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POSTON I
1942-1992 50 Year
Camp Reunion

POSTON I REUNION PLANNING COMMITTEE

OFFICERS

Keiji Higashi General Chairperson
 Mary Kinoshita Higashi Secretary
 Dick Kizuka Treasurer

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Rose Nishi Adachi	Ted Morinishi
Ed Akamatsu	Amy Yoshida Murakami
Earl Aki Amano	Tak Murase
Paul Chikahisa	Shizuko Kaminaka Murata
Ray Chikahisa	Nancy Sakamoto Nakamura
Shiz Tanaka Fujimoto	Tomiko Yamasaki Nakayama
Harry Haruo Fujisawa	Fusae Kikumoto Nishina
Arnold Fujita	Tak Nishizawa
Shigeko Kikumoto Hirai	James Oka
Edwin Hiroto	Karl K. Oike
Rowena Kubo Ichihara	Mary Takahash Ogawa
Joanne Taeko Ono Iritani	Setsuco Kuwahara Okada
George Kametani	Aiko Oku Ozaki
Marlee Kametani	Chiyeko Ono
Kiyoshi Kawanami	Ayako Sakamoto Otsu
Tae Omori Kinjo	Kazue Tsuchiyama Oye
Kei Kokubun	"Doc" Shinobu Saito
Usami Takata Komatsu	John J. Saito
Terry Ninomiya Kurihara	Aiko Sakuma
Harry Manaka	Tom Shiokari
William Manaka	Emiko Sakamoto Sugiura
Helen Masumura	Liz Kuwahara Tsuchiyama
Hisaye Masutani	Tosh Tsuchiyama
Kenji Matsuda	Nellie Yano Williams
Nancy Matsumoto Matsuda	Akiko Nishimoto Yagi
Mitsey Ohye Miki	Tok Yamada
Henry Mori	Aya Yoshida Yawata

POSTON I
1942-1992
50 Year Camp Reunion

OCTOBER 9, 10 & 11, 1992
TORRANCE MARIOTT HOTEL
TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA

"OMOIDE"
MEMORIES
RECOLLECTIONS
REMEMBRANCES

COLORADO RIVER RELOCATION CENTER
UNIT NO. 1
POSTON, ARIZONA



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"OMOIDE"

- MEMORIES
- RECOLLECTIONS
- REMEMBRANCES
- REMINISCENCE

WESTERN STATES COCAINE AND SOUTH ARMY
WAITING CAMP CONTROL ADMINISTRATION



Welcome to the Poston I 50 Year Reunion.

After accepting the general chairperson position, I wondered what I was getting myself into. After 50 years, who can remember the experience of relocation camp life? To my surprise, many people at our first meeting volunteered to chair the various committees.

The first meeting was held on August 17, 1991. Thanks to **Joanne Ono Iritani** for recruiting us to attend this first meeting. Since the first meeting our committee has grown to over 40 people. I would like to mention a few of the committee chairs who have worked many hours to bring this event to where we are this weekend.

Paul Chikahisa computerized all the names submitted by many volunteers, and by the size of the attendance, they did a great job. He also made it possible to seat everyone at the banquet in their respective blocks or quads. **Fusae Nishina** and **Shigeko Hirai** co-chaired the Facilities and Banquet Committee. Fusae's diligent and persistent negotiations with the hotel made it possible to enjoy this event at a reasonable cost. **Kazie Oye** headed the Program Committee. I cannot believe all the top quality people she recruited; talent that is endless, and you can certainly see the results. **Nancy Matsuda** chaired the Program Booklet and Registration Committees. From the superb quality of the souvenir booklet, it's evident that she recruited a committee of experts.

Karl Oike, **Edwin Hiroto** and **Arnold Fujita** were responsible for the exhibits and displays. It's a mystery how they were able to assemble all the items on the small budget they were given. **John Saito** headed our Publicity Committee. The job of Treasurer, which no one wanted, was undertaken by **Dick Kizuka**. We are certainly thankful to Dick for keeping everyone on budget. And finally, many thanks to **Mary Higashi**, our Secretary, who did a fantastic job of keeping minutes for all our meetings.

Everyone talks about the rough times we all experienced because of the relocation. But after working these past 12 months with so many wonderful people and seeing the tireless and unselfish effort put forth by all the members, I can see why we overcame many obstacles and have lived fruitful lives these past 50 years.

Thank you all for your attendance.

Kei Higashi

EXECUTIVE ORDER No. 9066
February 19, 1942

Authorizing the Secretary of War to Prescribe Military Areas

Whereas, The successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense material, national-defense premises and national-defense utilities as defined in Section 4, Act of April 20, 1918, 40 Stat. 533, as amended by the Act of November 30, 1940, 54 Stat. 1220, and the Act of August 21, 1941, 55 Stat. 655 (U.S.C., Title 50, Sec. 104):

Now, therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War, and the Military Commanders whom he may from time to time designate, whenever he or any designated Commander deems such action necessary or desirable, to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he or the appropriate Military Commander may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with respect to which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restriction the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion. The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to provide for residents of any such area who are excluded therefrom, such transportation, food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be necessary, in the judgment of the Secretary of War or the said Military Commander, and until other arrangements are made, to accomplish the purpose of this order. The designation of military areas in any region or locality shall supersede the responsibility and authority of the Attorney General under the said Proclama-

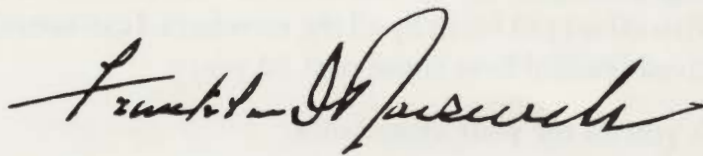
tions in respect of such prohibited and restricted area.

I hereby further authorize and direct the Secretary of War and the said Military Commanders to take such other steps as he or the appropriate Military Commander may deem advisable to enforce compliance with the restrictions applicable to each Military area hereinabove authorized to be designated, including the use of Federal troops and other Federal Agencies with authority to accept assistance of state and local agencies.

I hereby further authorize and direct all Executive Departments, independent establishments and other Federal Agencies, to assist the Secretary of War or the said Military Commanders in carrying out this Executive Order, including the furnishing of medical aid, hospitalization, food, clothing, transportation, use of land, shelter, and other supplies, equipment, utilities, facilities, and services.

This order shall not be construed as modifying or limiting in any way the authority heretofore granted under Executive Order No. 8792, dated December 12, 1941, nor shall it be construed as limiting or modifying the duty and responsibility of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with respect to the investigations of alleged acts of sabotage or the duty and responsibility of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice under the Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941, prescribing regulations for the conduct and control of alien enemies, except as such duty and responsibility is superseded by the designation of military areas hereunder.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House, February 19, 1942



THE WHITE HOUSE,

February 19, 1942.

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**WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY
WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION**

Presidio of San Francisco, California

May 3, 1942

**INSTRUCTIONS
TO ALL PERSONS OF
JAPANESE
ANCESTRY**

Living in the Following Area:

All of that portion of the City of Los Angeles, State of California, within that boundary beginning at the point at which North Figueroa Street meets a line following the middle of the Los Angeles River; thence southerly and following the said line to East First Street; thence westerly on East First Street to Alameda Street; thence southerly on Alameda Street to East Third Street; thence northwesterly on East Third Street to Main Street; thence northerly on Main Street to First Street; thence northwesterly on First Street to Figueroa Street; thence northeasterly on Figueroa Street to the point of beginning.

Pursuant to the provisions of Civilian Exclusion Order No. 33, this Headquarters, dated May 3, 1942, all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien, will be evacuated from the above area by 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Saturday, May 9, 1942.

No Japanese person living in the above area will be permitted to change residence after 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Sunday, May 3, 1942, without obtaining special permission from the representative of the Commanding General, Southern California Sector, at the Civil Control Station located at:

Japanese Union Church,
120 North San Pedro Street,
Los Angeles, California.

Such permits will only be granted for the purpose of uniting members of a family, or in cases of grave emergency.

The Civil Control Station is equipped to assist the Japanese population affected by this evacuation in the following ways:

1. Give advice and instructions on the evacuation.
2. Provide services with respect to the management, leasing, sale, storage or other disposition of most kinds of property, such as real estate, business and professional equipment, household goods, boats, automobiles and livestock.
3. Provide temporary residence elsewhere for all Japanese in family groups.
4. Transport persons and a limited amount of clothing and equipment to their new residence.

The Following Instructions Must Be Observed:

1. A responsible member of each family, preferably the head of the family, or the person in whose name most of the property is held, and each individual living alone, will report to the Civil Control Station to receive further instructions. This must be done between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Monday, May 4, 1942, or between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Tuesday, May 5, 1942.

2. Evacuees must carry with them on departure for the Assembly Center, the following property:

- (a) Bedding and linens (no mattress) for each member of the family;
- (b) Toilet articles for each member of the family;
- (c) Extra clothing for each member of the family;
- (d) Sufficient knives, forks, spoons, plates, bowls and cups for each member of the family;
- (e) Essential personal effects for each member of the family.

All items carried will be securely packaged, tied and plainly marked with the name of the owner and numbered in accordance with instructions obtained at the Civil Control Station. The size and number of packages is limited to that which can be carried by the individual or family group.

3. No pets of any kind will be permitted.
4. No personal items and no household goods will be shipped to the Assembly Center.
5. The United States Government through its agencies will provide for the storage, at the sole risk of the owner, of the more substantial household items, such as iceboxes, washing machines, pianos and other heavy furniture. Cooking utensils and other small items will be accepted for storage if crated, packed and plainly marked with the name and address of the owner. Only one name and address will be used by a given family.
6. Each family, and individual living alone, will be furnished transportation to the Assembly Center or will be authorized to travel by private automobile in a supervised group. All instructions pertaining to the movement will be obtained at the Civil Control Station.

Go to the Civil Control Station between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M., Monday, May 4, 1942, or between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M., Tuesday, May 5, 1942, to receive further instructions.

J. L. DeWITT
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army
Commanding

POSTON

When this territory was first separated from Mexico, Arizona and New Mexico were under one government. The seat of this government was Santa Fe, New Mexico, so the Arizonans had to travel a couple of hundred miles just to get a land deed signed or to get any other official business done. This was one of the many reasons why Arizona finally broke away and formed a separate state.

Charles A. Poston was one of the prominent characters in this undertaking. He was a pioneer settler of this territory; and long before we came, he dreamed of converting this arid wasteland into a fertile, productive farmland. He died without seeing his ambition realized; but several generations later his ambition was to be carried through and a city was to be named in his honor.

In March, 1942, just four months after the United States' entry into World War II, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 9066 which gave Lieutenant General John L. Dewitt of the Western Defense Command power to evacuate anyone whom he thought to be potentially dangerous. Later President Roosevelt issued another order which established the War Relocation Authority. The W.R.A. established ten relocation centers (two of which are in Arizona—the Poston and Gila River Relocation Projects). Approximately 100,000 Japanese were moved inland to these ten centers.

Poston is on an Indian Reservation in Parker Valley, sixteen miles south of Parker, in Yuma County, Arizona. It is composed of three separate units, which are spaced at three mile intervals. North to south, Camp I, the northern most unit, has a population of approximately 9,000; camps two and three have about 4,500 each. The inhabitants are practically all from California, with a few from Arizona. The majority of Californians are from Central California, although almost every part of California is represented.

Poston I is probably like any other relocation center, being about one mile square and composed of 36 blocks. Each block has fourteen barracks, one mess-hall, two latrines, one laundry room, and one ironing room. The barracks are made of redwood and pine, covered on the outside with slatted tar paper. One thing unique about our barracks is that we have a double roof, although even then the temperature is around 120° in the summer.

Poston is surrounded by high hills and mountains. The mountains are of rocky, lava-like composition, which apparently has a fairly high mineral content because our radio reception is very poor. The hill to the east rests on a plateau the side of which somehow resembles the Grand Canyon. The strata have various colors such as red, green, yellow, brown, and grey. These colors are layers of clay, sand, and gravel.

To the west the Colorado River flows by (hence, Poston is sometimes referred to as the Colorado River Relocation Project). That is where our water is drawn (via canals from Parker Valley on a diagonal entering from the northeast and going out at the southwest).

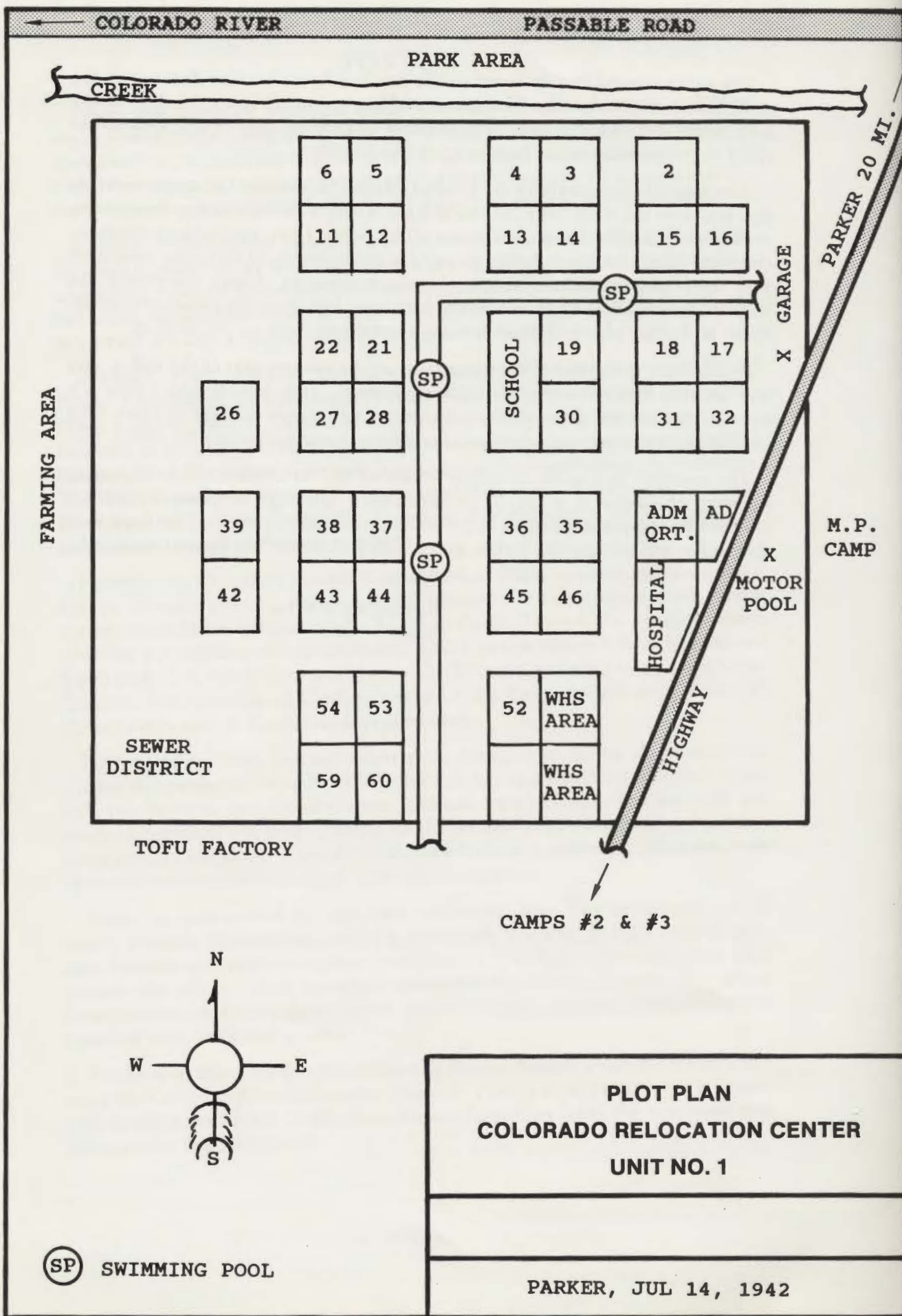
The earth around Poston is not unlike parched flour; it is fine dust which the wind blows around readily. The ground differs as you go from the river to the hills. Some spots were obviously at one time or another river or lake beds; other spots were sand dunes and beachy sand-like stretches.

The vegetation varies with the ground. Mesquite trees are the commonest. As you stand on the river bank, all you will see is green such as cotton-wood trees, willow trees, arrow-weeds, and many other plants; then, as you leave the river, the plants begin to thin out. All you will see will be plenty of mesquite trees until you reach the immediate vicinity of the mountains. There the plants and vegetation end abruptly. The hills are very bare, but there are a few cacti, desert holly, and other plants. The mountains themselves have no plants at all.

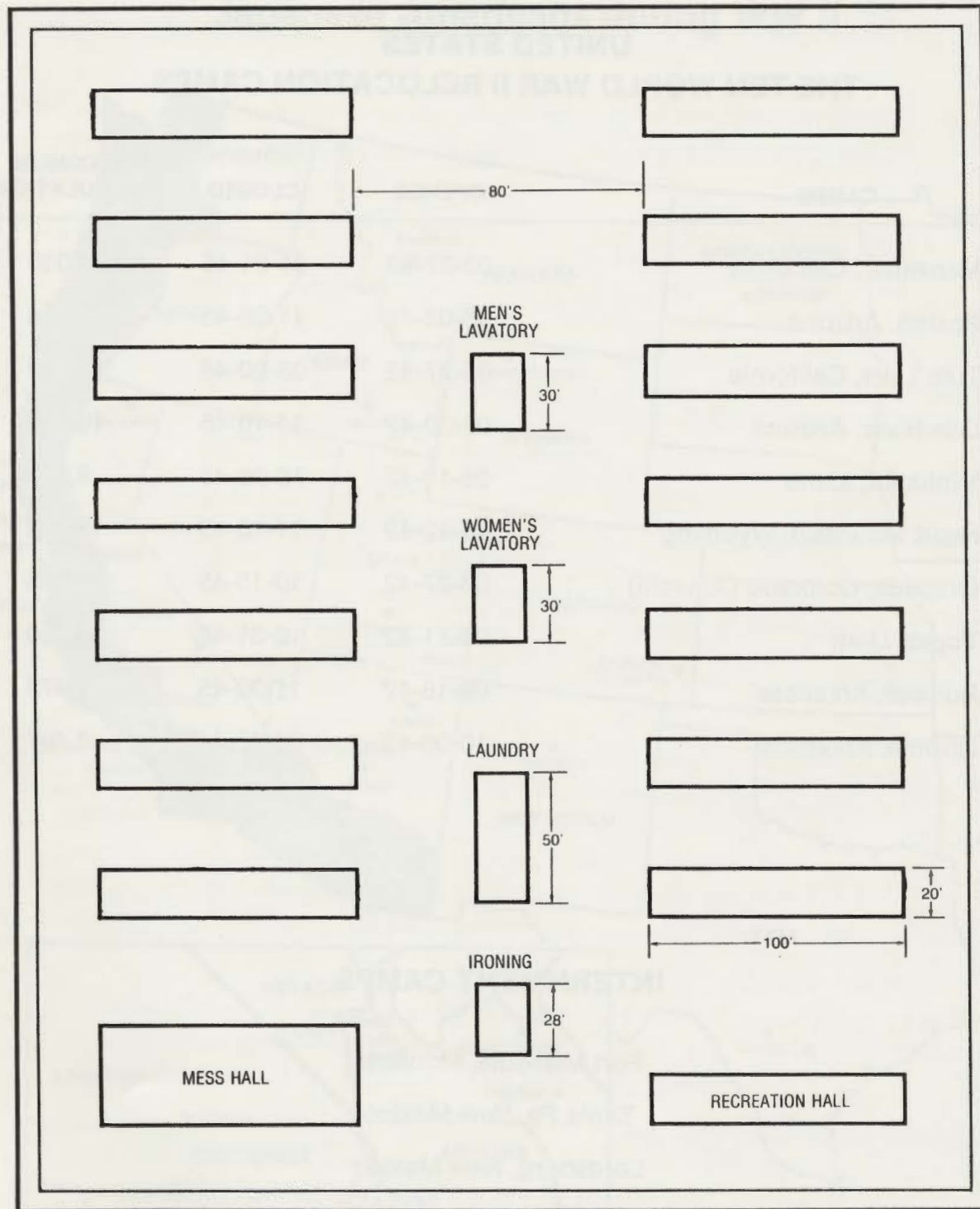
If you climb to the top of the mountains, at the eastern part of the valley, you will see that there is a slightly higher elevation. This neighboring valley is a desolate, sunbeaten place where a few miserable plants manage to exist. Our own valley is very green in comparison, although our own valley is a desert, too.

The weather in Poston ranges from about 95° to about 120° F. The main industry of Poston is going to be agriculture, although at present they are stymied by the presence of so much alkali. Eventually, however, we hope that this valley will become the fertile, green valley of which Mr. Poston dreamed.

By Lawrence Yatsu
Senior



TYPICAL BLOCK PLAN



Components of block units (facing page) consisted of 14 housing barracks most often divided into four 20' x 25' living quarters to house one family. Each unit also had a mess hall, recreation hall and communal facilities.

**UNITED STATES
THE TEN WORLD WAR II RELOCATION CAMPS**

CAMPS	OPENED	CLOSED	MAXIMUM POPULATION
Manzanar, California	03-21-42	11-21-45	10,046
Poston, Arizona	05-08-42	11-28-45	17,814
Tule Lake, California	05-27-42	03-20-46	18,789
Gila River, Arizona	07-20-42	11-10-45	13,348
Minidoka, Idaho	08-10-42	10-28-45	9,397
Heart Mountain, Wyoming	08-12-42	11-10-45	10,764
Granada, Colorado (Amachi)	08-27-42	10-15-45	7,318
Topaz, Utah	09-11-42	10-31-45	8,350
Rohwer, Arkansas	09-18-42	11-30-45	9,475
Jerome, Arkansas	10-06-42	06-30-44	8,497

INTERNMENT CAMPS

Fort Missoula, Montana

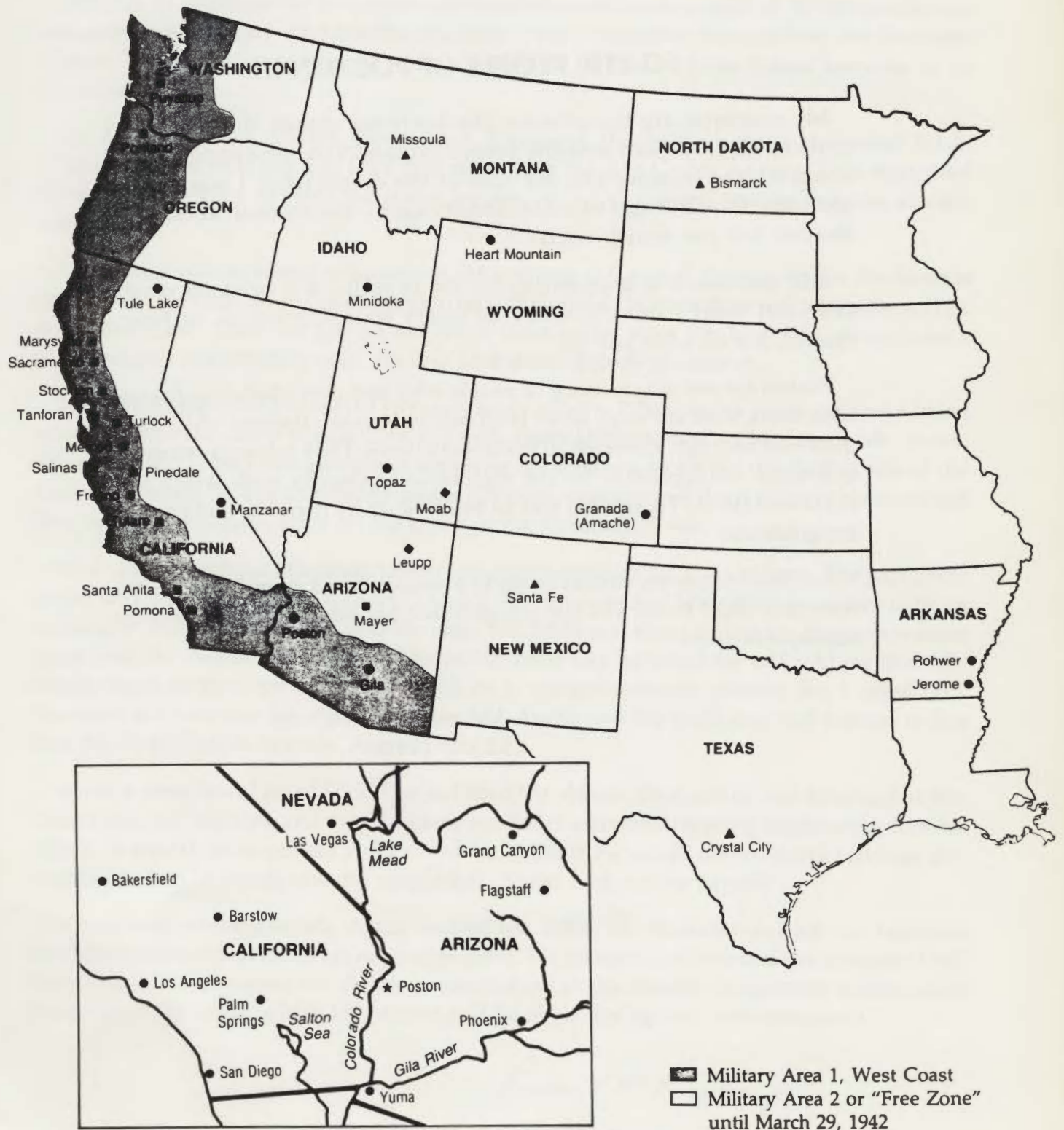
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Lordsburg, New Mexico

Fort Lincoln, Bismark, North Dakota

Crystal City, Texas

War Relocation Centers for Japanese Americans during WW II



TO THE PEOPLE OF POSTON I

My memories are tumultuous, like hurricane clouds. But how can I write of them without seeming presumptuous? You were enduring the upheaval, the injustice and the heat of the desert while I was a mere spectator. I could imagine the fear and the agony, the sense of outrage and disaster, but you were living it.

Still, perhaps it is appropriate for me to write, if I write on what I saw—not what I think you felt, or guess you experienced, or how I reacted, but on what you did.

Poston for me is a memory of people who met overwhelming disaster with more than survival, more than power to make the best of it, more than vast courage, although all these were there. They were transformed and made unforgettable by the dignity and integrity with which you expressed them. To see this was to be lifted up by it and to feel pride in being human.

For that reason my overall *omoid* of Poston is like a cumulus cloud in a clear sky, and I thank you for this gift that has sustained me down the subsequent years.

Alexander H. Leighton
22 July 1992

A MESSAGE OF RECOLLECTION

Not all was serious at Poston!

Staffing an organization to operate and maintain a new community of 20,000 people was not easy for everybody. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was given responsibility for the three "camps." Supervisory personnel were transferred to Poston from Indian agencies in all Western states.

As Assistant Director for Operations, I enjoyed the help of many dedicated B.I.A. employees. One of these was Dick Bowman, from the San Carlos Agency. Dick organized Japanese Americans to staff the water supply, electrical system, sewage systems at each camp.

Mr. Asami was recruited to supervise the systems at Camp II. (I am not sure the name is correct.) At first Mr. Asami used his own bicycle to make the rounds to wells, pumps, valves, powerlines, etc. Later we got an old truck from some place for him. Mr. Asami was a conscientious and efficient man. He was paid about \$20.00 per month.

Mr. Asami also was interested in community affairs. When many residents were being relocated and the camp populations reduced, some kitchens had to be closed. Mr. Asami thought it would be a nice gesture of appreciation to have a picnic for the staff of one of the closing kitchens. So, one Sunday he loaded the picnic supplies and the staff onto his truck and they went to a suitable place on the shore of the Colorado River.

Now . . . personal use of a government vehicle was prohibited, then as now. The picnic was under way when Relocation Center Director, Mr. Duncan and Mrs. Mills happened to be on a pleasure drive in their own car in the area. Mr. Mills was surprised to see the government truck and Mr. Asami and guests at the picnic. Next day he called me and told me that Mr. Asami must be fired for use of the truck on a non-government activity. So, I called Dick Bowman and told him Mr. Mills had seen Mr. Asami and the truck and had told me to fire him. So I told Dick to fire Mr. Asami.

About a week later I asked Dick if he had fired Mr. Asami. Dick said he had done so, but Mr. Asami was still working and that the camp residents were contributing funds to pay him his salary. A month or so passed and I asked Mr. Mills if he would object to my rehiring Mr. Asami. He said he would not. So we put Mr. Asami back on the payroll.

A couple of weeks later Mr. Asami invited Mr. Mills, Mr. Bowman and me to a Japanese food dinner in celebration of his re-employment. We accepted and enjoyed the occasion. I still have one of the presents Mr. Asami presented me at the dinner—a cigarette holder made from Mesquite wood, which Mr. Asami said he made during his "unemployment."

Robert H. Rupkey

Robert H. Rupkey

AN EVACUEE'S PRAYER

Give me, dear Lord, the strength to take
Whatever comes my way,
And keep me, Lord, from blowing up
In spite of what they say,

Give me a sense of humor, Lord,
And teach me how to smile
Though forced to trudge the hardest trail
For many a weary mile.

And then, if I can safely pass
Through all this time of stress,
I pray, dear Lord, that you will keep
Me free of bitterness.

— Unknown —

ISSEIS' SPIRIT

This barren land where the dust, the hot and bitter cold, the coyotes and rattlers call home.

A land where each day nature tries to reclaim this harsh land, we now call our home.

Dim are the Issei's thoughts of returning to a far away land, a land of their ancestors and their youth.

The tar paper barracks, they connote fear and despair, for this nation just does not understand.

These camps that cover this vast wasteland are a travesty to family values and to human dignity.

But these tar paper barracks in this unforgiving land are no feat to the spirit of the Issei pioneers.

Days are long when one cannot build on a dream, days go slow in this hopeless tar paper land.

From this desolate land young men will go to prove their allegiance to the red, white, and blue.

They will go to battle in a land far away, some will give their lives to a country that won't love them back.

Those that must stay in these wasteland camps grieve to see their young men die.

These young men love this nation so much, the Isseis put aside their desire of ever going back.

One day the wind and dust, the rattle snakes and the coyotes will reclaim this desolate land.

And when the war is over they will start to build, for rebuild they must, for this is their homeland.

Dedicated to the Issei Pioneers
By Shigeru Fujiwara

I STILL REMEMBER THIS DAY

JULY 26, 1945

I recall that dreary day
The day I left for Poston way
My friends, my home, all standing still
Over mountain, hills, and dales
I still remember this day.

And on the trip we gazed around
But as the same headed for Poston bound
Long cactus and the ocean blue
All passed by as other things do
I still remember this day.

Desert sands and heat surrounding
Not a tree or bush astanding
Longer and longer the hours seems
Still riding to a place never dreamed
I still remember this day.

Reached Parker safe and sound
Many people gazed around
Wondering where our destination lead us
Finally got there in a rush
I still remember this day.

Desert sand and heat surrounding
Not a tree or bush astanding
All at once the black barracks caught the sight
of my eyes
Oh how I wish I could be home down
California way
I still remember this day.

May Ikeda

Note: This poem was written when the author was 14 years old as she experienced it.

POSTONIA

Laughing Asian faces
Sparkling almond eyes
Greet me ev'ry morning
Neath Arizona skies
Noisy, happy children
Scurrying to school
While I, their teacher, undertake
To teach the Golden Rule

Sturdy little bodies
Active little minds
Eager with the questions
Of lessons I've assigned
Busy, ever-searching -
 Knowledge is so sweet
Stumbling o'er a strange new word
They may chance to meet

Morning passes quickly
Time again for play
Out they go to run a race
Beneath the sun's bright ray
Their faces cloudless as the sky
Above their own small heads
What time have they to think of war?
Or fear a tyrant's tread?

Trusting me completely
Crowding 'round my desk
Daily bringing little gifts
By childish love I'm blest!
Helpful, loving, giving
Kindness in itself
Polite, co-operative
They all seem little elves!

When once our school is over
Release is then complete
And off they go - to barrack homes
Dear mother keeps so neat
Within the block, oft can be heard
Their childish, ringing laughter
Dear child, when camp life is no more
Oh what, will then, come after?

Must children suffer for the faults
Of elders, race or creed?
To me, this wonderland of ours
Was founded for a need.
Small Kiddies, innocent and sweet
The future's reins may seize
Let's hope our fairness leaves a niche
For American - Japanese!

V. L. H.

8/8/44

*Written while a teacher in W.R.A. Camp #1,
Poston, Arizona*

GO FOR BROKE

"Go for Broke" was the slogan for
A *very special* group
The most decorated unit
Always a fresh news "scoop"

By others oft called "buddah heads"
For purely ethnic reasons
These others soon showed them respect
Thru fighting they were seasoned

They made their country feel *so* proud
For the 442nd now
Was a well-trained, brave, and fighting machine
Before no foe would bow

The men and boys of Hawaii
Joined kin from the U.S.A.
Brought fear to the foes who faced them
Are remembered yet today

Our "budda heads" charged the "Kraut heads"
Drove Fascists from Italy
For wherever help was needed
There 4-4-2 would be

Now "Go for Broke!" is a phrase which means
"Hey man, give it all you've got"
We'll "Go for Broke!" to win this war
Surrender? We will not!

Virginia L. Hess Fear

GOODBYE, POSTON!

A line or two, I write to you
To bid you fond farewell;
To let you know before I go
How I've enjoyed this "Hell."

Now I'll admit I've had a bit
Of clean and wholesome fun —
Some days of case 'neath mesquite trees
and basking in the sun.

The friends I've made I wouldn't trade
For barrels full of gold;
The things I've learned cannot be earned
Or stolen, bought or sold.

In reverie I'll sometimes see
The silv'ry desert moon;
The stars up high in a velvet sky,
The hush on Sleepy Lagoon.

Sometimes I'll long for the cricket's song,
For the sad coyote's cry,
For the rustling breeze thru willow trees
Where the River wanders by.

I'll tell you this, I know I'll miss
Those meals at the Cooking School,
The shows outdoors, the C. E. stores,
The gang at the swimming pool.

I'll oft' recall my old mess hall,
My seat in the Men's Latrine,
The barren gleam of my barrack room
In Block 22 - 14.

I'll remember names like Norris James,
Townsend, Chandler, and Dies,
De Witt and Best and all the rest
Of those double-dealing guys.

And you can bet I'll ne'er forget
The dust, the blistering heat —
My balls all wet with slimy sweat.
B.O. and athlete's feet,

And rattlesnakes and belly-aches,
Bad boils and heat-rash, too —
Potatoes hashed and noodles mashed,
Boiled beans and meatless stew.

As years go by, I'll heave a sigh
For squids, neck-bones and kraut;
That special treat, "coyote meat,"
I'll miss without a doubt.

I think, perchance, I'll miss the ants,
The bugs and pesky gnats,
Mosquito bites on sultry nights,
and flies that drove me bats.

How dear to me the memory
Of Poston e'er will be
The times I've had both good and bad
I'll cherish tenderly.

So goodbye, pals, you guys and gals,
In Poston, Unit I.
I've said enough; excuse this stuff;
My farewell song is done.

Bob Okazaki

TEACHER'S DIARY

The following has been excerpted from a 1942 journal kept by Miss Lucille Reed, a first grade teacher at Poston I. Miss Reed later married Ray Franchi.

Sept. 27, 1942—All day nothing but civil service papers. Quite uneventful but I did get to see Poston. Squat rows of barracks, stretching in endless rows and looking like the toys someone forgot and left out all night. Each block consists of 14 resident barracks. These are made to the standard army measurements, 24' wide and 96' long, and have been partitioned into five or six large rooms. Each room is the home of one family unless the family happens to be large enough to require two rooms. Each family can divide or arrange the room in any way they like.

These 14 barracks or apartment houses are arranged in two rows with an alley between. In the alley are community showers, community laundry facilities. There is no running water in any of the homes. At the end of each block there is a building twice the size of the others. It is the common dining room or mess hall. Over 250 people eat here three times a day. Behind the mess hall is a recreation hall, built just like the apartment barracks, but without partitions. It is used for dances, classes in all kinds of hobbies and crafts, library space, nursery schools or cooperative stores.

Oct. 1, 1942—Today I met with a group of Japanese primary teachers. I never realized I was so dumb. They are so helpful and wonderful to one. We learned songs and I felt quite strange having a Japanese girl teach me all of the nursery rhymes that I should know better than she but did not.

We were assigned our rooms today. Recreation hall 43C.

Monday, Oct. 5, 1942—My first day of school at Poston a bare room only crude benches and tables too large and 65 little brown children looking up into my faces saying "good morning, teacher."

We were telling experience stories this morning of what we play. One little boy said, "We play airplane."

"How do you play airplane?" I ask.

"Oh you spread out your wings and you fly over the ditch (irrigation canal) and drop bombs on the *bad* Japanese."

I hung up a small American flag in my room. All over the room you could hear. "Oh! the American flag," with all the feeling you could imagine. One little boy asks to feel of it. "You make it?" He asks. "Yes," I replied. "Pretty good," was the answer. Somewhere back in the room someone started singing "God Bless America." So we all took it up. Such pretty children's voices I have never heard.

Wednesday, Oct 7, 1942—What a difficult time I had trying to learn the names of 65 Japanese children. I walked up to one little boy. Are you Hiroshi I asked. "Hell no," was the reply. "I'm Jimmy." You see, he wasn't Japanese in his own mind. He was an American. He was the same boy who told the airplane story.

Monday, Oct. 11, 1942—Millicent Ogawa is a very beautiful Japanese child. When she draws everything has a face, trees

have faces, houses have faces. Today she came up to me and said, "Where do you live, teacher?"

"Up by the Post Office," I replied.

"Oh, you live in a white house. In those white houses."

"No, in a black house just like you."

"Who lives in the white houses, teacher?"

"Some of the Caucasians." I answered thoughtless—

"What are Caucasians? Am I a Caucasian? What am I, teacher?"

"You are a Japanese. Japanese are brown people."

"Why do Caucasians live in white houses? Just because they are white? Half dirt, half grass. Half white houses, half black houses. That's cheating teacher."

What could I say! We flatter ourselves that we have democracy. The administrators have white bungalows equipped with conveniences. The Japanese have black tarpapered barracks with wide cracks in the floor.

Tuesday, Oct. 12: Hideo always lingers at the door to say goodbye and always says, "Teacher, I go home with you today." Today he said, "Teacher, I go home with you today. You have father?"

"Yes"

"Does he live with you?"

"No he lives in Kansas."

"You have a mother?"

"Yes."

"Does she live with you?"

"No. She lives in Kansas, too."

"Who lives with you, teacher?"

This is a real question to these people as five families live in a barracks and in many cases only a curtain or quilt for a partition.

"I have a roommate, Miss Peterson." I answered.

"Is she nice, teacher?"

"Yes, she is."

"Does she fight, teacher?"

"No she doesn't."

"Well she shouldn't, should she

teacher? It isn't good to fight!"

Just a glimpse into one of the many problems this situation carries with it.

Wednesday, Oct 13: Today heard another interesting story. When Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Mathieson, the branch chief of Business and Agriculture, moved in Mrs. Mathieson was wondering if she could get a Japanese woman to help her do her unpacking. She was told by one of the Japanese that there was a lady who would be glad to help her if she would only let her play on her piano. Mrs. Mathieson contacted the woman who proved to be a concert pianist.

Thursday, Oct. 14: The Sears and Roebuck story is one that is typical of this place. One of the teachers wrote the word *crochet* on the black-board. The word was misspelled. One of the pupils called attention to the spelling. The teacher suggested that it be looked up in a dictionary but there being no books naturally there were no dictionaries. The pupil remarked that the block manager had a dictionary. So the pupil was permitted to go to the block manager's office. He returned shortly with the correct spelling. "What dictionary did you use?" the teacher inquired.

"The Sears and Roebuck Dictionary."

General Observations: Arrival

60 little first graders with no desks and only apple boxes to sit on. What would I do to keep these children busy? We had no desks, no books, no pencils or crayons. I went into the kitchen and got large pieces of wrapping paper which some food had been wrapped in. This I used as a blackboard as I had a box of crayons. I also secured salt and flour and mixed it with water to make claylike substance. We molded the clay in the form of letters and made words. We also learned to make numerals with the clay. I obtained a large number of matches and broke off the heads of the matches and used them for learning to count, also to add and subtract. Surprisingly enough we learned.

RECOLLECTIONS OF POSTON I

1. First family to enter Poston, May 8, 1942 - The Maeda Family of Imperial Valley - Blk. 6
2. First person to welcome families into Poston I - George Fujii
3. Poston was named after of Charles Poston (Father of Arizona), a pioneer
4. First born in Poston I - Toshiro Yoshida, May 16, 1942 - Block 35
5. First couple married in Poston - Mae Misono and Bob Fukunaga on June 11, 1942
6. First Director of Poston - Wade Head
7. First Poston Chronicle published on May 13, 1942
8. First volunteer into U.S. Army - Charles Nakamura, Blk. 14
9. Total number of Draft Registers - 100
10. First major fire was in Blk. 6, November 16, 1943
11. First funeral - May 23, 1942 - Mortician Harry Nogawa



Japanese garden on construction site of Hospital



Main entrance to Administration Center



Administrative Staff



Block managers and other office staff members



Kaj Takenouchi, Fumi Okanishi, Tomi Nagata, Mary Eno,
Tom Sakai, Mr. Nelson, Roy Furuya



Administration Building



Relocation Office



See Len Park (next to Administration Building)



U.S. Post Office



Bridge in back of Administration Building



EVACUEE PROPERTY CLERICAL STAFF

Back row l to r - Lily Nagata, Shiz Sadakane, Aya Yoshida, Mary Kinoshita. Front row - Amy Yoshida, Dorothy Obata, Akiko Nishimoto



FINANCE SECTION PERSONNEL



BLOCKS 5, 6, 11 & 12 Quad Girls Club

Reenoips

Back Row l to r - Kisaye Nakasaki, Phyllis Kinoshota, _____ Matsuda, Pat Eddow, _____, Kathleen Uyetani, _____, Mary Yasuda, Miyo Higashi, _____, _____, Jane Kato, Mrs. Murakami, Advisor, Min Kato (G.I. visiting Poston). Club had a picnic for visiting G.I Min Kato.



BUREAU OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Back row l to r - Jyuichi Sato, Hisa Fuji, Myrtle Sasaki, Tom Sasaki & baby, Alexander H. Leighton, Mrs. Leighton, Florence Mohri, Elizabeth Colson. Front row l to r - Gene Sogioka and baby, George Yamaguchi, Minnie Sogioka, Mary Kinoshita, Akiko Nishimoto, Scotty, Nishimoto, Spicer Baby, Mr. Spicer



Poston I Fire Department
Fire Chief: Eichi Kuramoto
Captain: Jack Wada



Poston Police Dept.



Fire Department



Kiyoshi & Misako Shigekawa (former police chief) with son Gerald (6 months old)



American Red Cross



Block 4 Stage



Monument of Poston I Servicemen



Kazuma Katsumoto, Judicial Dept., later C

**FORMER POSTON
GIRLS BREAK
INTO PRINT**

Arrival of Yuri Sugimoto and Merian Kanatani, former Poston residents, to work in the Kansas City WRA office rated a front page story in the Kansas City Star last week, it was disclosed today.

"The War Relocation Authority," the lead of the story stated, "added yesterday to the office staff of its area supervisor here two young Japanese women, who for the last year had been held in the evacuation center at Poston, Ariz., and in shy responses to the genial questioning by their boss, Vernon R. Kennedy.

The employees and the employer were not new to one another, Both Miss Sugimoto and Miss Kanatani had worked for Kennedy previously when he was Chief of Employment in Poston.

The *Poston Chronicle*

POSTON • ARIZONA

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UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION GIVEN

Unemployment compensation is authorized only for those workers involuntarily unemployed due to illness occurring while engaged in project work, the Employment Division disclosed today.

This ruling was based on a revision to Administrative Instruction #27, recently received on the Project, which stated:

"Eligibility of evacuees to receive unemployment compensation shall be limited to those actively engaged in WRA Project employment, who are unable to report to work due to illness and who present

dum, WTA Director Dillon S. Myer pointed out, "There are now more than sufficient employment opportunities outside the relocation centers to absorb all the evacuees not employed in project operations. The need for unemployment compensation as a partial substitute for income earned through employment has disappeared."

Applications for unemployment compensation by residents who are eligible under the current policy should be made at the unit employment offices, it was announced. Compensation should be at the



Front row l to r - Tak Kodani, Sus Matsumoto, Tami Izumi, Henry Mori, Sab Hashimoto, Rosie Nishioka. Standing - Ihoko Sakurai, Susie Yamashita, Joe Toi, Setsu Yoshida, Edith Fukaye Isago, Hannah Okamoto, Adela Nakajima, Steve Sakai, Wakako Nakamura, Yamauchi, Jeane Ikokuchi, Tsuruka Mizusawa, Lily Ishii



Relocation Office l to r - Harry Hagi, Lillian _____, Bessie Shimono, Mary Kinoshita, _____, Yogi Ezaki, Mr. Carter



Acting Block Manager and Staff



Relocation Office Staff



Lifeguards



Swimming Pool

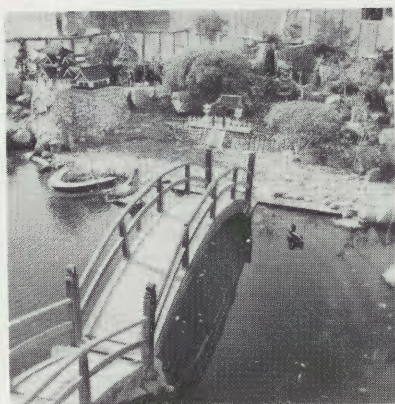




Miniature palace, part of Japanese garden



Japanese Garden near the Offices





Production and distribution personnel of tofu factory. Manager: Henry Miwa



Tofu factory: Abura-age cooking



Tofu factory: cooked soy beans grinding



Tofu factory: funyu press - extract funyu from cooked and ground soy beans



Poston I Law Department Staff

Front row - Marianne Masui, Elmer Yamamoto. Second row - Yoshi Yamada, Paul Murata, Hedy Kimoto, Rakumi Sasaki, Aki Sakuma. Back row - Thomas Masuda, Ted Haas, Mrs. Masuda, Lily Yoshimi, Miwa Yanamoto



Elementary School Auditorium



Poston I Elementary School & Staff

Front row - Miss Deguchi, Mrs. Bromell, Mrs. Geeting, Miss Stephens. Second row - Mrs. Girdlers, Mrs. Sandmeyer, Miss Kawashima, Miss Ueki, Miss Breeze, Miss Yamada, Miss Huey, Miss Nishimura, Miss Hess. Third row - Miss Tanaka, Miss Acock, Miss Ness, Miss Sakamoto, Miss Shindo, Miss Hirata, Miss Sato, Miss Noritake, Miss Nakasaki, Mrs. Yoshimoto, Mrs. Fukuyama, Mrs. Dugan. Fourth row - Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Merritt, Mrs. Satterwhite, Mrs. Huey, Miss Newhart, Mrs. Battles, Mrs. Sundoren, Miss Youngdahl, Miss Graham, Miss Smith



Auditorium



Mrs. Robinson's 2nd grade class
1943-44



Elementary School buildings



Miss Huey's 2nd grade class
1943-44



Mrs. Robinson's 3rd grade class
1944-45



Mrs. Robinson's 3rd grade class
1944-45
Fathers and Daughters



Halloween Party - 3rd grade 1944



Homemade slide, anyone?



Front row l to r - "Bird" Toshio Mitamura, Hazuki Chino, Grace Bingo, Patsy Ohye, Jane Yan, Richard Takii. 2nd row - Chizuko Matsumoto, Dorothy Rush Sudgren, Taiichi Aoyama, David "Buff" George Kajihara, Suehiko Ikeda, _____, Etsuko Sakuma. 3rd row - Masaharu Na, Masao Nimura, Masako Nakatsukasa, Takako Ichishita, Akiko Florence Fujiwara, Ayako Oshio, Kinjo, Hisashi Sujishi. 4th row - Roy Yukio Wakamiya, Tom Furuya, Joe _____, Hiroshi Jimmy Akimitsu Ushijima, Bobby Sakaguchi, Marian Iwanaga, Ayako Nakamura, _____ Stevens



Mr. Hajime Tanaka's core class



Mr. Pevy's Sr. English social study class



Mrs. Robinson's 2nd grade class



Betty Timmon's 5th grade class, 1943-44



Kindergarten class, teacher Grace Manaka

guchi,
atani,
mura,
roshi
shita,
Peggy



10th Grade - 1943 Sophomore Class



4th Grade, teacher Virginia Lee Hess