

EVACUEES' REQUESTS IN CONNECTION  
WITH THE CLOSING OF CENTER

There are two groups of people in the Center regarding this matter. The first group requests that the same kind of protection and maintenance as that afforded by the WRA continue to be provided to them for the duration by WRA or by some other Government agency.

The second group is willing either to return to the West Coast or relocate elsewhere provided a certain number of their requests are granted by the Government.

FIRST GROUP: Due to the lifting of the Evacuation Order, the return of the people of Japanese ancestry to the West Coast has become possible. However, the majority of the people find themselves in a situation which makes it impossible for them to avail themselves of the opportunity thus offered. They, therefore, request that the same kind of protection as that afforded by the WRA continue to be provided. Their reasons:

1. The mental blow caused by the forced evacuation was so severe that they are unwilling to go out of the center.
2. The economic structure built by the people of Japanese ancestry in the past half a century had been radically destroyed.
3. The oppression and persecution of the Japanese minority is still existing in the outside communities.
4. This group has an uneasiness which arises out of the fact that the Issei are too old and no young people are with them to help in case they decide to start any enterprise--particularly agriculture. The average age of the Issei now is sixty-one years and it is impossible to undertake any business successfully without the help of their sons. But most of the Nisei have relocated to



the Middle West or East, and some of them are in the armed forces.

5.

6. Mr. Milton Eisenhower, former director of the WRA, announced in a pamphlet which are distributed among the Japanese people in the assembly centers that the relocation centers would be kept open for the duration of the war. Many people acted on the basis of that announcement. They disposed of their property rights and made other arrangements on the West Coast. Therefore, they have nothing on the West Coast to go back to.

SECOND GROUP: This group is willing either to return to the West Coast or relocate elsewhere, provided the following requests are granted:

1. That the Government provide special protection through Federal agencies for the life and property of returned evacuees. They think that in certain cases local authorities are not adequate to provide protection.

2. That the Government establish a means to give a guarantee of living to those who go out until they firmly re-establish themselves. This help is to be extended to relieve suffering from lack of livelihood and shall be given on a basis similar to the Army's dependency allotment or as unemployment insurance benefits or out of cash especially appropriated from the Federal Administration's fund.

3. That the present relocation cash grant be increased and also that the penalty provision in connection with it be eliminated.



Most of the people are altogether out of funds on account of the forced evacuation. In addition, living in a Center in which the basic pay is \$16 per month for 2½ years, the people have been forced to spend most of what they had left. Therefore, those who remain in the Center are those who cannot afford to relocate. They are not on the whole wage earners. Most of them are business men and farmers. If they relocate now, it will take several months before they can re-establish themselves in the kind of businesses in which they were engaged before evacuation. They need some funds to tide them over the period in which they can make plans and execute them so that they can finally get started and become self-supporting.

4. That a counseling service be established in the WRA offices which would be maintained for the duration.

5. That the Government extend loans to those who start agricultural or other enterprises and also to individuals who are wage earners, to relieve them in case of emergency.

About 70% of the people are engaged in independent industries prior to evacuation. Therefore, real re-construction of livelihood can be achieved only through a plentiful supply of loans. This is the reason why this group requests that loans be extended to all those who were engaged in agriculture, business, or manufacturing industries. The loans offered through the Farm Security Administration and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation are limited to Nisei only, but it is the Issei who need the loans more than the Nisei.

Therefore, this group believed that the fact that they are evacuees should be sufficient grounds to qualify them to receive



loans. As they may not have collateral to give in exchange for loans, this collateral provision should be altogether ignored by the Government. Also, the provision that the recipients of loans must be citizens should be set aside.

The same treatment as regards loans should be extended to evacuees who are wage earners or laborers.

6. That housing facilities be provided for relocatees. It seems the housing shortage on the outside is discouraging the evacuees from relocating. Therefore, this group requests that the Government encourage the establishment of more hostels.

When we were evacuated, we went to assembly centers then were transferred to relocation centers. Now, "disassembly centers" should be set up at vital points on the West Coast to give housing to the evacuees so that they could relocate from these centers to the outside.

The housing shortage should be ceased by building houses through the FHA for returning evacuees in big and important cities on the West Coast.

7. That property service be extended for the duration for those evacuees who need it.

8. That a public relations agency be established to fight anti-Japanese movements and propaganda.

9. That, to safeguard against evacuee's sickness and injury, the Government grant a sickness and injury insurance policy to each evacuee for the duration.

10. That the government exert its influence so that evacuees can buy life, fire, auto, and other insurance policies.



## THE PEOPLE OF POSTON II STATES ITS CASE

The issue is not "Strike or no strike", but whether we Poston residents believe in, are capable of and shall maintain law and order under a democratic form of government! We are in active sympathy with the problem of our fellow evacuee residents. We are now doing our utmost to help bring about an early settlement.

A state of strike in Poston Two is not recognized, nor accepted at this time by the Poston Community Council and the Poston Congress now meeting in emergency sessions. By overwhelming popular vote, eleven blocks of this unit have already accorded the Community Council and the Poston Community Congress full confidence.

Initiated by the Community Council, the present Congress is composed of a membership which includes the following recognized representatives; a councilman, advisor, and block manager with his assistant from each block, the Fair Practice Board members, and heads of works divisions. To retain the objectives of representing only the welfare and interest of the residents, the block managers have expressly been relieved of their direct responsibility to the project director of this unit while acting as members of this Congress.

The case for the people of Poston Two is chronologically stated: The source of the present repercussions at Unit One arises from the series of beatings and attempted attacks culminating in the recent severe battery and maiming of Kay Nishimura. Surging the troubles were the extremely irritable circumstances and conditions; the indiscriminate forced evacuation and concentration of all those of Japanese ancestry regardless of citizenship or affiliations, and particularly the extremely depressing locations, heat, dust, hardships, sacrifices, enumerable shortages, and shortcomings, disruption of normal life; the wholesale shattering of ideals, lead many to a state of desperation; confusions by multiple changes, long delays in the payment of token and nominal cash advances, clothing allowances, and other regrettable circumstances aggravated the matters. The immediate incident is the arrest and confinement of George Fujii and Isamu Uchida on Sunday, November 15. Since their arrest and confinement, Mr. George Fujii has now been released on grounds of insufficient evidence although investigation has not been completed and Mr. Isamu Uchida, we are advised, has been charged by the project head with assault with a deadly weapon. The confinement of popular Mr. Uchida brought about a strong reaction expressed in mass demonstration, and demand was made upon the project director of his unconditional release. Failing to succeed in this demand the Council and Block Managers resigned from office and the demonstration and determination of the masses desiring the release of Mr. Uchida increased and became more demonstrative. Recognizing that a serious situation was becoming more so in Unit One, and at the request of Unit One representatives, our Council and the Block Managers were met in an emergency session. Thursday, November 19, they were joined in this anxiety by the Advisors and Council men from Unit Three who met with them. To this meeting Three representatives of the protesting populace of Camp One made their appearance and plan. Their speaker outlined the immediate incident, the charge, confinement and the demonstration following the arrest of Mr. George Fujii and Mr. Uchida. Following the plea of these representatives, they were asked specifically whether they, in Unit One, were requesting that we cooperate with them in a sympathy strike.



The answer of Unit One was clearly "No". They were asked what Units Two and Three could do to alleviate the situation and aid in this matter. The speaker for Unit One stated that that was up to us as Unit Two and Unit Three representatives. However, he stated that since the Council and Block Managers of Unit One had resigned, they were without any organized or recognized bodies which could negotiate with the project director and his staff for an early settlement. Thereupon the joint body of Units Two and Three selected two members from each of the following groups; block managers, councilmen, and advisors of each unit, making a committee of twelve in all who were to negotiate a peaceful settlement of this problem with the project staff. They were immediately dispatched for that purpose to Camp One. Prior to their departure, Mr. Evans, the then acting director, was contacted and the group were informed that an announcement was about to be made to a committee of 72 at Unit One in regards to this case, the announcement being in main that Mr. Fujii was being released and the fact that Mr. Uchida was being charged with assault with deadly weapon before Superior Court of Arizona, Yuma County, where he would be accorded a fair trial. Since the negotiating group felt that such an announcement would still be unsatisfactory to the protestants at Unit One, they went before the Unit people's committee of 72 and after relating the plea of their representative, announced that the negotiating committee had come to endeavor for an amicable settlement for them. The people's committee acclaimed and entrusted our joint committee to negotiate. After a series of conferences and securing no changes from the announcement determined upon by the project staff, the negotiating committee presented their situation to the executive committee of the protesting group, and the meeting then went into the general announcement by the project director of the release of George Fujii and the charge upon Mr. Uchida. The announcement was not accepted with favor by the group and the negotiators having failed to bring about the meeting of the minds between the project director and the protestants, they returned to their respective units to await further results and expecting information on developments from Unit One. The following day after waiting until approximately two o'clock Friday, November 20, Block Managers and certain Councilmen and Advisors, feeling anxiety, requested that a small limited delegation again endeavor to settle the strike situation and mass demonstration at Unit One. They had a personal representative consult with the project staff and securing the confidence of the project staff was able to present to the people of Unit One, the following proposition if they would make it to the project director: that Mr. Isamu Uchida be released immediately upon the condition that the residents of the Poston Community composed of the evacuees only, would give Mr. Uchida a fair trial upon the charges instituted by the Chief of Internal Security. The reaction to such a proposition with the assurance of acceptance by the project director was very favorably received by the central executive committee of the strikers who were at their office. However, they felt that since they were a limited number and since it was a change from their original demand, they would like to share this responsibility with the block representatives in this mass movement. Therefore, the committee of 72 was called in for immediate session. The proposition was thereupon repeated to them. Meanwhile, Number Three Unit also being advised of this new and final possibility for negotiation, also expressed that they would suspend any action pending Unit One's acceptance of this new term. The first vote taken of this group of 72 to Unit One was overwhelmingly in favor. A few were determined to proceed under the original demand of unconditional release. After several speeches by its members, it finally determined that they would take a plebiscite of their respective blocks in deference to the work and demonstration made by the people up



to that time. The answer and the result of the plebiscite was to be made in a meeting to be held on Saturday, November 21, at 10 o'clock A.M. Therefore, The negotiating committee from Unit Two returned late that Friday night to report in detail the matter to the Supervisor of Block Managers, who in turn advised each of the Block Managers immediately.

Late that night, a certain group from a certain block went around the blocks, ringing messhall bells and asking the residents to arouse themselves to a meeting at the Cottonwood Bowl. To those gathered at the Cottonwood Bowl, the sponsoring group made an announcement of the progress of the case only up to the negotiations which had failed on Thursday. The Speaker stated Camp Three was already on sympathy strike. Strike was called for here and with the acclaim of the group sponsoring such movement, it was also claimed for Unit Two, and certain groups from the same body went to Unit One and Three to publish this fact. On Saturday morning, November 21, at a regularly called meeting of the Block Managers, Fair Practice Board, heads of departments, Councilmen and Advisors of Unit Two, a report in full was made of the progress of the negotiations and the fact that further action would necessarily have to wait the definite reply from Unit One which would be gathered at their ten o'clock meeting. During this meeting Unit Three announced that they were not on strike and rejected the statements made in the Cottonwood Bowl the previous night. Although the morning passed and contact was made several times, no reply on whether Unit One had accepted the final negotiation terms was made known. Meanwhile, the same group sponsoring the meeting at the Cottonwood Bowl the previous night came en masse and requested that the reports of the recent negotiations be made before the body and to which it was agreed. In the afternoon, therefore, a report was made at this open meeting which was sponsored by Block 211. At that meeting, a representative from Unit One, led by Mr. Nagai, made a speech which did not reply to the negotiation, but indicated that situation was such that we should go on sympathy strike. This mass meeting was steered for a strike movement. All opposition was squelched effectively. The Councilmen of Unit Two, Advisors together with the Block Managers, the Fair Practice Board and the department heads met immediately in the Personnel Messhall to consider their reaction to this Cottonwood Bowl demonstration. It was agreed that a survey would be made and ballots taken on the popular wish of the people through their respective blocks and with that in mind the body retired to the evening after supper. At that following meeting it was revealed that definitely at least nine blocks were not in favor of the strike as outlined in either meeting at the Cottonwood Bowl and two blocks had no survey yet and, therefore, voted in favor of continuing the organized bodies of this unit. On the following day, Sunday, November 22, the same group of representatives met and determined that for this emergency period, this body would constitute itself as a Poston Two Community Congress and represent the popular will and the self-government of its people. It returned a definite report that an uncoerced secret ballot revealed that residents of eleven blocks voted full confidence to the organized and now existing self-government bodies and against recognition of strike in the form as called by the present sponsors of this strike movement.

The chronological detail is presented solely for the purpose of clarifying those to whom it may concern that the issue is not one of strike or no strike, but one of belief and practice in self-government in a democratic manner. Particularly does the Community Congress condemn the manner in which the meetings at the Cottonwood Bowl were conducted wherein no accord was given the opposing views and wherein speakers seeking to express views contrary to strike were overenthusiastically and vulgarly cajoled. The Congress of Unit Two believes that every person in Poston Two is entitled to express his views and to vote on all issues



by secret ballot and to be represented in a duly constituted manner, and that all action should be taken by such a body of representatives properly chosen by democratic means and procedure. It goes on record as definitely in favor of law and order and expresses confidence that the people of Poston are capable of maintaining law and order under their own constituted judicial system, and will execute the responsibilities of such form of government.

To the people of Poston Unit One, we repeat our full sympathy and again offer our cooperation to aid in the fair, just, and complete settlement of the difficulties and attain a definite progress in our mutual welfare. Since your request we have vigilantly and actively endeavored in your behalf.

November 23, 1942

POSTON II COMMUNITY CONGRESS



W. RELOCATION AUTHORITY  
COMMUNITY ANALYSIS SECTION

Extract from letter  
Poston I  
Friday p.m., July 30, 1943

Colo. Rev.  
gun

I got in here along with Colonel Gould and a sergeant for Camp Savage plus Dr. Ade late last Sunday night, and was met in style, taken to the Grand View to cancel my reservation, and driven to the project. At Poston they don't send a black Maria to collect the visiting firemen, as they seem to do at Gila. The five days here have been very illuminating to me, and I have been fortunate in finding early Len Nelson, Administrator of Unit I. He was the acting director during the strike and demonstration of last November. He has taken great pains to keep me comfortable and show me everything; he has also overcome me with the supply of typists, secretaries, and interpreters he has rounded up for my use. Home was never like this.

Beginning Monday the place has been full of tension and apprehension over various issues: 1) the cut in employment; 2) segregation; 3) the belief on the part of the people that Poston is to be closed entirely on September 1--this rumor has unfortunately been nourished by the publication of the list of centers which are to receive the transfers from Tule Lake, and the list did not include Poston, Gila River, or Manzanar; it was fattened remarkably by the Examiner quote of Mr. Myer, which stated that all centers were to be closed, 75,000 people would be leaving them, and only one center would remain open, Tule Lake--; 4) the last minute call from Governor Osborne, forbidding the sending of 175 evacuee student teachers to the summer session at Fort Apache. This was announced yesterday, first at a closed meeting of labor board, exec. com. and representatives from the council, by Mr. Nelson, and later in the afternoon to the group of kids who were getting packed up to go. Nelson probably saved the place a demonstration by gathering in the key evacuees and talking frankly with them. This change in plans has been very bad all the way around, as all the teachers out on annual leave were at this time en route to Fort Apache to be there on Monday; the students were packing furniture had been shipped ahead, and even ration points had been forwarded to the Indian Service for the use of the people from here. The implications of this refusal of permission to young people who had refrained from relocating and promised to stay on another year here out of a sense of duty, to attend a course of instruction which was designed to help them in the Americanization of the children here, are pretty serious. I have learned that Mr. N. advised that Head ask the Governor's sanction some weeks ago, before special instructors were hired, and plans went further. The advice was not taken, and the Gov. learned indirectly of the "plot" to take the kids to Apache.

The general feeling here is that it is only the large-looming of segregation that has prevented a blow-up over both the employment-cut and the Apache matter. I could expound on both these subjects, but my time is short and I want to get this letter off to you while I have a typewriter.

I have learned a good deal of the difficulties arising from the double jurisdiction exercised here. The evacuees have wavered between belief in what the Indian Service says and what WRA says, and they seem to



have a genius for contradicting each other, and tend now to believe nothing either says. I have a much better knowledge of what actually happened and the relation of one event to another in the Poston "Incident" than I ever had before. Official reports sent in to Washington reveal far less than they conceal, I have concluded.

My first day here I sat in at a meeting of the manpower commission, where the chief topic of discussion was the cutting of employment for the month of August. Next day I was present at the meeting of Unit I's Block Managers. As the only person on hand from Washington, I was asked to help quash the rumor that Poston was closing September 1. The next morning the Chronicle contained an explicit article outlining segregation and lifted from the Rohwer paper. It was run all around a statement, official, verifying the choice of Tule Lake as a segregation center. This was released to Poston at 3:00 P.M. the previous day. The evacuees had been told that details of the program would be given them the minute the staff had them. Then simultaneously comes the Rohwer paper, showing that Rohwer had been in possession of the facts some days earlier or else that the administration here was deliberately lying when it said it did not have the details. That was one mess. The Fort Apache disappointment broke, and then came the Examiner article quoting, or I trust, misquoting the Director, and sounding as if sundown of day after tomorrow would find every living soul removed from all projects but Tule Lake.

The closed meeting of all the key evacuees was held to try to work out all these problems. Just before it came off, Nelson got me out of my barracks and said the acting director, Burge, and he both felt it would help if I would write a statement for publication in the next day's Chronicle in both languages, on the abandonment of Poston theme, and if I would attend this closed meeting and speak up at need. It was certainly a new role for me, but I was able to state that I had not heard, either at the Conference of P.D.s or at the last staff meeting, anything at all to indicate that anyone dreamed of closing any project until time and relocation had decreased the population to the point where economy necessitated combining the centers. They also asked if Tule Lake was to be run like an internment camp by the army. They were very worried on that score. I spoke with considerable assurance on that point, but by golly, by the time evening came yesterday, I began to wonder myself, if Poston maybe wasn't going to be turned over to prisoners of war! These rumors get you, after a while. I reported formerly that at Gila, the personnel, including the P.D. asked me very seriously if I knew whether Gila River was going to be abandoned. I was dumbfounded, that early in this trip, but said I hadn't heard anything about any such notion, and it seemed very fantastic to me. I assure you it is a very new experience to me to be treated as if I knew something about what makes WRA run, and I find myself being shaken with inward mirth very frequently. On the other hand, let me assure you that I have been very discreet about anything I uttered, stuck fast to saying only what was fact when I was in Washington, and bent over backward to avoid any inference being drawn that I was mother-confessor to Dillon Myer.

I had a long and fruitful interview with Mr. Sodono, a pioneer of Imperial Valley, a perfectly wonderful old man. I had a secretary take down everything he said--and it was fortunate, as he talks rapidly and all his



letters ells are r's, so that the evacuee girl was much better able to cope with the flow than I. Another interview with a daughter of the Samurai nearly slew me. She is a very intelligent and highly educated woman, doing research on Leighton's project. Her recital of the occupation days here, and at the assembly centers was pretty hard to take. It wasn't an official report, but the spoken word of a person whose charm and wit would make her outstanding anywhere and who had been through this sheep-herding process.



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After December 7, 1942

It was a fine Sunday morning in San Luis Obispo and my friends and I were getting our fishing equipment together so that we could go fishing. It was cloudy all day yesterday so it felt very good to see the sun again, and all of us were very anxious to go to the beach to see who could catch the first striped bass. At last we started off for Pecho Beach. After driving for about ten minutes we reached a large sand hill and from there we walked up to the beach. We raced up the sand hill and down again to the beach and cast out lines out into the ocean. After waiting for about fifteen minutes one of the boys caught a perch, so most of us went to that spot and after that we caught twenty two perches altogether in two hours. A little later one of the boys felt a strong bite on his line and when he tried to pull it in, it was very heavy and didn't move very much. We thought that it was caught on one of the reefs so we went to help him, but it started to jerk so hard that he nearly lost his pole. He kept on reeling in only to have the fish pull it out again. At last after fighting for awhile the fish tired out and we pulled it out of the water and dragged it up to the beach. It was a large striped bass weighing about thirty pounds and it was about four feet long. After seeing that fish everyone was excited and tried to catch one also, but nobody else was lucky enough to get another striped bass. At noon the oldest boy, who was the cook, unwrapped all the packages of food and started cooking. We went along the beach and gathered the drift and made a nice fire. He took out a pan and cooked the meat for the barbeque. All of us quit fishing and watched him, and we could hardly wait for the meat to turn brown. When



it finally was cooked we took out paper plates and put in the meat beside the salad and cakes. We drank soda pops and tore off hunks of French bread and started eating with our fingers because we forgot the forks. Even though a little sand got on the salad and meat it certainly tasted good because all of us were nearly starved.

About a hundred feet from the ocean there was a high cliff which came right down to the beach. It was formed by the sand which had hardened and it was so steep that we had to build steps to go up to the top. On the face of the cliff we carved out our names and went climbing all over it, making footholds with a little hatchet. There was one place where the cliff was almost perpendicular to the ground so I went there and carved my initials. While I was adding the finishing touches to it I dug into a small hole and a scorpion came out. It scared me so much that I nearly fell off and started to slide down towards the steep part but my friend reached over with a stick and I grabbed it just in time. We killed the scorpion and examined it. Since this was the first time I had seen one I thought that all scorpions looked like this one. It was sort of transparent and the color of it was red. It was about one and one half inches in length and wasn't very large.

After playing around for awhile we made a slide on that cliff. Since this cliff was nearly as high as one of Poston's water towers, nobody wanted to be the first one to try it. Later one of the boys got enough nerve to slide down and the other followed. Once we went down there it wasn't so bad the second time and all afternoon we just climbed up and slid down the cliff. Later we started to make more dangerous ones and when we went



down one of these we couldn't stop even though we wanted to, because it was so steep. There were many bumps on the way down so the slide was like a snake. When we hit one of these bumps while going down we would go flying up and come down on our seats and it sure would hurt. Once when I was going down I hit a large bump and when I came down I lost control and rolled down the cliff down to the beach.

When I tired I got my camera and took pictures of the boys coming down. I also took pictures of them making the slide, the picture of some of the largest fish, and a picture of the boys eating. We also brought along some guns so we shot at targets placed on the cliff. When our bullets ran out we went to the slide again.

At four p.m. we headed for home, and when we reached there I heard many people talking about Pearl Harbor. I listened to them for awhile and went to my radio and listened to it to see if it was true. The details of the Pearl Harbor attack was given so I decided that it must be true. I didn't expect a war to start this early but I knew that a war would begin sooner or later. I had read in magazines and newspapers that Japan had a third class air force and that the warships were built too heavy and were no good. The airplanes of Japan used in China must have been about third class but since they had no opposition they didn't need any good airplanes. The zero fighters and bombers they are using now are certainly one of the world's best. The zero fighter has a 1,650 horsepower engine and it carries two cannons and two machine guns. The best part of it is that it is highly maneuverable and it can climb up way into the stratosphere. Last year I read a newspaper headline which said that the United States Navy can wipe



out the Japanese Navy in two weeks if it had a chance. The war has been going on for over ten months and the Japanese navy is still strong and dangerous. The Japanese army showed its strength when it captured Singapore in a few months. This was a very strong fortress and it was supposed to take Japan about ten years to capture it.

The rest of the family was feeling sad about the war starting, so they didn't talk about it so much. The Japanese school quit a little later and we also quit taking kendo and judo lessons. In San Luis Obispo we used to go to the Japanese school right after we finished high school. The teacher we had gave us a lot of home work and it was pretty hard so I wasn't very sorry when we quit it. I didn't want to quit judo but since the teacher went back to war just before the war, we didn't have any judo.

The day after the war started we went to school as usual but they didn't talk about the war as much as I had expected them to. During the second period we went into the auditorium and had to listen to the President's speech. During that speech I didn't feel very good sitting in there because I knew that many people in there would have a grudge against us. After the President had finished his speech the principal of our school gave us another speech concerning us. He said that he felt sorry for us and that he wants nobody to tease us or anything like that. After the first week in the war nobody talked to us about the war. Every thing went along as though there was no war and I still got along pretty well with my friends, in spite of the war. Most of the students in that school were pretty good fellows and we never even got teased and nobody called us "Japs" as I had expected them to do. The only way we were reminded that there was a war going on was, that we had air drills quite often. Since we lived near the



coast, there was a chance that we might get bombed from the Japanese bombers. When there was an air raid drill the bell rang differently from the fire drill. We immediately stood up and marched out in order. Students were appointed to close the windows and shutters, and another person led the others out of the classroom. We marched down to the hall and lined up in our proper places. Our hall was suppose to be a very good bomb shelter because there were rooms on both side of us and over us was a double roof. During a fire many people get killed because the people get panicky and don't know what they are doing. If they were trained to march out in order then the number of people killed and injured would be reduced considerably.

Not long after the war started we started hearing stories about many Japanese being killed by the Filipinos in cold blood. Some of the Filipinos went along and when they came to a Japanese home they knocked on the door. When somebody came out to answer the door he was shot, and the bad part of it was that nothing was done about these killings. Many people were also knifed in the back. Even though nobody in San Luis Obispo was killed or wounded we saw some Filipino in a car pass back and forth in front of our place. Since these Filipinos didn't live around here they must have been trying to get somebody. Another time I went into a store and I saw a Filipino examining the rifles there, so I walked out of there in a hurry. After this I always kept my gun loaded at home to be sure that no one would come in and try to shoot us. When we went somewhere we usually went around in gangs. For awhile there were many fights between the Filipinos and the Japanese. When I came to Delano there was fight because of a crap game. The Filipino was crazy enough to pick



on someone who knew judo. When the fight ended the other Filipinos carried away the beaten Filipino.

A few weeks after the war started an order came out that we had to turn in our guns, swords, radios, and cameras. In our town it was all right to keep our radios if we took out the short wave coil for it, so we took ours out and didn't have to turn it in. I also had two cameras but I got a permit from the sheriff to keep them because I was taking some pictures for our high school annual. The only thing that I turned in was my rifle and I sure hated to lose it but I thought that if I kept it I would get into trouble so I turned it in. When I went to the police station to turn it in, my gun was about the best one there. Some of these guns were rusted so much that the trigger wouldn't even work but the others were pretty good. To be sure that it wouldn't rust, I put on a thick layer of grease on them after cleaning. It was wrapped in a greased cloth and a dry cloth was put over this one. After signing the necessary papers for it and getting the receipt I had to answer some questions and have my fingerprint taken. The person who was born in Japan had to have pictures taken with numbers around their necks like an ordinary criminal.

Just before we had to turn in our weapons and our cameras the police raided my neighbor's place and took away all his photographic equipment. He had come from Salinas to make his living here. There were two brothers and they were the one who took us to the fishing trip. The older one supported his younger brother who went to California Polytechnic in San Luis Obispo. He made his living by developing and printing the rolls of film that the people brought to the drug store. When they raided his place



they took away all his photographic equipment which was worth over a thousand dollars. When he went to the police station to see if he could get it back, they stuck him in a jail. The next day the police couldn't get anything against him so they let him out and returned his equipment.

While I was working as a waiter in a chop suey restaurant, many Japanese soldiers in the United States Army came over to eat. They sure missed the Japanese food that they were used to eating so they always ordered some sort of Japanese food. The soldiers came from Camp San Luis which was about five miles from San Luis Obispo. Some even came from Camp Roberts which was about forty miles away. Since these soldiers came over nearly every Friday, Saturday and Sunday I knew them pretty well. I used to try on their gas masks and helmets and they told me some things about the war. One of the soldiers told me to come into the camp and visit him some day but I didn't have a chance to. Sometimes when we went someplace on the car we used to take them along, and there were many dances held in town for the entertainment of these Japanese soldiers of the U. S. Army. Before the war started, Camp San Luis Obispo was only a small National Guard camp, but when they started to draft the men it grew and when the war started it was very large. We used to drive through it every time we went to Moro Bay and I was surprised at the rate it grew. It was just about the size of San Luis Obispo and it held twice as many men. Because of this camp near our town, the stores prospered because of the business from the soldiers. Every weekend the town would be full of soldiers and it was not unusual to see a couple of M.P.'s escorting a soldier back to camp to help out the cook (K.P.) or to spend some of his time in the guard house.

A little after Christmas the Japanese submarines started to sink tankers off the coast. One of these tankers, the Montebello, was sunk out of Estre



Bay near Caucas. This place was about fifteen miles away from San Luis Obispo and it was early in the morning when the torpedo struck the tanker. There was a great roar and even the windows in San Luis Obispo rattled from the concussion of the blast. Along the coast on the way to Pismo beach they have large coast artillery guns emplaced along the hill near the beach. These were camouflaged with nets and the soldiers were on guard day and night. These guns were placed to ward off any attempted invasions on that coast and also to shoot at submarines and battleships if they came within range.

One day in January we heard rumors that we would have to get out of San Luis Obispo. I talked it over with my friends and we didn't think that they would make us get out of our homes, because we were citizens and we had a right to live there just like any other American citizen. Later I found out that that being a citizen of this didn't mean anything. If it was true that we had to move out we didn't think that it would be very soon and we didn't hear anything about it for awhile. In February we read in the newspaper that we might have to get out and they were considering it. This got us worried and we wondered where we could go.

It was during this time that the police came around to every Japanese home and searched it. In our house they found a school uniform which they wore in Japan. It belonged to my uncle and the police severely questioned him. He had a very hard time trying to explain the policemen that it was only a school uniform and not a military uniform. He also had to prove that he had not military training in Japan and also answered some other absurd questions. These men that searched the Japanese homes usually drank "sake" a very strong Japanese wine made from rice, at each home. By the time they finished searching all the homes, some of them were so drunk that they didn't know what they were doing. One of the police joked and said as he left,



"they ought to let us search your homes more often so that we could get drunk again".

A definite order came out that we had to get out of San Luis Obispo before the 24th of February. This was about on the 10th so we had to get busy and be ready to get out. We had to sell most of the things which we could not carry on our truck. Since most of the second earlers knew that we would have to sell our things whether we wanted to or not they offered us little money for our goods, but we had to sell it anyway. For instance, we had to sell our piano for \$4, a new forty gallon water heater and our sofa together for \$14.50, and thirty chairs and a table for \$17.00. There were other things which we practically gave away to the junk dealers. After getting all of our things sold and the other things packed we were ready to move. I went to school and got my drawings that I made in Mechanical drawing but since this was drawing of England's Supermarine Spitfire I had to destroy it because the F.B.I. might catch me with it and use it as an excuse to take my father to a concentration camp. I also destroyed the airplane models that I made. One of them was a two feet model of the U.S. Curtiss P-40. Since we couldn't take all of our things in one truckload we left some of the things in our house. We had to make about three truckloads all together to take all of our things to Fresno where we intended to go. When we came back for the second truckload they walked into the cafe and found one junk dealer attempting to walk off with the cash register. We also found that the washing machine was stolen.

On February 18th, we moved to Fresno which was about one hundred and fifty miles away. We stayed therein a house with our friend who also moved from San Luis Obispo. Fresno was a larger city than what I thought. It had a population of about 60,000 people so it was very easy to get lost in the



town. That night when we reached Fresno my father and uncle went back to San Luis Obispo for another load. They came back again the next day but had to take the truck back for the last load. Since they made three truck loads the garage was full of the things that we couldn't leave inside the house. The next day after reaching Fresno, my friend and I went to the church and watched the others coming in from San Luis Obispo. Since there were no vacant houses around there, many of the families slept inside the church. We also walked down to the town to see what it was like. After walking around and seeing the interesting parts of the city we started on our way home. We were passing through Chinatown and pass a cafe when we saw a Chinaman glaring at us from inside the window following our steps with his eyes. After passing through that street we sure got out of Chinatown in a hurry and we hurried along everytime we passed that cafe.

Since I still had my bicycle, I went riding around the city, but later I found that it was safer to walk. There were times when I went through the main street dodging the cars and sometimes I used to get caught in a traffic jam and barely slipped out alive. Cars were all around me and if I made I slip I might get hit so it was pretty dangerous. Once I nearly was hit by a bus that shot out from a parking place so I didn't go around Main Street as much as I used to after that experience. Most of the time I used to take my friend for ride and scare him as much as I could. I would go towards a tree at full speed and swerve away when I was within a few feet of it but sometimes I came to close and clipped my handlebars but I was lucky that I never rammed into a tree. At other times, I used to zig zag through the trees that grew around the church but often times I scared myself more than the boy that was riding with me.



One day we went to the Fresno Park on the other side of the city. It was a beautiful park with lawn growing all over the place and ponds scattered here and there. When we first reached there, we went to the ponds and watched the many different varieties of ducks and wild fowl swimming along. The zoo was a little farther in and upon reaching there, the first thing that we noticed were the monkeys. As usual they had a large crowd watching them do their stunts and the little children watched them gleefully. Most of them were picking fleas off of each other's back but one little monkey would go up to a high place and pretend to fall and catch the bars with his fingertips. Next we went to see the lions, leapords, and the other jungle animals. While we were watching two leapords, they nearly started to fight but all they did was to growl and scratch each other. Next we came to the most colorful part of the zoo, the cage where the wild birds were kept. The various names were written on a board in the cage but we couldn't even pronouce them. Beside the bird cages were the reptiles but we didn't stay there very long. After walking around the park once more, we started home but we stopped on the way and played basketball and football at a playground. After tiring of that, we played on the swing and the bars before heading for home. That night we went around the city on a car and saw the city by night but after riding around for awhile, I didn't even know what part of town we~~xx~~ were in. We went to look at the Fresno High School and later went to see the Edison High School where I was expecting to attend.

The next day we went to see our friends in Dinuba. One the way, we stopped to see one of our friends who had just moved in the night before from San Luis Obispo. They had just brought their load and were loading their



truck again and they had to move out the next day that they moved in. We helped them load their furniture and trunks and after talking for awhile we moved on again. They told us somethings that happened in San Luis Obispo after we moved out. About two days after moving out of there, the F. B. I. raided that place and took nearly every Japanese man who hadn't moved yet. They still had four days in which to move out but the F. B. I. took them anyway. One family was just getting ready to move out and they were loading up their truck when their father was taken away. The boy had to work hard to get the truck loaded and the house cleaned because his father was taken away. They were better off than another lady who had three small children, and her husband was taken away. Our nieghbor was also taken and he had a son in the United States Army too. The boy was sad because his father was in a concentration camp and his older brother in the army, as they would have a hard time moving out.

On February 28th exactly ten days after we had reached Fresno we had to move again. This time we had to move to Delano. This trip wasn't as far as the last one but it sure was tiresome to be moving around all the time. In a few hours we reached Delano and unloaded all of our things in our house. The next day another boy, my uncle and I went back for the second trip. We stopped the truck and the driver was trying to fix it but it was pretty hard because he didn't have the proper tools. An American boy came along and he helped us fix it. He lived near the place where we were stopped so he got his tools and helped us out. If it wasn't for him we never would have got out unless we called a mechanic. We started out again but we heard some queer noises coming out of the engine. After going a few miles we stopped



again and looked at it. The radiator had been torn up by the fan hitting against it, because the generator was raised too high. The water was leaking out of there and if we went any farther it would burn out the engine so the other two boys walked back to Kingsburg. On the way they had to stop at every house and see if they could use the phone but since they were Japanese nobody would let them use it. When they reached Kingsburg they telephoned to Delano and three boys from Delano drove our car up to our truck. Since my father was an alien it was dangerous for him to be driving around at night, so the boys brought the car. I had to wait from four p.m. until ten p.m. until they came. I certainly was tired of waiting but if I left the truck somebody might stop and steal some of our things on the truck. When they finally came in the car we tied the truck with a chain and pulled it with the car. At first we tied it bumper to bumper but the car swayed so much that they stopped and retied it. Even though the car swayed pretty much and we had some very close shaves we reached Delano safely. Everytime the car slowed down and started off the car was jerked and I thought that the bumper would be pulled off because the truck was fully loaded and it was pretty heavy.

A few days after reaching Delano we signed up to go to school. This school had a new auditorium and cafeteria. Since it was made recently, it was very good looking and in that school we had assemblies about two or three times a week in there. When I first started school I did not have any friends there, so I did not have much fun. Later I got acquainted with my classmates and it was fun going to school after that. For awhile I worked out in the lettuce patch in Delano and we made fifty cents an hour which is about as much as we make in a day at Poston.



I never did believe in superstition but on Friday March 13th the F. B. I. came along and took my father to a concentration camp, so it was bad luck day for us. Not only that but they came in and searched every corner of our house, taking out suit cases and tossing out everything in it and examining it. My desk and suit cases were a mess after they got through with them and since they didn't have to clean it up they didn't care. My aunt sent me a letter and it had just come that day. The F. B. I. got it and took it with them and didn't even let me read it so I didn't know what it said in there. I wrote to her and told her about it but she didn't care because there was nothing bad written there, but I still would like to get it back so that I can read it. They also took along with them some other articles such as Japanese magazines. They didn't even give him enough time to pack his suit case full so he only had a half suit case full of clothes. Later we sent him a suit case full of the clothes which he didn't have time to pack. My father was first taken to Fresno and placed in a jail there. In that jail the food was terrible and the coffee they had to drink didn't have any sugar or cream in it. The food they made (beans) didn't have any salt or other spices in it so it didn't taste very good. When he got out of there they took him to Sharp Park Concentration Camp. He spent his time there until they let him out and he came to Poston about a month and a half ago. They took away without any reason at all and it seemed to us that they took him so that it would be harder for us. We sure had a hard time when we had to move again, but a man helped us so it wasn't so bad. A few weeks later they came again and took nearly every Japanese man in Delano.

Our school term was nearly over and it was a few weeks from summer vacation when the order came out that we would have to go to a camp. All we knew was



that we would be taken to Parker Dam in Arizona. We started taking typhoid shots in Delano. The first shot wasn't so bad but when I took the second shot my arm was sore and it was hard to move it around. Some persons had to stay in bed after taking these shots because they became dizzy. A few days before we left Delano we had to take an examination. We went on the school buses up to Bakersfield and waited. I thought that it was supposed to be a thorough physical examination but all they did was to look inside my mouth and look at my abdomen to see if I had any sort of disease.

This time when we moved we didn't get to bring our cars or trucks so we had to sell these along with nearly everything else which we didn't store or bring along with us. We also made boxes for our things and made bundles so that we could bring it to Poston. I also had to go back and forth from the gas and electric companies to pay up the bills. They told us that we could bring only the things that we could carry with us so we left many things behind that we should have brought.

On the night before we left Delano we broke the curfew and stayed out nearly all night. We knew that the police couldn't do anything about it because we were getting out of there the next day anyway. Some of the people went to the shows and some other s went out and got drunk. We slept only about an hour that night and the next morning we started off.

It was about three a.m. when we gathered in front of the J.A.C.L. and waited for the buses to come and pick us up. When it was about four a.m. the buses came at last and we got on them. When they were sure that nobody would get left behind they started off. There were about five buses and every one of them were full. We went up to Bakersfield on these buses and got off at the station.



We got on the train and waited for along time. At eight fifteen a.m. we started off towards Arizona. At first there were a few hills which we could look at but we went through a desert and we saw nothing but trackless waste-land all about us. Occasionally we saw a mirage out in the desert and it looked so much like a large lake that it was hard to believe that it was only a mirage. We had ice water on the train so it wasn't so bad and we kept on drinking it because it was so hot. During the ride we were restless and Hiroshi and I walked up to the front of the train and back again. Next we walked up the rear and sat there for awhile. When we walked, we couldn't walk straight and went from side to side because the train rocked so much. There weren't very many people in the last car so we went there and slept. Suddenly I woke up and found a cup cake on my lap so I ate it. Then they brought some sandwiches and milk. At the last they brought us some oranges and this was our lunch. At six thirty we went past the Colorado River and this was the first time that I had seen it. I always thought that it wasn't very wide, and that the banks went up about a mile high but I guess that's only around the region of the Boulder Dam. When we went across I found out that it was very wide and the water was muddy. Soon after crossing this river we reached Parker and stopped. Some of us went off and helped them unload the baggage into the trucks. When this was finished the people were permitted to get off the train and get on the bus. These buses were crowded and the windows wouldn't open so I nearly roasted in there. We drove on and when I looked out at the landscape it looked as though there was fog out in the distance. Later I learned that it was dust hanging low over the trees. On the way we passed some buses coming back after making their trip so we knew that our camp was nearby. It was about eight p.m. when we reached



Poston. The camp looked dismal and there were hardly any people walking around. The buildings were lined up monotonously and every block was lined up in exactly the same way. When the bus stopped at block 14, the people were waiting for us but we didn't get off the bus until about an hour later. As I looked out of the window I saw one boy walking by and his boots sank into the dust up to his ankles. He left dust behind and it looked like a smoke screen. When we finally got off we registered and were assigned to our rooms.

We got on a truck and were taken to our room, and dumped off. The room was barren and there was nothing in there. The floor had a thick layer of dust on there on there and on the walls were knot holes and cracks about one eighth of an inch wide. The trucks were going back and forth and raising so much dust that it was hard to breathe. We went to the block managers office and after some difficulty got our beds. Next we received our mattresses and filled them with straw. The baggage came in so we went to get it and had to look around for it in a large pile. That night we went to kitchen fourteen to eat and on the way back we didn't know where our room was. After asking somebody we finally found it and that night we were lost about three times. The next day I went out to the wood piles that were near block 36 and gathered some scrap to use for shelves and chairs. That day we straightened out our room and cleaned it. That afternoon I got a job in our kitchen (#3) as a waiter. We served cafeteria style so I was the one that served the tea. We worked there a few days but we changed to kitchen #13 because we knew more people in that kitchen. During the first few months, the food in Poston was bad and we had canned weinters which tasted much different from the regular weiners. We also ate saurcraut and potatoes all the time and when we had canned fruit they put it right on top of the other



food. We didn't have ice water or milk as we do nowadays. Since we served cafeteria style they had to line up and wait in line to eat.

When I used to put water in the pails so that we could use it in the kitchen, I couldn't even see the bottom of it because it was so muddy. Often we saw oil floating on top of the water and it tasted bad. We were warned that we would get sick if we drank too much of that water but it was so hot that we drank dots of it even though it tasted terrible. Many people in our camp had diarrhea from this water so the doctors were busy all the time and they didn't have any medicine for it. In our block we didn't have any hot water for a few weeks because one of the tractors broke our pipes. Even though it was hot weather the water was cold and we were glad when the hot water came again. We don't have any water shortages right now but at first the water was always going off with out warning. When the water went off the electricity didn't work either so it was very inconvenient.

In our block we killed many scorpions and rattlesnakes. Once we found a rattlesnake under a house. It was killed and one man cut it open to get the meat inside so that he could dry it, and eat it. Inside there was something moving around so he cut it and seven baby rattlesnakes came out. Most of them were dead from the beating they received, but two of them were alive. All of them had one rattle and the live ones would coil up and strike if we went close to it. The boy who killed it kept it in a cage but somebody poured water in it and killed them. Today a man caught a rattlesnake with thirteen rattles but some of the rattles were broken so there must have been over thirteen rattles. It was about as fat as my wrist and over four feet long. The man skinned it and



made a belt out of the skin. About two weeks ago when I was walking home from the library, my friend and I heard a rattle so we jumped back. Since it was dark it was hard to see but we could make out the form of the rattlesnake coiled and ready to strike. My friend watched it to be sure that it doesn't get away and I found some sticks. We killed the snake and brought it under the light so that we could take a good look at it. I dropped the snake near a telephone pole under the light and suddenly a scorpion ran out from under the pole and we killed it also. After burying these we started going home again but we were careful to avoid dark places because we nearly topped on that rattlesnake.

At first we had dust storms every day but none of them was as bad as one a few months ago. That evening after coming home from work we were in our bathing suits ready to go swimming. We were in our block yet playing around on the bars. Out towards Parker we saw some dark clouds and a black form coming towards us. As it came closer we knew that it was dust but we thought that it would go past us because it was going towards block 2. As it came near the people in the park came out like frightened deer and ran home. We didn't think it would strike us but it did and when it struck it struck so swiftly that we didn't have time to run for the buildings. The sand hit us and it stung but it started to rain so the dust wasn't so bad. The rain came down in torrents and the wind started to blow harder. We were still out there watching what would happen. We looked towards block 2 and saw a foof fly off. Then another in block 13 went up and it hit the latrine shattering the windows in it. In our block only one went off and it was the block manager's so he had to sleep in the recreation hall. On most of the buildings the tar paper began to peel off and the rain came into the room so that it was like a shower. While we were watching we noticed that a foof started to flap up



and down just about ready to fly off. The boys who lived in it went up on the roof and held it down so that it wouldn't fly off and they got some boards and fastened the roof down securely. When we were sure that our roofs wouldn't fly off we went to block 2 and looked at the damage done by the storm. When we went across the firebreak the wind was so strong and we had to run across but we didn't go very fast. Walking on the sidewalks was just like walking on a floor with an inch of grease on it. I fell down into the mud about eight times and there was nobody who was with us who stayed on his feet for five minutes. We had on our bathing suits so it didn't matter whether we landed on the mud or not.

Block 2 was hit the hardest by this storm because it was on the corner of the camp. When we went to look at it there were eight roofs blown off, and the lumber was scattered all over. The garbage cans were turned over and scattered all over. When we were walking along a large wooden box came rolling past us and other objects were flying all over. The telephone lines were down and most of the poles were leaning over to one side. We were muddy because of the flops in the mud holes but when we got home we couldn't take a shower so we went to the rain barrel and washed ourselves. The electricity was also off so we had no lights that night. The next day the people got some boards and fastened the roof down firmly so that it would not fly off in case another storm came. The next day we were expecting another storm because of the dust but there was no storm. In the whole camp a total of forty roofs were off and many others were almost ready to fly off.

When camp 1 was filled the people started to come into camp 2 and 3. The first bunch from Salinas came into camp 1 but the others went to camp 2. Except for a few blocks, almost all of camp two is filled with people from Salinas and the vicinity of it. Since I had some friends in there I went to



see them. We started off in the morning and hitch hiked up to there. When we went to camp & there were many people whom I knew because most of the people from San Luis Obispo went to Reedley. From Reedley they came to Poston and when they did come the conditions were much better than when we first came here. They have better water than us because it doesn't taste as bad and it is not as hard as our waters.

After working in the kitchen for awhile the workers under seventeen was fired because they were too young. After this I got a job as a messenger for the Agriculture Department. There were two other messengers already but one quit after a little and another took his place. We went to work at eight thirty to block thirty seven and sat at a table until a message was given to us to deliver. Since another messenger joined us later and there were four messengers we didn't have to deliver many messages. Most of the time we sat around playing games, or carving. While I was working there I carved out a model of a German airplane. After I was through with it it looked more like a Spitfire than a Me. 109. Sometimes we had to deliver something to every block manager in this camp but since there were four messengers it wasn't very hard. Usually when we go to deliver a message we get a ride on some trucks that go along the road. On the way back we usually take out time about it but when we have to deliver a message in the middle of a checker game we hurry back. Usually when they give us a message they tell us to deliver it after we finished the game or when we are going home, but there are some messages that have to be delivered right away. Since there were many typewriters in that building, I used to type in there. Sometimes they would let me type some things for them. When I first signed up as a messenger the first thing that I had to do was to go to block 11 and get a sign which one of the men painted. Another messenger came along with me and on the way back I held the sign.



We were about half way back with the sign when I noticed that the paint was still wet and I smeared part of it. We stopped and started fixing it up with an eraser and when we finished it didn't look so bad. At eleven thirty we went home to eat and came back at one. We worked until four thirty and went home. This work wasn't very hard since we sat around most of the time but it was too hot walking around in the sun.

One day I went to deliver a message to a mess hall and the boss asked me whether I wanted another job as a waiter in that kitchen so I worked there again. In this kitchen we had lots of fun because most of the workers felled around when they weren't working. We always gave hot seat or hot foots to another worker. Once I crawled under a table and was giving a boy a hot seat. The head waiter crawled behind me and tried to give me one, but before I felt it the headwaiter jumped and yelled because one of the waitresses had given him one. We always had music in there because the workers brought phonographs in there and played all kinds of records. The boss used to buy ice cream or watermelon and give it to the workers. In most of the kitchens the waiters weren't allowed to go into the place where they cooked, but in our kitchen they didn't have any restrictions like that. I had to wait on the bachelor's table with another waitress and this was the worst row in the whole messhall. Every table on that row usually took third and sometimes four helpings. When they came in we had to watch to be sure that they filled in all the seats because they usually tried to skip some seats. Each table had its share of food on it but sometimes they would go to the next table and take something off of it and bring it to theirs. While I was in that kitchen I also worked as a kitchen help and dishwasher for awhile but the waiter's job was the best. When we carried dishes the dishwashers used to paly tricks on us by putting waterbetween the plates and when we carried it the water would



run down and get us wet. Other times we used to have water fights and pour ice water down somebody's neck. When we weren't fooling around we had to work pretty hard, but that job in the kitchen was pretty good. George Ikemiya was also a waiter and he worked even though it was his day off. He used to work the hardest among the waiters and waitresses.

On September the first I went to work out in the woods with the subjugation crew because we used to drive the tractors around hauling logs. At first we had to go into the woods and chop trees but later we worked out on the cable. There were about ten young boys working out there and one hundred and forty old men went out into the woods to chop trees. Working on the cable was the hardest job out there because we had to follow a catipillar with a heavy cable. We tied this around a tree stump and let the tractor pull it out. When it was out we went up to it and unhooked the cable. This was the hardest part because the cable would usually dig into the stump and it was hard to take off. These cables were very strong but they would usually last only a few days. The boss would always be watching us because as soon as he went away he knew that everyone would loaf and wait until he started coming before they would work. When they started pushing out the stumps with the bulldozers we didn't have to work on the cable anymore so we just went around and hauled logs. This work was the best because we went around on the tractors and had races to see who could finish the first. When we went to dump the loads we went along at full speed because the ones that were behind the first tractor got all the dust. This dust was so thick that they had to stop because they couldn't even see the road. Once when we were going along with a load a boy on an empty tractor came along and passed us up. He went directly in front of us and started to give us dust. When we stopped he would stop and shoot out when we came near him. After a while we fooled him and was beating him. We were going



along the road while he had to race along the bumpy field but the driver's hat flew off so we stopped. He passed us and since we were stopped he went back and forth in front of us making so much dust that we had to sit there because we couldn't see a thing. When we dumped our load and were coming back the other tractor got stuck in the soft sand so we pulled them out. During the last few days that we worked there, we hardly did any work at all. We just reased around on the tractors and went through the woods and came back to the block 3 park.

At ten O'clock the truck brings us sandwiches so we toast the bread and fry the baloney and eat it. At noon we always have the same thing and they never changed in a month. We have to eat a rice ball, pickles, baloney and a fruit. Since we never had anything different, the men were disgusted and began to go home on the tractors because when they went home they got mybh better food.

Before school started we switched to half day job. We signed up as catipillar service men in other words, a grease monkey. We usually start work at two o'clock and work until five thrity. We get eight hours credit for this job because we are supposed to be on the night shift but we finish early most of the time. Sometimes we come home a little past seven and we are always late in eating, so they save us something to eat all the time. We wait at the corner of block 3 until the truck comes along. It is a Chevrolet with about six or seven oil can of the back. Sometimes when we have time we go into the camp and fool around. After finishing with these tractors we go to a place little north of camp 2. When we finish with these we go to camp one and grease the tractors that working here. Altogethder there are about fifteen catipillars which we have to grease and we have two large grease guns and a small one. On



Thursdays we have to work the hardest because we have to crawl under a tractor and grease the holes below the catipillars. There is about only a foot between the ground and the bottom of the tractor so it sure is messy. The grease leaks out of the holes and drips all over a person's face, getting it all over my mouth last time. On the bulldozers we have to grease about fifty holes every day but on the others there aren't as many holes. Two persons have to work on a large gun and it sure feels heavy after carrying it for awhile. After finishing we come home and have to take a shower right away because we get so greasy and dirty. Some of the persons working in our crew are out of high school already but most of us have to go to school in the morning. We work just as much as they do and should get eight hours but I don't know if we will get credit for it because we are only supposed to work twenty hours a week when we go to school.

I thought that we would have six periods and that it would last as long as a regular school, so I was going to quit my work but since they only had three periods it was no use quitting. I took Solid Geometry but since it was in the afternoon I had to change it to Algebra II and have all my classes in the morning. There were many other subjects which I wanted to take such as typing II, Mechanical Drawing, Solid Geometry, Radio, Spanish, and a few others but since there were only two electives I couldn't take them all. There were forty eight pupils in the second period Algebra class so I told the teacher that I would change to fourth period. When fourth period came along I found out that the Core class lasted two periods so I had it changed back again. The teacher wanted some pupils to change to the afternoon class because there were only about six in there but nobody wanted to so he let the office change it. I was one of the ones that were chosen to be in the sixth period but I went to the office and had it changed again back to the second period. We don't



27.  
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have books right now so it is pretty hard but when the school system gets organized I guess it will be much better and we will have books and other materials.

We are lucky to live in Poston because it is a much better camp than most of the others. Fresno Assembly Center was the best organized but now that they are moving to Arkansas they have to start all over again and organize the new camp. When we came to Poston we didn't have to worry about moving again because this is a relocation center and we don't have to move until the war ends. In the Fresno Assembly Center the people ate good food and they had fruits every day. When we first came to Poston the food was terrible but now we have good food and we also have fruit and vegetables every day. The heat isn't as bad as what it used to be and there are less scorpions seen around here. After they had finished making the sidewalks and hardening it with the water from the canal then the space between the barracks were plowed. All sorts of vegetables were grown and they had started to come up. I didn't think that the things that were planted would grow very well but I was surprised when I saw all the vegetables that were at the fair. The flowers planted around the houses added color to it and it wasn't as barren as it was when we first came here. Some men went out into the woods and collected antique wood that were to decorate their barracks. There are some wood that were fixed up to look like crabs, scorpions, crocodiles, and other animals. If you look for it, there are all kinds of pretty wood out in the woods. They usually find the antique on a dead mesquite tree. Then the dead mesquite tree is burned there are some parts that are not burned very well and when the bark is peeled off of these, the wood inside is very pretty. Since most of these are hollowed out it can be used for flower vases and other objects that require hollow wood.



We hardly have any dust storms nowadays because the ground is hardened right now and there are more things growing between the barracks to hold the dust down. It gets a little cold in the mornings but this is better than reasting in the heat. Now that the camp is better organized it is a better place in which to live. We have movies every week at the three camps of Poston. The first movie we had was in block 32 and the name of it was "One Hundred Men and A girl." When I heard of the movie I didn't know that kind it would be. It thought that it would be on a small screen and that it would be produced by the various companies for the advertisement. At first we didn't have movies regularly but soon it began to come at a definite time so we knew when there was going to be a movie. On Monday night it comes to Block 22 and if we don't have a chance to see this we can go to block 18 and see it on Friday nights. We have talent shows about twice a week but now we don't have them that often. Instead we have Japanese plays and they built a large stage on block 4. They have actors who are paid and they practice it nearly every night and after putting on a show in camp 1 they go to camps 2 and 3. Sometimes the people from camp 2 or 3 come over to camp 1 to put on a show.

One thing that is good about Poston is that we do not have as many restrictions as the other camps. There is no fence around our camp nor guards posted all over. We do not have any curfew so we can stay out as late as we want. We get to go out to the Colorado River and fish or swim if we want to and others have gone to the mountains towards the east and climbed them. In most of the other camps they aren't even permitted to go out of the camp and they have roll call all the time. So far we did not have our rooms searched like they do at the Fresno Assembly Center. When I first came here I thought



that it was the worst camp in the United States but when they have some things organized a little more it will be the best.

THE END



C O P Y

ARIZONA STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

TEMPE, ARIZONA

September 16, 1942

10<sup>3</sup> R.  
colo.

Mr. E. R. Fryer  
Whitcomb Hotel  
San Francisco, California

Dear Mr. Fryer:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter written by one of our Japanese students who is now at Poston. I am not giving his name but if supplying it will serve any useful purpose, I think I would be willing to do so.

I should like to get your reaction to this letter. This young man was more or less critical before he left here. For that reason I am inclined to discount it somewhat. On the other hand, I wonder if everything possible is being done to create livable conditions for these people.

You have a very difficult problem and you have my complete sympathy in trying to work it out.

Sincerely yours,

(signed)

Grady Gammage  
President



C O P Y

Poston, Arizona

August 20, 1942

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Gammage,

It is still hot in Poston. Having no cooling system, we have no way to escape the heat except, perhaps, by taking frequent cold showers. We are too often denied even that because at least once a week, the water system goes wrong, and water is shut off for various length of time. We then don't have even drinking water then, there being no emergency water line.

Food is terrible. I am getting tired of breakfast consisting of mush, toast without butter or jam, and coffee. We occasionally have corn flakes or shredded wheat. We seldom have fruits. We miss greens.

The medical situation has improved somewhat after the head physician was forced to resign. What precipitated it was the death of two new-born babies. The Japanese doctors under him requested cooling systems for rooms where babies are kept in the hospital. The head physician refused, saying it was unnecessary. As a consequence, at least two babies died in the room in a temperature of 108 degrees. The doctors pronounced death due to dehydration. One of the babies' mothers grabbed a pair of shears and attacked the head doctor. It was her first baby.

There were other instances of deliberate misconduct on the part of the medico and a firm pressure was put to the administration by the evacuees through their representatives. The head doctor resigned. The significant part of it was that there was nothing done until the evacuees got their dander up. The administration, either took the attitude of protecting the head doctor, or "I don't know" attitude.

The administration has grand plans -- especially in the matter of producing agricultural products. However, the department has only one Caterpillar tractor, and 4 small ones. Lots of big talk about things being done or expected to be done here is mere talk.

The officials are still fumbling around without giving definite idea as to policy. There is too much passing the buck. It makes me smile a wry smile when I read in the American papers (for instance, the Arizona Republic, editorial for August 19) about how well the Japanese in America are being treated. Our life is that of slow torture. The queerest part of American democracy is that it is torturing its own citizen because he happens to have a Japanese blood in him while German and Italian aliens go scot free. I haven't heard a sensible explanation of that phenomena yet, excepting those not very complimentary to America.

I suffered from cold for about a week. It seems strange that one should catch a cold in this hot weather, but I did. And this is the first time since I left Hawaii that I suffered from cold, or any ailment for more than two days at a time. I am taking vitamin pills, but that doesn't seem sufficient.



I am working as an adult education leader. We are spreading the information on co-operatives. We have four specialists from New York to help us. They will be with us for about a month. My pay is \$16 a month. Only professionals like doctors, registered nurses, and a few others get the top pay of \$19 a month. It seems queer to see the hospital white nurses getting good wages while the Japanese nurses doing the same work gets only \$19.

Most of our pay (and more, at times) go to the canteen. This business of buying pops, icecreams, crackers, etc, at the canteen has become a headache for many, especially parents with many children. I have heard that at least one mother had to sell some of her dresses so that her children may have money to buy things like other children.

We can't help going to the canteen because the food supplied us is so unbalanced and unsatisfying. Too, it is so hot here, that except for breakfast, we come out of the dining hall dripping wet. This no exaggeration. Children often leave the table without eating enough, and soon find themselves hungry again.

Milk is being supplied for children 11 years old and younger. Also to expectant mothers and those advised by the physician. There is no milk available for others. Not even at the canteen.

We have planted some Bermuda grass, and they are growing in patches. A few have sowed the seeds of castor bean, or stuck the twigs of cottonwood and tamaracks in the ground.

There is altogether too much waste going on here. I wish the Mormon people were running things.

At first, some of the Caucasians evidently held on to the idea that they can treat the Japanese as they would Indians who had never been out of the reservation. They quickly found out their error.

Within the bounding limits prescribed by the Army and the War Relocation Authority, the government within this camp is administered by the "City Council" elected by the evacuees. Every evacuee over 16 years of age was allowed to vote.

We have a movie once a week. The expenses are being paid out of the profits of the canteen. The selections of the pictures so far has been not very satisfactory.

There are amateur (talent) shows. At least there is one series of seminars on political science and sociology being conducted for college students. For the elementary and high school students, it is doubtful if there will be schools before October.

Prospect of college students leaving for college is very dim. Army approved only 17 out of 150 colleges willing to accept Japanese.

Regards.

Sincerely,



TO THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AFFAIRS:

Over a year has elapsed since the Army has ordered general evacuation of all persons of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast. At that time a grave emergency existed, decisions and actions necessarily had to be prompt and immediate, and the leaders of our government no doubt could not have given this problem the serious consideration that it should have received at that time. However, we are very glad that the Senate has seen fit to make a thorough investigation of the Japanese evacuation problem, and we take this opportunity of expressing a few thoughts with the hope that the same may be of some assistance to your deliberations.

As a result of the evacuation order, today we find about 110,000 people of Japanese ancestry temporarily relocated in the war relocation centers, of which the Colorado River Relocation Center is the largest one. Evacuation to the Japanese was virtually a nightmare and in one instance, Japanese who had rather extensive business interests, with their homes established for many years were ordered removed within a period of 48 hours. To add to the misery and hardship of the Japanese, the Japanese families who were ordered to move within the 48-hour period were without most of the men folks and the heads of the families, who had been prior to that time taken into custody for investigation, out of which a great number have been restored to their respective families in the relocation centers. The financial loss to the Japanese was great.

There were a great number of shortcomings and mistakes that added to the hardship of the Japanese, but this, no doubt, was caused due to the emergency of the situation rather than a willful intention on anyone's part so to do. In the relocation centers the facilities were far from being comfortable, and although the Army may be equipped to handle great numbers of men, yet there seem to be a great deal lacking in reference to the problem of handling women, children, the aged and the sick. We are not at this time attempting to criticize any one individual or agency, and we feel that as a group, they have done everything within their power to assist and alleviate to the best of their ability this suffering.

Either right or wrong and regardless of how much suffering, the people of Japanese ancestry have been evacuated and nothing can be accomplished by our reviewing the past. But we sincerely feel that the leaders of our country, the



Congresmen, the Senators and the various Federal agencies are all anxious to give the proper democratic consideration of the future of the people of Japanese ancestry; and it is with that thought in mind that we humbly submit these thoughts. We request that your committee, the Congress and other Federal agencies, including the War Department and the War Relocation Authority, exert their utmost consideration and effort to the problem of relocation and rehabilitation of all of the loyal people of Japanese ancestry located in the relocation centers.

We would like to see in the immediate near future the return of all loyal people of Japanese ancestry in the relocation centers to as near as normal status as they formerly and originally enjoyed prior to evacuation. As a step towards this program we suggest the Committee's investigation and the possibility of all people of Japanese ancestry who have proved their loyalty to the satisfaction of the governmental officials to allow those people who have property holdings and other business interests still existing on the West Coast to be returned to their respective businesses and communities. To the others that have proved their loyalty to the satisfaction of the governmental agencies, we ask the government's cooperation and effort to have these people relocation in other communities so that they can take their place as a part of this great American commonwealth and do their part as loyal citizens and residents.

We can assure you that all of the loyal Japanese in the relocation centers are eager to assist the United States and are desirous of doing their part at this time when there is such a great shortage of manpower. As far as any Japanese that the government may find are disloyal, we feel that they should be accorded the same treatment as all other disloyal aliens are being treated in this country. In connection with this relocation program, we would like to call to the subcommittee's attention the fact that up to now there has been a great deal of unfair, untrue and entirely false publicity circulated and disseminated in this country. We feel that the government can to a great extent control the circulation of this insidious undemocratic type of news and also release for general publicity any favorable news and activities of the truly loyal people of Japanese ancestry.

Recently as an example of our democratic system of government, the War Department has very wisely recognized the right of the loyal Nisei the right to enlist in the armed forces of the United States through the Selective Service program. We have heard that in the main the results of this Selective Service program has been very gratifying. In the draft



questionnaire, there were questions 27 and 28 which were intended to sound out or determine the loyalties of the applicants. We are not in any way trying to justify the numbers of "No" answers to these questions. However, we would like to point out that the "No" answers may not necessarily mean that the whole group are disloyal. In fact, if a more thorough study would be made of the situation, we feel quite confident that the "No" answers were not prompted necessarily by disloyalty but reasons purely personal to the individual. You will have to keep in mind the fact that we have all been through a very nervous and highly miserable time. We feel that a great number of the people were stunned by the difficulties they have encountered in the past year and have not been able to re-adjust themselves as yet to date. But as the more humane, democratic-like program is worked out for these people, a better response may be later encountered.

In reference to the question of whether the Army should take control of these relocation centers, we agree with the thoughts of the War Department as expressed by Colonel William P. Scobey before the Senate subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs on January 20, 1943, and that the War Relocation Authority be allowed to continue the control and management of these centers and be further allowed to continue on with the work of relocation, which they have just recently started. We also wish to endorse the statements made by Dillon S. Myer before the Senate subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs on January 20, 1943, in reference to putting into effect at the earliest possible moment the program of relocation and rehabilitation for the proved loyal people of Japanese ancestry.

We invite an opportunity to send our representatives before your august body to testify to any phase of the Japanese evacuation and relocation problem and any other problems and conditions connected therewith.

We hope that this brief statement of ours in some measure will assist your committee, and if there is anything that we can do to assist you in acquiring pertinent information we shall be happy to be of service to your committee. We assure you ~~that~~ with all confidence and sincerity, with respect and trust of the government that the loyal people of Japanese ancestry are 100 per cent cognizant of the war effort of the United States ready to serve to the best of their ability. We do hope and pray that these people will be given every consideration and assistance to relocate, to re-establish and again take part in the American way of life in their respective communities of this great country of ours.

Respectfully submitted,

March 9, 1943.

POSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL



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Selective  
Service

-25

2042 New Interior Dept. Bldg.

February 17, 1944

Memorandum for Mr. Collier:

I don't know where this comes from. It might be an individual, not a group. There always have been a few Niseis who had feelings of this sort, but up to the time I left Boston, I do not think they were numerous. The stiffness of the document suggests someone not at ease in English and the line of argument is of a sort found among parents who do not want their sons undergoing the risks of entering the army. One should also note the possibility of Kibei origin. There were a number of Kibeis who came back to this country primarily to avoid the Japanese military service.

A. H. Leighton  
Lt. (MC) U S N R



C  
O  
P  
Y

February 17, 1944

To The Secretary of Interior:

It is the duty and a privilege of every man to fight and offer his life to his country that has given him every opportunity and the authority to exercise all the rights accorded him by the Constitution of the United States. It is the supreme and an obligated duty for him to protect and harbor those privileges which he possesses and cherishes.

We, Niseis, are loyal and willing to serve and bear arms at any time to protect these precious rights bestowed upon us. We have been taught and reared from tender youth the Democratic principles of our Government—a heritage well-worth being proud of—which allow us the freedoms not granted in any other country.

Few years ago with the outbreak of hostilities, with the Axis Nations, our freedoms were no longer a reality; we lost all claims to exercise our civil rights. Now we have been, once again, reinstated into a draftable status, but so far as we are concerned, WE, who have lost practically all our rights and privileges have little or nothing to fight for to preserve.

1. Is it our duty to lay down our lives to defend the Constitutional Rights not accorded us? Is it a privilege to fight for what you do not own?
2. That the Article V of the Bill of Rights, "no person shall be deprived of liberty or property without due process of the law; Article I, "that no law shall be established prohibiting the freedom of speech or of the press, or of the right of the people to peaceably assemble; and the other Articles II, III, IV, VI had been disregarded when citizens were placed in camps behind barbed wire fences and placed on the same status as an enemy alien. The Bill of Rights was unconditionally established to stand firm and strong under any existing situation.
3. It is our understanding that America is prosecuting this war so that our way of living will now cease.

UNTIL SUCH TIME AS ALL THE WRONG HAS BEEN RIGHTED AND ADEQUATE COMPENSATION MADE, WE, THE NISEIS, SHOULD NOT BE COMPELLED TO BEAR ARMS; AND TO SUCH DATE AS OUR STATUS IS DEFINITELY ESTABLISHED AS TO WHAT RIGHT AND PRIVILEGE WE ARE FIGHTING FOR.

NISEIS OF AMERICA

(Mailed from Boston)



PROPOSALS TO BE PRESENTED TO INTER-CENTER CONFERENCE

The following proposals represent the voice of the total population of Poston, Arizona, Units I, II and III, numbering approximately 13,000 residents.

I. Requests of those who cannot either return to restricted zones or relocate elsewhere and their reasons.

Almost all of those with a definite income, or those who have the ability to operate a business, or those with enough confidence in themselves have already relocated, but those who are left would like to have the government continue with the present setup because they cannot relocate for the following reasons:

1. The economic security which has been built by them, during fifty years past, has been destroyed.
2. The majority of the residents have either sold at a sacrifice or leased for the duration their houses, land, stores and equipment used in farming, industry, business, etc.
3. The majority of the family heads are too old to start anew and their children, upon whom they depended, are in the armed forces of the United States; to relocate with dependents makes it very difficult to insure economic security.
4. Because we lack financial resources, (even if we so desire) we cannot enter farming, industry or commerce. Even though some may have the financial resources, they cannot obtain the high priority necessary to purchase the equipment they need to conduct their business. The insurance companies will not issue policies to Japanese because of the risk involved in case of trouble.  
An Issei cannot buy or lease land in certain states due to Alien Land Laws. In some cities, they will not grant business licenses to Japanese. Moreover, the majority of the Isseis do not know enough English to go into business.
5. Due to racial prejudice of some individuals, labor unions, and other organizations, a person who held a position before evacuation will not be able to return to that position or to a similar one.
6. Due to racial oppression, a person who returns to restricted zones or who relocates elsewhere will have to live in constant fear. Although the army and the government have assured us of protection of life and property, there have been several cases of threats, injury and damage to the few who have relocated or returned to restricted zones. It is very doubtful whether the government and the army can control the emotional feelings of the people at large.



7. The present relocation grant is so small that it is wholly inadequate to start a new life.
8. Religious freedom would be curtailed because of the fact that the majority of the residents are Buddhists and nearly all the Buddhist priests are excluded from the military zones.
9. Since evacuation, the policies of the WRA have changed a great deal and many promises were not carried out, perhaps, due to changes in conditions. As a result of constant disappointment and fear, the residents have become alarmed. Their minds are in a state of uneasiness and anxiety because the future is so uncertain.

Therefore, we the residents request that the center remain open for the duration guaranteeing security of livelihood, educational facilities, and medical care as agreed before and during evacuation.

### III. Requests of those planning to relocate.

1. In order to guarantee security of life and property, we would like to have the Federal and Local authorities establish the following:
  - a. To establish a special agency to enforce existing laws in order to prevent anti-Japanese movements and to insure security from threats, bodily injuries or damages to property from individuals or organizations.
  - b. To guarantee a reasonable and just compensation in case of bodily injuries or damage to property.
  - c. To give financial assistance as to all the necessities of life until a relocatee becomes self-supporting.
  - d. To give financial aid to relocatees who need it in case of sickness or death.
2. The relocatees who plan to go into farming, industry, commerce, etc., request the following:
  - a. Loans of necessary capital at a low rate of interest.
  - b. To make it possible for all relocatees to buy, sell or lease land in any states.  
and all
  - c. To give a priority rating to buy necessary construction materials, fixtures, equipment, etc.



- d. To make it possible to obtain any and all business licenses.
  - e. To make it possible to buy any and all types of insurance necessary.
- 3. Relocateses would like to have the same job opportunities as Caucasians.
  - 4. Repeal all wartime restrictions imposed upon the Isseis.
  - 5. Compensation for all losses due to fire or theft of evacuee property while stored in WRA or Government warehouses.

IV. Copies of all resolutions approved by the All-Center Conference should be sent to the President of the United States, both Houses of Congress, Religious and Social Organizations.



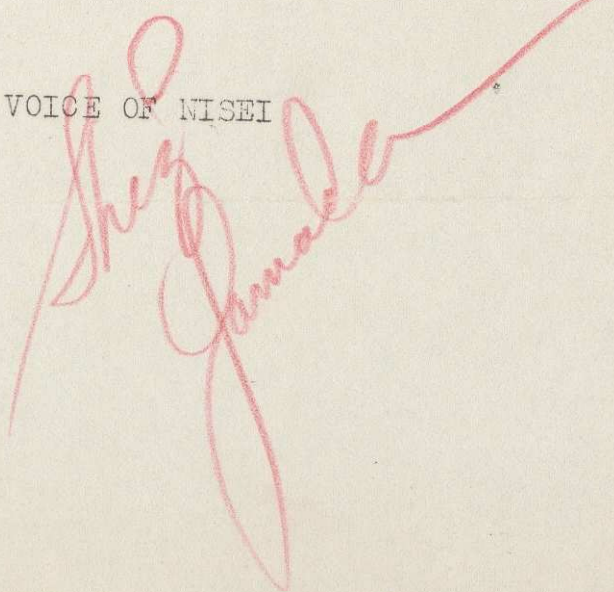
TO THE GENTLEMEN OF 17 YEARS TO 38 YEARS OF AGE

As you know fellow Americans, at last they did recognize and realize that we are Americans. We are going to be drafted soon, just like an American outside enjoying the freedom and liberty. But, don't you think they should reconsider the steps that they had taken?

As we believe that Mr. Roosevelt's speech at the Congress was not merely an excuse to draft us to soldier's and die in vain, we are demanding the following as an American Citizen:

- (1) Personal apology from Gen. DeWitt regarding his statement "Jap is Jap" and be expelled from his office. We also want apology from Mayor Bowron and Gov. Warren, and American Legion of Cal.
- (2) Freedom, Rights and Privilege should not be denied in California, militarily, economically, and politically.
- (3) Open the barb-wire and withdraw the Guard-duty of M.P.
- (4) Such signs as "No Jap", "You Rat", "No Orientals or Colored admitted" and etc. which were familiar in California, must be taken down throughout the U.S.A.
- (5) No discrimination upon the Japanese securing occupations.
- (6) Every opportunity must be given to the Japanese soldier for advancement in the Air Corps, in the Army, and in the Marine Corps.
- (7) Japanese soldier must be mixed with other Caucasian soldier to fight side by side.

VOICE OF NISEI





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55 - 42 42.00



July 21, 1942.

PROPOSITION TO: Mr. Wade Head

FROM: Mr. Kurata

1. Equal rights to all residents of Poston.
2. All voting privilege granted barring none.
3. Freedom of Speech granted for all causes, for the welfare and development of Poston and its potential resources.
4. The equitable arrangement of allowances.
5. The twenty dollars per month for non workers as present demanded be rectified.
6. The present progressive program of Poston be presented in full to the satisfaction of all.
7. The development of lands and industries, in the distribution of products, and profits and losses be clarified.
8. Under what supervision and condition are each developments to be undertaken, by residents of Poston, or by Federal government.
9. The privilege to enjoy all the confines of the Colorado River Indian Reservation during our residence in Poston.
10. After termination of the war, the full restoration of all Civil rights, freedom of travel and residence be granted to all and the assurance of the Federal Government in assisting to re-establishing ourselves. To again enjoy the peace and prosperity of our great nation.



Regional Files 103, Wash. D.C.  
Miyamoto

*Poston*

Letter from Harley H. Gill, Supt. and Registrar of Northern Cal.  
Congregational Churches to E. R. Fryer.  
July 31, 1942

My Dear Mr. Fryer:

I had hoped to call on you today but press of other matters had prevented.

Yesterday I visited the Tanforan Assembly Center, and while there had a brief conversation with Rev. E. J. Kawamorita, who, I believe, is president of the Japanese Church Federation of Northern California. He placed in my hand two copies of a recent letter written by a Japanese who is in the relocation center at Poston, Arizona. This was to a Japanese friend in Tanforan and was written in Japanese and has been translated. I am enclosing a copy.

The request which is being made of you, and which I am sure you will agree is reasonable and a necessity, is that at the earliest possible moment an ice making plant be installed at Poston to relieve the people, especially the sick, and that for immediate help carloads of ice be sent there.

I am sure you appreciate having such matters brought directly to your attention.

With kindest regards and best wishes, I am



Regional Files 103, Wash.D.C.  
Miyamoto

Mr. Harley H. Gill,  
Supt. and Registrar  
Northern Cal. Congregational Conf.  
1164 Phelan Building  
San Francisco, Cal.

Dear Rev. Gill:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 31, 1942, transmitting a copy of a letter written by a Japanese person at the Colorado River War Relocation Project at Poston, Arizona.

We realize that, to those persons not accustomed to the hot, dry, windy climate of Arizona, this experience must, indeed, be discomfoting and to some, almost unbearable. It is, perhaps, surprising that the complaints have been so few.

Ice is needed, but despite the best efforts of the Project Director, he has thus far been unable to obtain sufficient ice from surrounding towns to supply the needs of Poston. Meanwhile a search is being made for used ice making machines. It is expected, if this reasearch is successfull, to construct an ice plant at the project.

The translated letter, of course, greatly exaggerated conditions there, including the heat.

Sincerely yours,

(signed)

E. R. Fryer  
Regional Director



This is a translation of a recent letter written by a person living in Poston, Arizona, to her friend living in Tanforan, who is a member of Rev. Kawamori's Church. Translated on July, ~~24~~ 30, 1942.

Please excuse me for not writing sooner. Finally we have been sent into the desert of Arizona. Everyday we are fighting against the heat and the hot dusty wind. As far as our eyes reach the desert stretches in every direction, and barely visible in one direction, is the bare rocky hills from which direction blows the hot winds registering 120 degrees which feel as if it had blown from an oven.

Those of us who were not used to such a heat wilted at once upon our arrival. On July, 2nd, we left Salinas and arrived here at Poston the next day, 3 o'clock in the afternoon. As our first welcome there was a sandstorm that blew into our noses and mouths choking us and which covered our hair with a white blanket of dust and sand. The smell of it was indescribably nauseating. Weak from empty stomach and suddenly exposed to this horrible and hot sandstorm I vomited blood and was immediately put to bed severely ailing. On the next day the Fourth of July, I again vomited blood. I called a doctor who examined me expecting me to be tubercular but he reassured me that my lung was good, but that the cause of blood-vomiting was due to my lack of nourishment.

For the following week the temperature never came below 117 degrees. At night the hot wind did not cease and we were compelled to sleep outside gazing the stars, but we could not sleep. Not one of us was able to take food. Only gradually have we become able to bear the heat. During the intense heat we practically live in the shower rooms while in our barracks we are compelled to pour water over our cots drenching our beddings and thus we live like ducks. Since about two or three days ago the temperature came down to 110 degrees and at last we are beginning to feel like human beings. When we go outside we must cover our heads with wet towels and we wish you could see how we look. Everyone at first seemed as if they had forgotten their smiles far away, and there is hardly any talking, all we can hear the heavy breathing from the down-cast faces, but lately the last two or three days, as the result of the lessening of heat, gradually we seemed to have come to life. A young man who arrived here about two and a half months ago welcomed us and remarked that in about two months or so, you will become accustomed to this heat.

There are many rattlesnakes here and we hear reports that people are killing them here and there in camp. Yesterday, in our neighborhood, I saw a ten-year old live rattlesnake that had been put in a box by its captor.

When we arrived from Salinas, there were deaths daily among infants and old people. This added to our worried and depressed feelings and we wondered what would become of ourselves. But since the relief in temperature, death became reduced and we hear mostly of bloody noses and we feel encouraged; still it is very hard for the babies and the old people. While we were still in Salinas we had heard in vague rumors that there were frequent deaths in Arizona, but only upon arrival was this grim fact plainly revealed to us.

There are deadly scorpions lurking everywhere. Not one of us had been struck by the creature, but a friend of ours killed one recently and there were two found in the men's shower room. Not less than twenty scorpions had been seen in the camp; fortunately our eyes had been quicker than the power of the scorpion to strike us.

There are three camps in Poston. The first had already been filled by the people from Los Angeles and Imperial Valley areas when we arrived.



Letter from woman in Poston to friend at Tanforan, cont'd.

This first camp holds about 10,000 people; we were the first group to arrive at this second camp and daily new arrivals come here from the free zone of California. The third camp is still unoccupied but we believe that as soon as ours is filled, they will begin to send newcomers to it.

It certainly is extremely hot and our tears have dried long ago and we are almost incapable of shedding tears now, but in spite of it I still do cry from suffering and vexation.

During the sandstorms you cannot see one inch ahead, but we are actually blown from off our feet. My younger sister, Marie, was once a little late in running into the house when she was caught suddenly by the storm and she was thrown against her steps. This is not a place for human beings to live; some people say that in ~~188~~ 1800 the Indians who had been placed here had perished from the heat and since that time it had been tenant-less till now the Japanese had been sent here. This place is not yet completed, everyday the carpenters are working. One of the soldiers guarding this place died of sunstroke two or three days ago. On top of this, there is no ice or cold water here where there are so many people craving for just one cup of refreshing water and people commonly sigh for a drink of ice cold bottler of Coca-Cola. In the kitchen there is only one Frigidaire but no ice is available for the general people, and it is tragic for the sick people are thus deprived. Many people who are sick here can be saved if there were ice available for them, but there seems to be no relief for them. We are petitioning the authorities to construct an ice-making plant for the relief of these people.

Please for your own benefit petition the authorities to be sent to Tule Lake. People who are accustomed in such cool places as San Francisco will not be able to stand the terrible heat of Arizona, or else you will repeat the tragedy we have gone through. Relative of ours who are now in Tule Lake writes to us saying that it is very pleasant there. We urge that you people at Tanforan will try your best to be sent to Tule Lake. Only those who are accustomed to live in hot climates should come here in your stead. The three thousand six hundred people of Salinas are tragic examples of this misfortune. To people who used to live in the cool places such as Monterey, Salinas, and Watsonville, it is unbearable; even people from El Centro and other places in Imperial Valley find it difficult here. On top of this August will be much hotter than it is now. Some people say that because the Indians who had been sent to this reservation over a century ago had been exterminated by the intense heat of August, they called this latter hot season, "Indian Summer". During the daytime no radio stations can be heard. Only after eleven o'clock in the evening does Los Angeles station faintly be received. Phonographs cannot be played because they are soft and twisted from the heat. Water is very hard and clothes cannot be washed clean, and dust cannot be washed out of our hairs. We go to the showers to gain relief, we get soaked, we come back and in fifteen minutes everything is dry again; the rooms are like an oven, and our clothes are hot and unbearable.

This letter seems to be expressions of nothing but woes and pessimism, but it is all absolutely true. The suffering that we have borne is enough, we do not want others to suffer. Please arrange with all your power to have other people transferred to other relocation centers so that they will not repeat the horrible experiences we are going through. It is so hot that to write this letter is a great effort on my part. Please give our regards to others and say that we are just barely existing.