

SACRAMENTO REUNION III

MAY 25, 1992

RED LION HOTEL

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

WELCOME TO SACRAMENTO!!

It is hard to believe that 50 years have passed since our involuntary removal from this beautiful city in the spring of 1942.

Sacramentans were scattered far and wide, to all parts of our country. We were happy to host Sacramento Reunion I and Sacramento Reunion II in 1985 and 1988. This year's get-together has turned out to be the biggest yet. We may have close to 500 ex-Sacramentans in attendance.

The Sacramento Reunion III committee has put together what we hope is a program which will bring back memories of the 1940's. Bunny Crites, known to many of us as Mr. Big Band Music in the 30's and the 40's, will entertain us with songs from the past.

This souvenir booklet is dedicated to the memory of the late Henry Taketa, Sacramento JACL charter member in 1931, legislative activist on behalf of all Japanese Americans and our resident historian. His 50 years of work on our behalf will long be remembered.

Have a great time!

Toko Fujii
Reunion Coordinator

Committee:

Tom Fujimoto, Tom Okubo, Alice Yagi, Amie Fujimoto, Kanji Nishijima, Teiko Matsuo, Myra Kiyota, Wayne Maeda



Henry Taketa
1912-1991

SACRAMENTO'S "JAPAN TOWN" LIVES ON

by

Wayne Maeda

1870 marks the beginning of the Japanese presence in Sacramento County with a meager beginning of one. By 1893 there were about 100 Japanese, two hotels, one boarding house and the beginnings of a small Christian community with the establishment of the M.E. Church in 1892 (SJUMC is celebrating their 100th anniversary), the first and oldest Japanese church in Sacramento. Not to be outdone, the Buddhist community organized the Buddhist (Jodo Shinshu) Church of Sacramento in 1899. Before the decade of the "Gay 90's" came to a close, four or five more boarding houses were established along with a few grocery stores.

The 1900 Census showed continued growth with 1,209 Issei calling Sacramento "home." And, by 1910, "Japan Town" occupied five to six square blocks with the heart of *Japan Town* firmly established around "L" and "M," along 3rd and 4th Streets with 3,870 Japanese in the Sacramento area. "Sakura-mento" was known as "Ofu" (developed from the Kanji for "Sakura") and became the commercial, religious, cultural and recreational hub for the various Japanese settlements in Northern California.

Sakura-mento could boast of having established the Ofu Nippon (daily newspaper, 1907), Ofu Nippon Bank (1907, later taken over by Sumitomo in 1925), a number of medical clinics and hospitals (Eagle Hospital 1915, Agnes Hospital 1925), a movie theater, and over 200 Issei businesses by the 1920's.

With the arrival of Issei women, came the Nisei generation and continued growth of the Japanese in the Sacramento area to 8,114 in 1930. The Issei passed down their passion for baseball, Kendo, Judo, and 4th of July Sumo tournaments to the ever-growing Nisei. If that weren't enough, the Nisei could participate in Boy Scouts, basketball and other church youth group activities. For the older Nisei, there was always the American Loyalty League which later became the JACL in 1931. And during the decades of the 20's and 30's there were six more Protestant churches and four more Buddhist/quasi-Shinto temples organized making for a very diverse religious community.

By 1940, Sacramento's Japanese population declined for the first time in its history to 6,760 which mirrored the over-all decline of Japanese in the United States and California. It seems that the Alien Land Laws, Exclusion Law, discrimination and the Depression all took its toll on the Japanese population. Nevertheless, there seemed to be a "feeling" that the worst was behind them and better times seemed just on the horizon. On the eve of December 7, 1941, the Japanese business community had more than doubled since the 1920's to about 470. The attack on Pearl Harbor by Japan changed the course of history and altered the lives of Japanese-Americans forever.

After the war, many Issei and Nisei returned to the Sacramento area from places like Tule Lake, Manzanar, Amache, Poston, Jerome, Topaz, and Heart Mountain, to try to re-establish the *Japan Town* that once was. And, for a time, it seemed like *Japan Town* could be reborn. Then in the mid-50's with redevelopment, came another "relocation" and this signaled the final chapter of a geographic *Japan Town*. A feeble attempt was made to establish another *Japan Town* along 10th Street but it was clear that an end of an era had come. Yet, it is equally clear that *Japan Town* will always exist in our memories and in our hearts as long as each succeeding generation, with the guidance of the previous generation, participates in the life of their community.

SACRAMENTO REUNION II





Restaurant at 3rd and L Streets.
Mr. and Mrs. R. Masuda and daughters: Mary, Ruby, Pearl & Amy



Corner of 4th St. & M St.



Mayeda Family's Sunrise Soda Works



L-R: Kaz Izumi, Tommy Kono, Mits Oshima



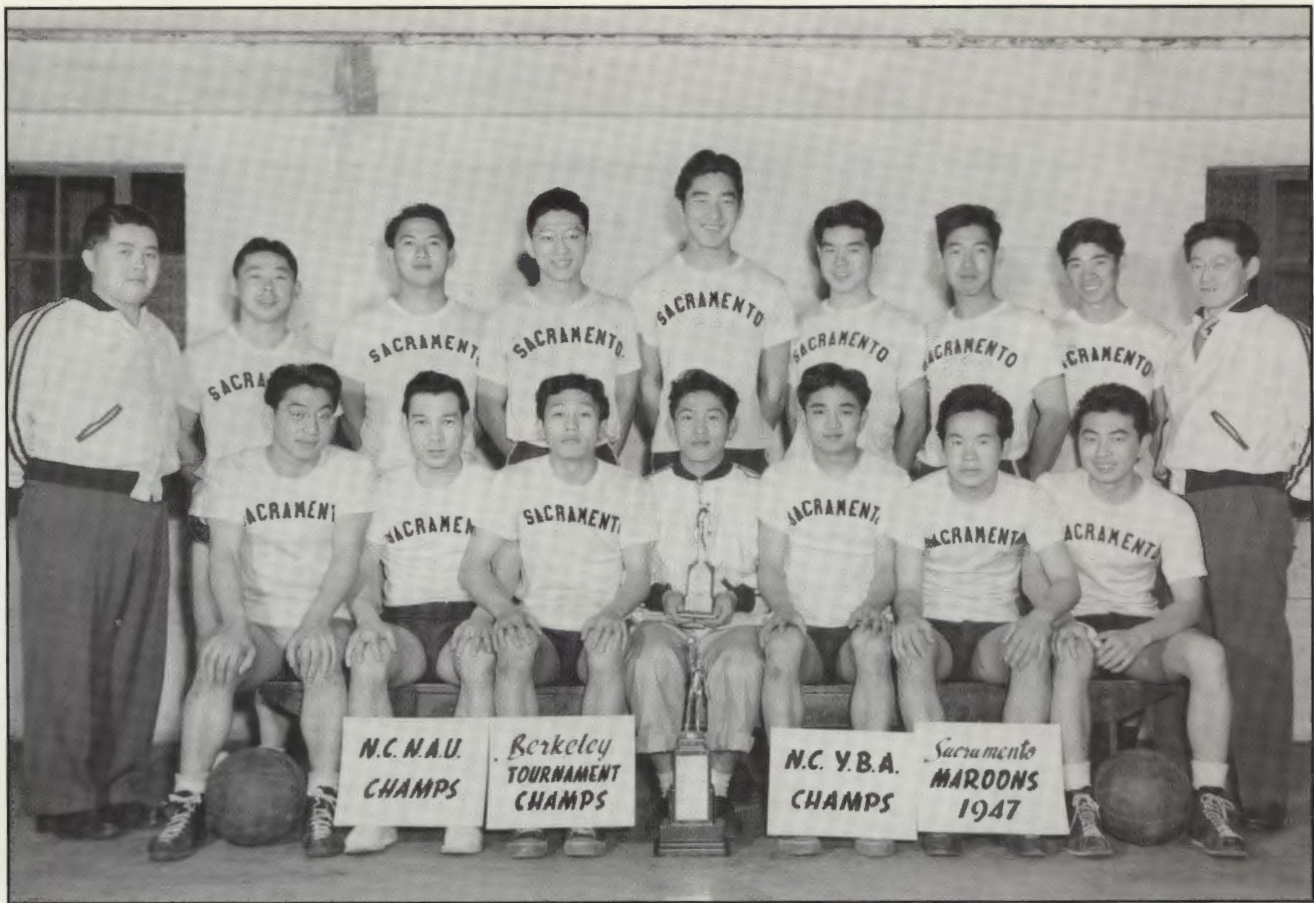
Sacramento Mikados 1937



Sacramento Jr. College Men's Club 1930's



Sacramento Taiiku Judo Club 1935



Perennial Post War Powerhouse
Sacramento YBA Saints