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DEFENSE

NEW PIONEERS FOR AMERICA

Written and Produced by

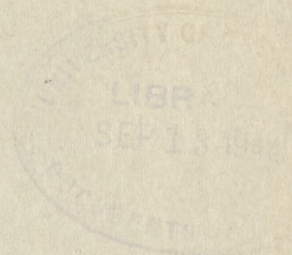
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Presented at Commencement Exercises

Amache High School May 19, 1944

LUS War Relocation Authority.
Department of the Interior
Amache, Colorado



NEW PIONEERS FOR AMERICA

On the right apron of the stage, an announcer is standing before a microphone. On the left is a verse choir of twelve people. The curtains are closed at the beginning of the scene and in the background, there is music.

(Fanfare of trumpets)

Announcer: There were once in an island country, long ago, and yet not so long as the span of life of a man, certain villagers, artisans, good folk, family people, lovers of land, of the young spring, of a field of rice sprouts. They gathered in the evening to hear from the lips of a traveler.

A man of the town, lately returned after many years,

A strange tale of gold, riches, machines, in a country where wealth was not measured.

Choir: It was a story, a tale of Kit Carson's,

Solo: A fable of Paul Bunyan,

Solo: A lie of Jim Bridger's,

Told in a St. Louis tavern--

Told in an Idaho log camp

Told in the Arkansas valley

Around a wavering campfire.

It was a story of Raleigh's

B: Told in a London grog-shop

Or something like Marco Polo

G: Spun for the elegant ears

Of pretty Genoese Women.

Like a lie of Jim Bridger's

A fable of Paul Bunyan

A tale of Kit Carson

Jim Bridger

Paul Bunyan

Kit Carson

Announcer: It was a story meant for the minds of the young and
restless--

Stirring the fire of imagination,

Adventure and joy for the young.

Choir: And the young listened, their spirits kindled--

Looking again at their village they saw:

G: Old houses--

B: Old manners--

G: Old people--

B: Old customs--

Small--unappealing:

Old! Old! Old!

Announcer: A well-known thing this village, of new unimportance.

This traveler now--wealth he had, wealth in his hands;

The world at his feet,

Nothing too big for him;

Might it not be the same for any young man of courage?

(Fanfare of trumpets)

The curtains part on a Japanese village scene, a small bamboo structure, a village well, and upstage, a village dance, or shibai. In the foreground, a boy, Kiyoshi, and his aged father are talking together.

Father: Foolish, foolish boy. You are more foolish than a woman.

This America, bah, it is a thousand miles and many more distant from this village. We are poor. I am old. Our fields are not profitable. Will you leave me, an old, old man to care for your mother and sister? You are chasing kites. Do you think rainbows have pots of gold at both ends?

You are my first born. If the second boy should go, it might, of course, be arranged; that is, if there were profit in it-- which there is not--you understand. The family will lose status. All our friends will laugh at us. They will say--"See, there goes the father of that stupid Kiyoshi. He has left the land; disgraced his family."

Boy: I cannot answer your arguments. All that I know is that we are poor, and grow poorer hourly. I am strong and young, and must take my chances while I am young, or else go in the old way to age and illness and death and no wiser.

Father: You would do better if I should get for you a matchmaker.

A good wife will take such nonsense from your head.

Boy: I have no use for a wife. We cannot support the family now, let alone a new wife. No, I will go, whether with your permission or without.

Father: Go then, fool. See, there, they are dancing. Is that not better than seeking a fortune among strangers? Oh, you young men, all the same always restless!

(Dance) (Traveler sees the boy watching and joins him.)

Traveler: Boy, what is it that you wish to know?

Boy: Is it true that the buildings are tall as mountains? Is it true that everyone is rich?

Traveler: It is true and more also. Each one has a horse with a carriage and some have carriages without horses, and they drive through the streets making a loud noise and at a great speed. Many kilometers an hour--as high as twenty.

Boy: But....does that not frighten the horses?

Traveler: Indeed, yes. But no one cares. There are plenty of carriages.

Boy: Is there plenty of fish and rice?

Traveler: Yes, but Americans prefer beef. They eat great quantities at each meal.

Boy: I must see these things.

Traveler: It is a long and perilous journey.

Boy: But you have made the journey.

Traveler: That is true. But it was long and hard.

Boy: Then I, too, can go to America.

(Curtains close)

Announcer: In the year of our Lord Nineteen hundred and eighteen

On the 4th day of December,

Less than a month after the war to end wars was over and done,

A small freighter, the Rykuku Maru, or a name similar

Slipped through a fog bound afternoon, through the gaps in the
breakwater, stood off the channel 'til the fog lifted and tied
up at a pier in San Pedro, Port of Los Angeles, pier 47.

Choir: A young man came down the gangway. As the fog lifted, in
the bright western sun,

The Coast Range,

The great rampart

The wall of a continent, towered beyond him.

The keepers of sunset frowned on the young man.

Announcer: The young man was short, and his face was pleasant. His
body was small, but well-developed and strong. He was a little
frightened of the strange land and the strange people, but he
was determined, too.

He rode on a train through strange streets and came to a
house to which he had been directed,

Where there were people from his own land.

And he inquired of them where he might find work, and
much gold.

Gold, yellow, glittering gold? Gold and riches? Wealth and
position? Their only answer was a laugh,

They laughed at his questions,

Laughed and went back to work.

SCENE II

(The curtains part showing a middle aged man sitting behind a desk.

Kiyoshi stands before the desk talking to him.)

Man: You are another. You expect to pick up gold in the streets. How can you believe such fairy tales? You will have to work here. Hard, too!. Competition is hard, and you do not speak the language. You would do better to go back. Go back to your father's farm in your father's village. This life is hard,

Boy: I did not come across the ocean to go back without what I seek. Your home is comfortable. You have many things. I can get them, too.

Man: I worked many years in the fields, and my family also, for this security. My boys are being educated in American schools. It will be easy for them but hard for you. Why do you not go back where life is pleasant?

Boy: Life is not more pleasant for a poor boy in Japan. Do you think that if I stayed at home and worked as hard as you have worked here, my lot would be as good as yours? Do you think I could send my sons to college or could leave the soil of my father's? You have forgotten much about the land of your birth. Would I have fine clothes, a strong house with oaken floors; time to take leisure; own an automobile; all the small things which you take for granted? No, I must stay.

Man: Very well, I can offer a job. Your room and meals and fifty cents a day. You can go to work in the celery beds tomorrow. But you would be wise to go home.

Boy: I thank you for your kindness. You will not be ashamed of having hired me. I shall work well.

(Curtains close)

Choir: He did work well--

He went to the celery beds,

He hoed the cabbages.

He turned the soil along the hills of green beans.

G: The sun was hot, on his shoulders.

B: The days were long, monotonous and dry.

And the soil clung to his bare feet.

But the boy worked

He saved more than a tithe of what he earned.

Announcer: As we have seen, the strong and courageous remained.

There was gold in the western land, and beauty too, and comfort

For those who were able and adaptable.

And the fertile land yielded, as the water brought from the mountains

Gave life to it. There were fish in the sea,

And the prices were good, and the merchants

Sold the fine silk of the east, and the careful goods of the hand looms

And many things the west wanted.

Choir: And on the whole, life was good.

True, there were clouds in the hot sky.

At the first no bigger than a man's hand

Nevertheless, they were clouds, and they grew.

Announcer:

There were people, not many in number,

But, who as so often with malcontents,

Were more clamorous than intelligent,

They were the kind of people who in every land

Do not stop to think; but feel only;

The thing which moves the best of them is fear.

Choir: Fear of a thing unknown, a thing misunderstood.

On the fears of these people, dictators rise.

And spread the creeping tentacles of power.

From their fear, discrimination grows

Legends of evil thrive by word of mouth.

Announcer: So in this sunny land there were people

Anxious because these strange newcomers from the east

Were capable, were successful, were learning how to get along.

Slowly and undercover, sometimes breaking violently.

At other times quietly feeding on itself.

The newcomers had friends too, who admired their industry,

their humor, and their quiet courtesy.

SCENE III

(The curtains part on a busy Drug Store. Several tables are filled with laughing, talking, people of high school age. An empty table is down left. Mary and Shigeko enter and go toward the empty table. Mary is a Caucasian.)

Mary: Come on, Shigeko--have a coke with me--

Shig: I'd love to, Mary.

Mary: Let's sit here.

(Mary signals for cokes)

Shig: My, but I love to go to Poly. Everyone's so friendly--I even have a date for the Senior play! My first one, too--

Mary: Swell. I hope Harry'll ask me.

Shig: You and Harry have been friends for a long time haven't you?

Mary: Yes, he's a pretty swell guy.

Shig: Good-looking, too. Every girl in school envies you.

Mary: Well, he hasn't asked me yet.

Shig: Don't worry, he will.

(One of the couples from another table do a short jitterbug.)

Shig: The teachers at Poly are swell, too.

Mary: Well, anyway, I don't like Miss Brown. She's going to flunk me in art.

Shig: I rather like her.

Mary: That's because you get along well in art. I wish I could do as well as you can.

Shig: I'd like to help you.

Mary: Oh, Shigeko, would you really help me? That sketch you made today was just beautiful.

Shigeko: I could show you.

Mary: Maybe I could do something for you sometime.

Shigeko: Well, Mary, I didn't want to ask you, but you know I am having the worst time in English. I just can't seem to understand prepositions.

Mary: I don't know much about them either--but I'll certainly try to tell you what I do know. Come over to my house tonight, can't you and we'll work on my art and your English.

Shig: Yes, let's do that.

(Enter Tom and Minoru--Tom is Caucasian. They are swinging foot-balls and helmets)

Tom: And when you caught that pass, Min----

Min: Shucks, that was nothing----

Tom: It was too--Well, here are Mary and Shigeko--Hi, kids!

Girls: Hi!

Tom: Mind if we join you?

Mary: No, sit down--

Tom: You should have seen the pass Min caught!

Min: It wasn't anything.

Tom: Well, it was like this-----

Shig: There's Harry now.

Mary: Come on over and join me, Harry.

Harry: You seem to have plenty of company. I'll sit over here.

Tom: Come on Harry, there's plenty of room.

Harry: There's not room enough for me and your friends there.

Mary: Harry! Don't be like that.

Harry: I want to see you, Mary. I want to ask you something. Come on and I'll walk with you.

Mary: Shigeko and I are walking home together. Do you want to come with us?

Harry: I wouldn't be caught dead, walking down the street with a---a--

Mary: Very well, Harry. Shigeko and I are walking home together.

Harry: Good-bye.

Shig: Oh Mary, your date.

Mary: Well, I don't date people like that!

Girls: Well, so long--fellows.

Tom: Wait a minute. We're going your way---

(Curtain)

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Announcer: So, there were friends, too
Many friends, good friends.

But meantime, across the Pacific,
In the old home, the mountainous island;
A new generation of men grew-----
Arrogant, hard, military in bearing.
The world was not large enough,
No power small enough,
No people,--at home, in Asia,
Peace loving and simple,
Could laugh at these war lords.

Choir: Their own boys they fed to their armies,
Their young women fed to their war plants.
Sons dying and dead could not move them!
The mutter of guns rumbled over the water,
Faintly, stirring the fronds of the date palms,
And so it went, tension, tension,
wait, wait, and the muttering of guns over the water....

Announcer: Then, then, the Black Day-----
The day of the weird attack,
The strange fever of events
Pearl Harbor! Pearl Harbor!

Choir: Nothing in this world since it began,
Nothing in the horrible history of wars
Was more calculated,
Could have been calculated,
To bring all the forces together....

Announcer: The fine forces of fierce resistance!
And the hidden forces of the minority
Who used the righteous anger at the sudden attack
For their own ends, until the clamor began,
The rumor spread;
And the thing happened....

Choir: What Pharoah set in judgment
Presumes, even now, to be wise enough
To sit in judgment!

To judge! To say-----
These were all wrong!
These were entirely right!
No one can be certain before the game is over,
And the photo-electric cell, reports the play,
Reports the referee's action----

Announcer: Whether advised or ill-advised,
The decision is made.
As irrevocable as the fall of a bomb,
Irrevocable! (Choir with announcer)
(Curtain)

SCENE IV

(Mother is sitting on the porch shelling peas)

Father: (enters) The crops are all in. The weather has been favorable.
All signs point to a good harvest.

Mother: If we are here for the harvest--

Father: You have been listening to rumors again. You and your
gossiping friends. This is our land, our own land.

Mother: Yes, and think of the years we worked for it.

Father: We'll not lose it now.

Mother: You said that same thing about your gun and Kiyoshi's camera.

Father: I know I have been wrong about many things.

Mother: And what about the curfew?

Father: I know--I know--But this is our home--Our land. For years
this has been our country.

Kiyoshi: (Rushing in with newspaper) Look here! We have to go!
It says so here.

Father: Slow now, son. Tell us about it.

Mother: I knew it--I knew it.

Father: Read it to us, son.

Kiyoshi: (Reading) It is hereby ordered that all people, aliens or
citizens, of Japanese ancestry are to leave the area composed
of Napa County on Saturday morning, April 10. They are to meet
at the Santa Rosa depot, from which they will be taken to Merced
Assembly Center. Each person may take two suitcases.

Mother: Two suitcases! My beautiful dishes.

Father: And my paintings.

Kiyoshi: I'm not going. I'm not going to leave here.

Father: First son, these are orders from the government.

Kiyoshi: I don't care. They can't make me. No one can make me.

Father: Don't talk like that, son.

Kiyoshi: Our crops, too--My own field of carrots. And school---
I'm not going.

Mother: You said that about curfew, too.

Kiyoshi: And my new car.

Father: Let's be calm now. Let's think what we must do. I met a man yesterday who said he'd buy our place.

Mother: You didn't tell me. For how much?

Father: I didn't tell you. It was so little.

Kiyoshi: How much?

Father: Only \$4,000.

Kiyoshi: \$4,000!! Why the house alone is worth more.

Mother: And the crops.

Kiyoshi: We'll never do it.

Father: We may have to, son.

Kiyoshi: It'll all be so different, so new.

Father: Listen, son, when I was just your age, I left Japan, everything I knew and loved for a new country--a new home. It has been a good life.

Kiyoshi: But this is different.

Father: Yes, because we are not going because we wish. But it can still be a good life. We can start somewhere again.

Mother: At your age. No, it's too late.

Father: Kiyoshi is young and strong. He can help. He has his life.

Mother: Saturday, day after tomorrow.

Father: Come on, son. Let's see if the onions are up.

(Curtains close)

(Music)

(Background for Choir)

Choir: And so they gathered,

Like the Children of Israel

Like Mormons in Independence, Missouri.

Fathers and old men

Women and young children!

They loaded the coaches,

Ancient coaches,

Loaded them down,

With Fathers and old men---

Women and young children!

Women and children!

Announcer: In no land since the beginning of time
Has the sun shone always.
With no people of any land have events dealt
impartially and equally.
Times change. Today's sorrows yield tomorrow's joy.
Yesterday's love is dust in your mouth tomorrow.
Now is the time----
Now is the where we live-----
Now is the present importance!
Now in Amache, Minidoka, Heart Mountain,
Now in New York City, in Memphis, Chicago----

Now.....

Now.....

Now.....

(Music)

Here then is a family--
Have you seen tombstones?

Choir: Mary Smith
Born 1789 - Married 1810

Choir: John Jones - Born 1900 - Died 1928

Announcer: Have you read newspaper notices.....

Choir: John Jones, only son of Hiram and Mary Jones, born 1900,
educated in Podunk High School, attended Klonk University,
was successful in the practice of law, died April 15, 1944.
He was survived by two sons in the services and his wife,
Emma. Internment in Mount Olivett, Wednesday, 3 p.m.

Announcer: Suppose all of us living--

An uncompleted burial announcement--

Choir: Hideyo Watanabe, Born 1924, evacuated from California,
1942, Graduated Amache High School, 1944-----
(Curtains)

SCENE V

Hideyo: At this minute, I am writing a line to be published in an American newspaper in 1981. These are my mother, and my father, my brother in the American Army, my elder brother, my sister and I. My father is on leave from Crystal City where he has been interned. What have you to say, father? Will you add a line to my burial announcement?

Father: I have nothing to say. What I have said I have said. I can add nothing. I have been unfairly treated. I shall return to Japan. As my son, I shall expect you to go also. There remains nothing to speak of.

Hideyo: And mother? Will you speak?

Mother: You are my younger son. You are dear to me. I go with your father. So be it.

Hideyo: Brother Min, add a line for an uncertain date in 1981.

Brother: 1981. It is a long time. Live long, little brother. My burial announcement may come sooner. Private Min Watanabe, cited for gallantry in action on the Reuen salient in Northern France.....(Pause)

Because he believed--
Yes, finally--and for always

Because he believed a haggard man whose spirit was
the deep spirit of a free land and a just one.

Finally and always.

A man who died in a theatre box in Washington who said,
"With malice toward none; with charity for all, with firmness
in the right as God gives us to see the right--let us
strive--to finish the work we are in--to do all which may
achieve a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with
all nations."

Hideyo: And Mary--

Mary: This is my land. It is my own. I know nothing of any other.
I shall be an interior decorator in New York City.

I shall go with you, Hideyo, but we shall not forget to
honor our father and mother.

Nor forget to worship the God in whom we believe.

Nor yet the beauty of Japan.

But take that which is good from Japan.

And remember it--Remember it as we grow in America--

America--the land of our birth

The land to which we came willingly because we believed in her--

Believe in her yet--

Believe in her opportunities

Believe that here we can live the good life--

That we can stand straight--

Take our place in the sun

Without fear

Without cringing--

Hideyo: With me, Mary. Then you go a long way. You have come eastward.

over the mountains, out of the West. And I----Hideyo, on my

burial announcement will have it carved----

Like Carson,

Like Bridger,

Like Fremont,

Like Lincoln,

He was a pioneer!

An eastward pioneer. In this great continent

From the wide flat plains to the deep and mighty Mississippi.

The delta of Louisiana,

The wide inland lakes, and the Indiana dogwood,

The great cities of noise and names; Duluth, Chicago

Philadelphia, Boston,

Savannah, New Orleans

St. Louis, Memphis!

The railroads, steel to the east, steel to the south,

Automobiles, aircraft, busses, tractors, sewing machines,

All these, these to pioneer.

I have heard enough of evacuation-----

Enough of Injustice-----

Enough of discrimination!

Min, my brother, we are the pioneers,

The new pioneers of a mighty nation

Conceived with a mighty belief,

One that forever needs proving-----

We need our pioneers, our Tom Paines with,

"The price of liberty is eternal vigilance,"

We need the mighty belief

Again and again proven:

That all men are created equal, that they are endowed

by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that

among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

(Curtains close slowly)

(Glee Club sings "United Nations")