

62  
31  
(Female)  
Third Period

July 24, 1942. The rows of barracks, the mess hall smoke-stack and its smoke, and a lone chimney reaching out to the sky in the background of early gay morning was the sight caught by passengers of the trains. Not believing it to be our future home, I thought it to be a lumber mill or something similar, until I caught a glimpse of people running toward the fence. (As we) came nearer to the camp, our only conclusion was that we had ended our last run. Along the railroad track were lines of army trucks waiting to take us into the camp. People filed off the train and filed into the trucks, (and) away they went. Behind the lines of moving trucks was nothing but a cloud of dust. In a short while, we were getting on the trucks. We were jostled, rolled, swayed, bumped, choked and jerked as the truck went along the seemingly never ending road. Gasping and laughing, we alighted among the surprised and welcoming friends who were behind the roped area. However, we were hustled along with our baggage, pushed among thousands of people, tugged and pulled by countless of people doing their respective duties, finally ending in a place like a barn. Later found it to a mess hall. Here we were asked many questions, hurried out the building into another, examined by a doctor, escorted to the housing department, guided to our baggage, jostled and pushed. We finally came upon the cinder road which led to our new home, 7401-B. Upon entering we found five folded cots in one corner, heaps of mattresses in the other, and the floor covered with black dust. Disgusted and tired, I was ready to cry, however, many friends who had arrived days before, came to help us get settled. In the short while, in the cleaned room with cots put up and with mattresses dusted and laid, I was ready to sink into them. But, no, my friends insisted that I take a tour of camp.

DIARY

May 26, 1942

Today we started on our way to Tule Lake Project from North Portland, Oregon. All day we were busy packing and getting ready to leave. About an hour before we were to start I helped take the baggage, suitcases, etc., on the train.

About 8 o'clock we bid good-by to everybody and got on the train. It was my first ride on a train. There was a big bump, then the train started to move. We moved way up the track and thought we were off to the city of Portland. Then we stopped, and then we went all the way back to the camp again. The reason was the train was hitching on more cars. This time we went about 2 miles and then stopped and waited at a cross track for the train from Puyallup, Washington, to come. It came after about 20 minutes and we started on to Portland. Just before we got to Portland we stopped for something, I don't know what, about mid-way on a bridge. The girls would look and see the water and would yell. When we got to Portland we waited on our real journey to Tule Lake about 11 o'clock. It was dark then and we couldn't see outside. About 12 o'clock some friends and I went from one end of the train to another. We were on the second car from the end. It is getting late and I'm getting pretty sleepy, so I'd better quit writing now.

May 26, 1942

This morning I woke up and looked out the window, and was I surprised to see it snowing. No wonder for we were just going over the Cascade Mountains. It was very cold in the morning. When it was light we were passing a sort of a prairie land with just shrubs. We had break-

(continued)

fast around 8 o'clock and we had milk, scrambled eggs and toast, and tomato juice.

Around 9:30 o'clock we reached Klamath Falls, Oregon. And we stopped for about 10 or 15 minutes and started out for Tule Lake. On the way we saw a large lake and lots of pelicans and ducks swimming around in the lake. We reached Tule Lake around 10 o'clock, and everybody was disappointed. We thought there was going to be a lake in the camp. This was the first time I was ever in California. We got off the train and got on a truck to where we were to find our apartments. Everything on the ground looked bare compared to where I lived, no trees, not hardly any grass. The water is white right now, but I guess it will get to be natural water color as we use it. That afternoon a friend and I got a job as messenger boys, but we quit the jobs and the next morning we both worked as waiters in the mess hall. Tonight it is raining very hard, and it makes me feel as if I am at home, because it rained a lot at home.

(Male)

July 20, 1942

Arrived at the W.R.A. Project in Tulalake. It was a large sprawling camp capable to hold 15,000 person. The barracks were similar to those in Pinedale. As soon as we were off the train, a cargo truck whisked us to the induction barrack where we relieved ourselves of our baggage and went through the formalities, etc. We soon had our luggage in the apartment assigned to us. A group of us boys started strolling around the camp. Soon we found the canteen where we refreshed ourselves with bottle of pop.

I learned that our block was in "Alaska." which is across the canal. We visited our friends and played football with them until dark.

July 21, 1942

Awoke early after a good night's sleep. Rob and I decided that we should see some of our friends who were coming in today. The rest of the day was spent in helping our friends carry their baggages. Arrived home when it was dark.



DIARY

May 17, 1942. Sunday--bright and warm.

Ah, evacuation day and almost my last Sunday in Tacoma. Right after breakfast I went to Baptist church on Fawcett Ave. Approximately 470 are scheduled to leave this afternoon. Didn't expect any students to be there, however there were some. In class we didn't pick up any special lesson, but had a discussion about "What makes the people fight." We all agreed on the point "money, crowded population, land greed of the leaders." Bid fare-well to everyone. Afterward, went to Washington Hotel. Mrs. Matsumoto took us to the Chinese Garden and treated us Chinese dishes. I guess that was the last Chinese dish for the duration. Then my next destination was the Music Box to see "Tuttles of Tahiti." I was very glad I have an opportunity to see the picture before I left.

May 18, 1942. Monday--sunny.

Eventually evacuation day for me. After breakfast I went to school to get my credit from Mr. Daniel. (World History). I changed my mind. I thought I might just as well get my voice recorded in my Oral Interpretation class in Room 221. I went to class without being prepared; I was supposed to be prepared with a poem and prose. I got hold of a book from a neighbor and selected a story, a short one, of course, and read it before a "mike." As I read on, the needle was recording my voice littl<sup>e</sup> by little. Teacher said I made a 100 per cent improvement in comparison with the beginning of the semester. Mrs. Hicks took my baggage down to the Union Depot. I was at the station by 3:00 P.M. Just before I shoved off, I was so thirsty I went to the soda fountain. I enjoyed myself with

(continued)

a bottle of nice cold coco cola. This bottle made me sad when I thought, "This might be the last bottle I'll ever have for the duration." Train pulled out at 6:00 P.M., 2 hours behind schedule. But anyhow we are off for a new community. Night fell upon us in the train. Thanks Heaven, I think I can be away from all the excitement and retire.

May 20, 1942. Wednesday--hot.

Woke up at 4:30 A.M. this morning. By 5:30 our train pulled in Fresno, California. A nice streamlined bus was waiting for us to take us to Pinedale reception center which was eight miles away. The whole view was different from the one in Washington. I saw the sign "U.S. Gov't" on the fence. First I felt like a inducted soldier. But with all the young and old, and boys and girls round about me I realized I was in a WCCA camp. The trouble was there was no green grass nor trees. At about 10 it became hot, hot as hell; it just made me sick. This is my first time I've been in a place like this.

DIARY

Somewhere on the train heading for Tule  
June 3, 1942

Dear Diary,

The alarm clock rang at 6:00 a.m. this morning. It was a hard battle, but the alarm clock finally won and I awoke. Then I remembered that I had slept in my own bed for the last time, as this was the morning we were to leave. After a snappy breakfast, which I didn't feel like eating, I began helping with the last minute packing. It was really a blue morning and it made me nervous to have everyone so quiet--Dad especially. At about 8:00 I started writing a letter, and it must have been rather uncheerful because I was in a melancholy mood. At 8:30 I laid my writing equipment in my suitcase. Two more hours and gee, I felt I had to do something in that time or I'd go bugs. I decided to visit Tags and see how they were coming along. They were very busy so I returned home by 9:00. It began to sprinkle lightly. It soon stopped, though the sky remained dull and gray. One hour and a half slowly dragged by. It was finally time to start out for the train station.

Besides evacuees from Arlington, Conway, Blanchard, Bellingham, Anacortes, Burlington and a few other places, many friends were waiting there to see us off. It was difficult saying goodbye to everyone. My first tears came when dad's friend to whom we gave my dog was telling us that he'd take good care of "Pret." From then on I was all tears. By 12:00 we were on the train and off for Tule Lake.

I sat with Key, Miyo and Cal. Munching on chocolates and fruit while conversing, we passed the time away.

Everett was our first stop for more evacuees. West Tinino was our next and last for that purpose.

69  
218  
(continued)

Several times during the trip I wondered if all this was really happening to me. Was I just having a nightmare, or was I really leaving my home and all my friends? I had Ikey pinch me. Ouch! I quickly came to the conclusion that these things were actually happening.

Later in the day we were given box lunches. Hayanos passed around a large box full of fried chicken. HMMMMM! It certainly was delicious. The milk, however, tasted very peculiar, and the first sip was also my last.

Now it's time to catch a little sleep. Ikey, Jeanne, Emma, Asako, Pauline, and I have laid out about 8 of the seats. Maybe we'll get a little rest. I have my doubts. Anyway goodnight for now.

Nancy.

Tule Lake Dust Bowl  
June 4, 1942



Tule Lake Dust Bowl  
June 4, 1942

Dear Diary,

Excuse me a minute while I rub the dust out of my eyes. Ah<sup>C</sup>, now maybe I'll be able to write through the dust covering you.

To begin with, I had a sleepless night and morning. The kids played cards or talked from 1:00 a.m. to 11:00 with the soldiers on duty. Two of the older men had "one too many" and yelled all night and morning. They kept many a sleepy passenger awake.

From early morning until we arrived at our destination we sang school and popular songs.

It was shortly before 12 when we had registered and were guided to our barracks on block 13. Is it to be a lucky or unlucky number for me? Even our building is numbered 13, and furthermore the apartment letter "B" is in the shape of a 13.

We had lunch at a mess hall. I almost died. The menu was as follows: boiled cabbage, bologna, rice and burnt scalloped potatoes. Ach! One thing I'm sure of is that if the Tule Lake water remains as icky tasting as it was today I won't drink another drop of it. Ah! gee whiz! Burlington had the best and most wonderful water, and I never realized that fact until I came here.

Oh! glory, but it was hot today/. I don't think I'll ever be able to stand such weather. What I wouldn't give to be back in good old Burlington. The dust here is terrific! I'm still wondering where that lake is. Someone told me I was in it.

The block had a meeting. The gentleman that spoke told the girls that it was their duty to help out in the block mess hall. Mom gave me the eye, so had to sign up. Oh, well. Ikey signed up, too. The speaker

(continued)

also asked for volunteers to cook the meals. Gads, Dad, of all people volunteered, and he hasn't cooked for over 30 years.

After supper I went over to Tags, who live two barracks over. It was dark by the time I left there, so I rushed over towards our apartment, opened the door, and started to enter. "Oh! Oh!" I exclaimed. I was in 1314-B--the wrong apartment. Hurriedly I made an exit.

I finished the letter I started writing yesterday morning. Now I'm so tired I'd better hit the hay.

Nancy

Dear Diary

I have been neglecting you lately and I'm sorry. I have a reason for writing in here today. This is one day I'll never forget! Shortly before it was time for me to leave for mess Dad came in and informed me that Hi, Helen, and GG had arrived from Puyallup. Right at this minute they were down on block 18. Oh, glory! What could be more wonderful? Before you could say "Jack Robinson" I was down there. I saw Hi first and started bawling like a two year old, I was so happy. Hi, Helen, GG, Oliver, Grandma Neji, Fumi, Betty, Herbie, and Arlene had come with four others--totaling 13. Yes! indeed. Thirteen was my lucky number. I was late to work at noon but golly it was worth being late a hundred times.

The mess hall work is certainly getting boring, and at times most embarrassing. I was waiting for knives to set out on the tables. One of the older ladies was wiping them. She asked me in Japanese, "Will you

71

(continued)

please excuse me for wiping the knives so slowly?" Since my Japanese vocabulary is limited to a couple or so phrases I was really in a predicament as I was unable to understand her. If I very (a hem) sweetly answered, "I don't know," I was sure I'd get by with my ignorance. I did it. Oh gads! Ikey told me what the lady had really asked me, and Honest Injun! I felt like two cents.

Oh! How I hate this old camp! It wouldn't be so bad if I knew some kids my own age to chum around with, but golly! my only real acquaintances are Ikey who's engaged to Harvey, Emma, who is engaged to George, and Jeanne, a drizzle. It would certainly be perfect if I could be back in Burlington with my old pals again.

Gee, but I miss tennis, roller skating, swimming and bowling. Playing baseball and dancing are the only things to do here. Our baseball team, the Skawhas, are really crummy with a capital C. Lands! but it's disgusting.

I was so excited to see Hi, Helen and GG this evening that I ran over right after I'd finished supper work. In my hurry I was unaware of which apartment I was entering. Naturally for me it had to be the wrong number again, 1805-C when it should have been 1805-B. Something inside me let loose and I let out a scream, running out of there without even explaining or excusing myself. When I got to Helen's I could hear the neighbors still laughing about my mistake. The partitions weren't in at the top.

June 19, 1942

Dear Diary,

Today I transferred from mess 13 to the personnel dining hall. It seems like a swell change. Finally I had a chance to meet some girls my



72  
(continued)

age. Huggie, Sy, Mutt, Afton and Sally certainly are nice and just oodles of fun. The cooks feed us quite well there. Oh, my! The ice cream cabinet is the most wonderful part of the whole place.

-----bye for awhile.

July 4, 1942

Dear Diary,

The Fourth Of July brings back memories of the good times we had back home on this holiday. Remember the carnival, rodeo, and parade at Sedro? or picnics and swimming at Lake Samish? roller skating, bowling and the movies at Bellingham or Mount Vernon? or the Pacific league baseball game at Seattle? or our own fireworks at the end of the day? Oh, gosh! Oh, gee! These were the days.

I'll remember the Fourth I had here at Tule because of my first chicken dinner since coming to camp. Hmmm! I had a leg. I'll try and forget the Fourth because of that baseball game we Skawhas lost to the Isleton girls. The score? Yes, that's the part I'm trying to forget. Let's blame it on the dust. I'll remember the day because of the parade held this morning, and because it was the first time I'd ever seen "sumo." I'll remember the odori held on the fire break this evening. Fun? Yes, but nothing in comparison to the good old days back home.

July 26, 1942

Dear Diary,

I'm still working. I went to Sunday School this morning with Pauline, Yude, and Rosie. This afternoon Jeanne's secret marriage to Tuke was announced. Golly sakes, of all the surprises this was the most extreme.

The Skawha's team broke up so I'm playing for the Fighting Recs. Wrecks? No lie. We're almost as bad as the Skawhas.