frank, and I found him very likeable.

#### Summary of Interview

99% of the people are o.k. but 1% is constituted of irresponsible persons. You probably heard about the group of men who "waited on" the Japanese at Orosi. The way it is, you either like the Japanese or you don't like them. The younger are o.k. One of the two men the party waited on was Mr. K. Tashiro, who is about 50-55 years old. He is very religious and often occupied the pulpit of the Hanford Presbyterian Church when he lived at Hanford. He moved to Orosi and went to the Japanese Methodist Church there. I (Worrell) worked on some tomato and celery experiments with some Japanese (With Tashiro? KL) and his word is as good as his bond. John Yamamoto is also a truck farmer and respected. The people give no particular thought to individuals but are against the Japanese as a group.

Judge Floyd of Dinuba is someone to talk to for information about County attitudes. He himself says the Japanese had better not come back. He doesn't like them, but he knows a lot about the County.

Guy Huston at Sultan runs a cross-roads store. He and his wife are big church workers and had the confidence of the Japanese more than any other white people. They'd be the only white people at a Japanese wedding or funeral or occasions like that. They are about 40 or 42 years old. They feel it is best for the Japanese not to come back until after the war. Mrs. Huston is an expert tomato packer and worked for the Japanese. She worked for Sakaguchi.

Nearly all the Japanese subscribed to Japanese newspapers from San Francisco. This wasn't so good at evacuation because no one but they could understand what was in them. The younger Japanese went to High School and College. I got to know many of the young fellows at Davis. They graduated and came back to run the family farms.

30-40 acres is the average size of the Japanese farm in the county. They are one family farms. The family has several children and counts on them for labor. The size of the farm is determined by the size of the family. Most of the Japanese here are truck farmers, but there are several nurseries and many citrus and olive farms, a few vineyards. Only two people had holdings of any size. One was Mayeda, a graduate of Davis, a fine type of fellow. He owned several hundred acres and leased more. He was near Dinuba. Another, Honada, had deciduous fruit orchards near Cutler. He had about three-fourths of all the deciduous fruits in the County.

The truck farming was diversified, mostly fresh vegetables not canned or processed stuff. It goes by truck and hits the early spring and fall market before the others. The County comes after Imperial Valley in hitting the early markets. Because the Japanese here dealt with Japanese brokerage houses and not with local shippers, it lead



to much distrust. Another thing was that there wasn't the acquaintanceship (with local Caucasians) as when the wholesaler is white. All of them dealt with Japanese brokers or wholesalers. They bought their cabbage and tomato plants, fertilizer, seed, etc., from their own people. If they found out any new tricks of insecticide or training tomato plants upon poles, they were clannish about it and didn't share it. The other Japanese got to know about it but nobody else.

There were few Japanese people in the Community so they traded in Visalia with white people. There were different Japanese brokerages.

The Japanese were not entirely to blame for patronizing the Japanese brokers. They were forced to do so (that is, through discrimination against them by white brokers and shippers).

There were Japanese members of 4-H. This is how it happened. It is quite interesting. Herbert Stohmeyer had Howard Takahashi as a pal in grade school. Albert became one of the outstanding 4-H boys in California, and would probably have got a National prize if it hadn't been for the war. He interested Howard in 4-H. Howard was 14. This was 7 years ago, and he was outstanding. He has 2 brothers and 3 sisters. The younger brother was in 4-H and two of the sisters. The other children were older than Howard. Any "4-H-er" would go to bat for them. Howard was at Poston, but bought a Spanish Fork, Utah, ranch. His younger brother is a master mechanic in the AAF, 7th Army, in France. The older brother is a soldier. One sister is at N.Y. State studying to be an Army nurse like one of the other sisters is.

No one ever considered them as Japanese. They were invited to all the parties and were in everything going on.

The "4-H-ers" had a program of citizenship directed by the U.C. Extension Office in Berkeley. The "4-H-ers" gave local service club talks on patriotism as part of this program. Of the 30 kids doing it, three were Takahashis. Margaret Takahashi, "Quarter Pint Margaret" everyone called her because she wasn't even as big as a half-pint, a tiny little thing, substituted for Howard, who was sick, at an American Legion meeting. She talked for 15 minutes. It was wonderful! When she got through, there wasn't a dry eye in the place. Maybe they had their tongue in one cheek about what a Japanese could tell them about Americanism, but I doubt it that time. Anyway it helped good feelings between Caucasians and Japanese. The Takahashis had no bitterness about evacuation. The "4-H-ers" gave them a farewell party. They only stayed a year and a half at Poston. They were Dinuba people.

Dinuba-Kingsburg is a German area. In World War I there was a lot of feeling. They had their own church. The F.B.I. found something.

The churches here feel it was unfair to remove the Japanese and that they should return whenever the Army says so. They haven't come out too strongly yet.

An Orosi rancher told me a story. A Greek family took over a Japanese farm and when three Nisei soldiers were back looking over the properties here, they helped spray the trees just to help out. This rancher wants them to come back for an interesting season. Let's see if I can tell you how it goes. Of all the Japanese ranches, a good half when to whites. If you figure by Sixteenths, the whites got 8/16, the Filipinos 4/16 and the Mexicans 3/16 and the colored about 1/16. That's just a rough estimate. The Mexicans and Filipinos had largely worked for Japanese before. The rancher said Mexican, Filipino, and colored living conditions were even lower than the Japanese, so he prefers Japanese. These other live in unsanitary shacks; a large percentage of them have been of poor quality. The whites weren't top grade. They often were white



neighbors of the Japanese who asked them to farm for them while they were gone.

You can always tell a Southern white from N. Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, because they wear big black hats. When the old one wears out, they get another. If they'd stop wearing them, people wouldn't recognize them and they'd fit in easier. The men from the N. Dust Bowl, Missouri, and S. and W. Kansas, wear a cap with a sun visor like a baseball cap.

The Coastal Salinas Filipinos have come in as seasonal labor gangs for the Stoop labor the Japanese used to do and that the Americans won't do. More Filipinos have been coming in. They get \$20-30 a day (sic) cutting lettuce and celery. They buy land with poor houses, and when they can get them, cars. They will be all right as far as Japanese coming back, but I don't know (meaning concern, KL) about those leasing Japanese land. Some have come in too because ranches in the military areas on the Coast were closed out. The Filipinos haven't come in for advice the way the Japanese use to. The Japanese were cleaner and neater and took a shower everyday.

Seven years ago there were only 5000 of truck gardens. Now there are 20,000. Before it was in Cotton, grain, and beans. We follow Imperial Valley in the markets and come in before Merced. The Japanese came in for advice on new produce. I knew the younger fellows, not the old ones. I made a conscious effort to work with them.

There were no transient Japanese here. There were no gangs of Japanese going thru here. There weren't 4-H Clubs throughout the County. They were weak in Ivanhoe when the Japanese were here; there weren't any in Lindsay, and none (?) in Orosi.

The YMCA here has a peculiar set-up. It's a county wide set-up. Each community has committees of citizens, 8-10 men. Our Y Secretary here is new, came from Pomona, after evacuation. The former sec'y. J. V. Root ("Cap") is at Phoenix; look him up if you go there. The Young People's Clubs were through the school.

Visalia has a population of about 12,000. Tulare County is 125-130,000. Most of the small towns are about 4,000 like Lindsay and Exeter. Each town's newspaper is jealous and prints nothing about any other town. I was surprised the Dinuba paper had a first page headline about a Nisei who got the Purple Heart. It gave a number of names of Japanese boys from the County. The Soldier Roll of Honor on the Post Office lawn here isn't finished. There will be Japanese names on it. It was sponsored by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. The president is a pal of mine and he says everyone will be on the roll. If they aren't, I'll see about it.

Hzmall is a young minister here, a Presbyterian and he talked to the Kiwanis on prejudice but mostly about the Negroes. He is younger than Rev. Hamilton, Methodist Church. Rev. Hamilton is fairly new here, came from Lodi after evacuation so wouldn't know local Japanese.



Interview with  
Mr. Gillfillan, County Farm Agent,  
Tulare County, Visalia  
January 29, 1945.

Katherine Luomala  
C Analysis Section

#### Thumbnail

Mr. Gillfillan, Tulare County Farm Agent, has an office in the Post Office Building in Visalia. His name was suggested by Mr. Hudson, Farm Agent of Fresno County. Mr. Gillfillan was not in when I called. His assistant, Mr. Moore, was in and I talked to him until Mr. G. arrived. Mr. Moore thought it best for evacuees to return gradually, a few at a time. Tulare County attitude, as expressed at meetings of the County Farm Labor Board composed of ranchers and county farm officials, is not as antagonistic, Mr. Moore said, as it was a year ago. Now when the use of Japanese farm laborers comes up as it did at the last meeting when a member remarked that the labor shortage was getting to the point where they'd even have to take back Japanese, members do not express violent opinions as before but listen without remark. A kind of quiet but grim amusement at the extremity of the suggestion, I gathered. Both Mr. Moore and Mr. Gillfillan thought Japanese farm laborers would be used by these ranchers if it looked as if they were going to lose a crop for lack of labor.

Mr. Moore left the office when Mr. Gillfillan got started talking. Mr. Gillfillan talked in a pleasant, objective-sounding way with many flashes of humor. If he has any hostility toward the evacuees, he concealed it well. I got the impression that he could "take them or leave them" and get along smoothly with people on both sides of the fences without sounding at least like too much of a hypocrite. I asked him to tell me particularly about how the Japanese fitted into the Community before evacuation. He recommended talking to Mr. Worrell who is in charge of truck crops in the office. Mr. Worrell, he said, was invited to Japanese parties when other Caucasians were not.

#### Interview Summary

Around Ivanhoe and Woodlake, the production of peas was started by white ranchers but was taken over by Japanese. The Japanese buy good land but have only shabby buildings on it and their women work in the fields; they work hard and don't mingle with the rest of the community. All these things make the other ranchers sore. (I asked if any had nice homes). Yes, I know a Japanese-American at Cutler whom I used to see on business. I never went inside the house but the family and place looked Americanized and his wife was very well-dressed. (I asked if the Japanese had begun to mingle at all in community activities before evacuation). Later, there was an American-born man who had a store at Dinuba who was in the Rotary Club. The 4-H Club at Orosi and Sultan had a mixed group. Worrell has had a lot to do with 4-H; he can tell you more. Mr. Davis, Supt. of Schools, at Dinuba is in the Rotary and could also tell you more than I can.

(I said some agents had said the Japanese farmers could "not be told anything as they knew it all" and asked what his experience had been). We had much contact with them. Some used to attend our field meetings and we'd get calls from them for advice. Mr. Worrell, in the truck crop work, used to hear from them a lot because most of them were in the truck crop line. A third generation boy (at the time I recall thinking from his description of generations that the boy was probably Nisei not Sansei, KL) asked me lately about financing his place now that the Japanese wholesale house is closed. He wanted to put in a crop before he left. Lester Kiggins handled his property for him; some of them rented land from him. FSA helped out too.



The Secretary-Manager of the Japanese Co-op at Ivanhoe, consisting of big farmers, was an University graduate and he used to tell me about how these farmers got ahead. Otherwise, I wouldn't have known about this. These fellows work up in the asparagus for about ten years, save their money, start farming on their own, get broke maybe, and then they go back to the asparagus and start all over again.

(I asked about Japanese businesses in town and to whom they catered). H. Sumida had a big store; across the street on the north-east was another. Sumida had a general store and he had other than Japanese customers. We used to go in there because he carried a lot of things in the way of farm supplies you couldn't get elsewhere in town. (Sumida's store has been vacant since evacuation and one the windows are signs saying, "This is the end", "Not much time left", "Great Sacrifice Sale", etc. No windows are broken. The store is not far off Main Street and on the corner of a street with many shops with Chinese names on them. KL)

A Japanese girl my daughter Mary went to school with is back here. Mary saw her on the elevator in the Bank of America Bldg. They recognized each other and spoke.

You can't tell about these Japanese. At Porterville there's a family whose daughter came to see us once. She seemed educated and Americanized. We thought she must be in the office end of the ranch. Then someone who was out at the ranch saw her working in the fields!

The Japanese cooperative, the Ivanhoe Fruit Assn. handled fruit and vegetables and took over all the Japanese produce there. Most of the truck crop was in Japanese hands but not because they are superior -- some of their practices are not so good. The wholesalers financed the farmers and naturally took on the crops at harvest. One of the young men I've mentioned got seeds, fertilizers, and other supplies from the Japanese wholesaler, and then sold his crops through them.

Some of them used heavy amounts of fertilizer plus fish meal. The cost of what they used was in excess of what was necessary.

The Japanese hired Mexicans and Caucasians including Okies. Earlimart had Mexicans. Lester Kiggins got some of the better Mexicans to look after the Japanese farms as foremen and laborers. In Sierra Vista, Filipinos are used as grape workers.



K. Luomala  
Community Analysis

Interview with Mr. Theodore Nickel  
County Superintendent of Schools, Tulare County  
Visalia, California, January 29, 1945

Mr. Theodore Nickel, County Superintendent of Schools, Tulare County, has his office in Visalia. He is on the WRA mailing list, as is Miss Doris Brown, who was not at home when I called. Her neighbor said she has some kind of county job connected with education and does a lot of travelling through the county.

Mr. Nickel, who looks to be about forty years of age, speaks with a very resonant, preacher's kind of voice and as he spoke quite a bit about the churches and the "Christian point of view" I assume that he has had ministerial training. He has a way of pronouncing each consonant in the phrase "little children" which makes it sound synonymous with "little saints". I kept waiting for him to quote the Master's words about "Little children, come unto me" because it would have been so suitable to the atmosphere. However, I don't think the originator of the quote was as unrealistic about children as Mr. Nickel seems to be.

Since writing the above, I asked someone in WRA about the Supt., and learned that he is a Pentecostal preacher who got into office about eight years ago by a fluke when the former Supt. had his domestic troubles publicized in the newspapers.

Mr. Nickel does not think that the little children of their own accord will resist the return of Japanese children to school because it is not in their nature. If they are unpleasant it will be the effect of prejudiced parents. For example, at one Church the Sunday School teachers and children enthusiastically planned to include presents for Japanese children in centers in their Christmas plans for gifts to children worse off than themselves. The Japanese children never got the gifts because the parents prevented it.

The schools will cooperate with the Government, Mr. Nickel said, in receiving returned evacuee children.

The churches have come out against evacuation and for lifting the ban, but they are being quiet right now, Mr. Nickel declared, because they feel that is the best way to help the evacuees. They can talk, Mr. Nickel continued, about checking Hitlerism but that is as far as they can go right now because of general community sentiment. He mentioned Rev. Hezmall's Kiwanis talk



Nickel,  
Visalia

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Luomala

aimed against all prejudice. Acceptance of evacuees will depend on whether or not there is a depression after and how long the war in Japan goes on. The treatment of Japan should be harsh to appease the anger of Americans who have lost relatives in the war. They want a scapegoat and it is better to make Japan that to draw off the feeling against Japanese in this country. Mr. Nickel remarked in the discrimination against Japanese shown by the fact of evacuation and the allowing of German and Italian aliens to remain.

He urged that the Government "speak more courageously and bring more pressure (in favor of evacuees and their rights) so that others can speak out without fear."

Mr. Nickel criticized the behavior of returning evacuees. He had been told by a friend that one of the Orosi evacuees, who was involved in the visitation by the thirty businessmen to evacuees, had been cocky and aroused resentment by his manner when he went to the Post Office where he demanded a Post Office box. He said the evacuee was John Yanamoto who has a lemon orchard near Orosi. Mr. Nickel's friend claimed that some people would not have minded the Japanese coming back but had got mad at the cocky manner. Mr. Nickel seemed to feel this resentment was one of the impelling factors leading to the visitation. Mr. Nickel said a Japanese girl had been visiting in Visalia recently. He had seen her at the hotel where no one paid any attention to her.



Interview with Rev. Everett F. Hezmall  
First Presbyterian Church  
Visalia, Tulare County, California

K. Luomala  
Com. Analysis Section

Summary of Interview

Rev. E. F. Hezmall, First Presbyterian Church, Visalia, is a young minister with what looked to me like a good-sized church set-up. He comes from the Bay Area. His name was suggested by both Theo. Nickle, Co. Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Worrell, County Agent's office. I did not keep notes on the interview with Rev. Hezmall. Because I had found absolutely no trace of citizen interest in organizing to help prevent the kind of disorder that was occurring in Tulare County with regard to the returning Japanese, I went to see if Rev. Hezmall might not be the type of person best fitted to start something. He had been twice mentioned by respondents when I asked about church leadership and he had given a talk to the Kiwanis Club that week on race relations in general. Also he is, I believe, head of the Ministerial Union.

He knew of no organized efforts to protect the interests of returning evacuees but said that in giving the Kiwanis talk he had hoped listeners would apply what he had said to the home problem of Japanese. I did not tell him how Mr. Hemphill had applied the point on the talk - by sympathizing with the Southerners who have a Negro problem just as California has a Japanese problem.

Rev. Hezmall was somewhat interested when I said that I thought Tulare County was behind any other county I had visited in rallying to protect returning evacuees, in taking more direct action. He suggested that I or someone else from WRA if I were unable, attend a meeting of the Ministerial Union held every other Thursday and discuss this matter. He said he would invite in people who had been interviewed or who might be helpful.

Mr. Hezmall thought two mistakes had been made: (1) in evacuating Japanese (2) in rescinding the ban once they had been evacuated.



Interview with Rev. H. K. Hamilton  
Court Street  
Willow First Methodist Church  
Visalia, Tulare County, California  
January 1945

K. Luomala  
Com. Analysis Section

### THUMBNAIL

Rev. H. K. Hamilton's name was recommended by Mr. Worrell, County Agent's office. Rev. Hamilton, who is minister of the First Methodist Church, Visalia, is an elderly man, who came to Visalia from Lodi a year or so ago. He belongs to the Kiwanis and the Ministerial Union; he seems rather withdrawn from the world and tired.

### Summary of Interview

Rev. Hamilton said he knew very little about the local Japanese but in Lodi he had known many. There were 168 at Lodi H. S.; they entered into school life. When evacuation came, the Japanese made a resolution regarding their good treatment. (Rev. Hamilton tried to find a copy but could not lay his hands on it.)

There was a question about the loyalty of some. This fact is causing considerable opposition to the return. However, Rev. Hamilton does not expect there will actually be much difficulty. Most of the Lodi Japanese were in grapes and had a fine situation. He thinks that before the war, the situation regarding Japanese was nearly ideal at Lodi. There was no difficulty.

Pretty nearly all Lodi Japanese were Buddhists. One or two little girls attended Hamilton's church. Miss Annabella Wilhams, who now teaches at Rohwer Center, formerly lived in Japan and Lodi, where she knew and worked among many of the people now in the Arkansas Center. She belonged to Hamilton's church and he praised her highly. He said she did an individual type of work.

In Visalia, there is no organized group working to aid returning evacuees. Rev. Hamilton fears the return to this county will cause difficulty. He himself would assist as much as he, a relatively new person in the community, can.