

relocation camp

September 29 • 30 • October 1, 1989 Doubletree Hotel Monterey, California

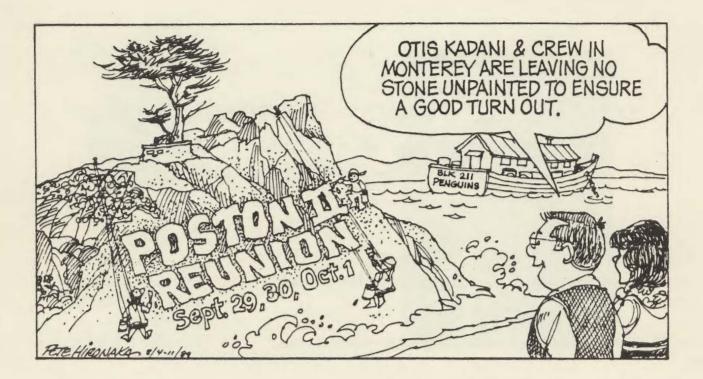
REMEMBER WHEN . . .



After that fateful day in December of 1941 . . . the helplessness, confusion, suspicion and uncertain dark future for all of us . . . rumors galore . . . restrictions and curfews . . . first painful realization of distrust and question of our loyalty by being herded into assembly centers . . . trying to make ourselves comfortable in our temporary quarters straw mattresses, horse stalls and make-shift quarters . . . more rumors as to our next destination and what is to become of us . . . the long hot train ride to destination unknown . . . more rumors . . . finally reaching a place called Parker, Arizona (where in the heck is Parker) in 100 degree plus temperature dressed in our Central California clothing . . . the bus and truck ride to Poston II — our home for the next two to three years . . . hot summers, cold winters and the forever dust storms . . . evening movies with our folding chairs and charcoal heaters . . . dancing to Glenn Miller's music . . . going to the canteen to see what we can buy with our hard earned money . . . basketball and softball games . . . cooling off in the swimming pool . . . homemade air conditioners buzzing away . . . the controversial loyalty question . . . seeing the boys off to the army . . . people gradually relocating outside . . . end of the war . . . making the big decision to go back to California and wondering what kind of reception we will face . . . the struggle to try to pick up what was left of our shattered lives . . . the long uphill struggle to our present day status . . . still waiting for our redress money . . .

So . . . whenever and wherever we meet, we will always say "Remember When" . . . and reminisce about the camp days — the sad times and the good times . . . till we meet again . . . to once again take that "Sentimental Journey" into the past . . .

Cover design by Gene Nakata and Larry Omoto



POSTON II COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Otis Kadani Chairman MONTEREY Kaye Tanaka Joann Nishi Ruby Hori Molly Sumida Shiz Shiozaki Jiggs Oka John Gota Mitzi Kamimori Yave Ninomiya Cedar Tabata Takeko Enokida Rose Nakamura Daisy Yoshiyama Fumi Shingu Amy Kuwatani Hisako Oka (Not Poston II members,

Bill Omoto Ko Kadani SALINAS Bob Oka Mary Oka Craig Yama Janice Higashi WATSONVILLE Lily Yamashita Peggy Kurimoto

but helpers) Frank Tanaka

Evelyn Kamigawachi Tom Yagi Harumi Murakami Dear Postonians from Camp II:

In Kalane

Welcome to Monterey.

Yes, uprooted from our homes and sent to assembly centers and camps in hell holes of America, behind barb wire fences and machine gun towers, we have fought our way back into the mainstream society of America.

Today, we of Japanese descent, have congressmen, astronauts, doctors, lawyers, professors, school teachers, physicists, judges, scientists, technologists, business men, and our military prowess, not to mention high ranking military officers, above all of this, let's try to maintain some of our heritage and culture which we value so much.

We have suites — not barracks, restaurants — not mess halls, bathrooms — not straw filled bags, bedrooms — not wooden boxes, pets — not rattle snakes or scorpions, and finally shopping centers — not canteens, remember those days? Well, those days are behind us, but we will never forget. It will always be "Remember, when" . . .

The committee for this reunion, composed of Camp II residents from Monterey, Salinas and Watsonville, does hope that you will have an enjoyable reunion. The committee has worked many hours to make this reunion memorable.

A special thanks, to Mr. and Mrs. George Oki from Sacramento for their time and generous help — and to

Bill Omoto, who is a Postonian from Camp I, but who was generous enough to put this booklet together for us.

Thank you to the committee members and please have a good time meeting old friends and making new friends to make for a nice memorble reunion, so that it will add to your "Remember, when" . . .

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS — POSTON II REUNION

September 29 • 30 • October 1, 1989 Doubletree Hotel — Monterey, California

Friday - September 29, 1989

Registration Hotel Lobby (Doubletree) 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

10:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.

Friday Nite Mixer DeAnza Room (Doubletree) 7:30 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.

Saturday - September 30, 1989

Registration Hotel Lobby (Doubletree) 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Golf Laguna Seca Golf Course 6:15 a.m. (Hotel Lobby)

(Monterey) 7:00 a.m. (Tee-off Time)

Aquarium & Barnyard Tour Meet in Hotel Lobby 9:30 a.m.

(Bus Transportation with Guides Furnished)

Hospitality Room 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. 10:30 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.

Saturday Nite Banquet DeAnza Room (Doubletree) No Host Cocktail – 6:00 p.m.

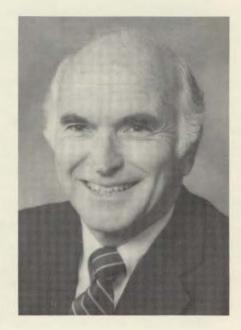
Dinner & Entertainment – 7:00 p.m.

Sunday - October 1, 1989

Sunday Brunch DeAnza Room (Doubletree) 10:00 a.m.

Office of the Mayor Monterey, California 93940





July 13, 1989

Dear Friends,

When I was a youngster growing up in Monterey, suddenly a lot of my school classmates were gone. I was told they left for camp. I wasn't sure what it all meant at the time. Now I know.

Many of my friends today have told me what it was like to be a young person in one of those camps.

I can sense a feeling of strength, love, and pride in their parents and their neighbors from their experiences they now reminisce about.

Now, many of those young camp members are some of Monterey's outstanding citizens. They are leaders in our community and some of our most respected citizens.

The City of Monterey is a better place because of their contributions. I am very proud of the Japanese/American community and their ideals.

On behalf of the citizens, I welcome you here for your reunion and hope your stay here in Monterey is one you will long remember.

Sincerely,

Daniel Albert

Muil allut

Mayor



SALINAS ASSEMBLY CENTER (RODEO GROUNDS), 1942

Salinas Assembly Center DATA

The name "Temporary Detention Camp" accurately describes the true nature of the sites nominated for historical landmark designation. At the time, the U.S. Army used the euphemism "Assembly Center," but these sites were not merely places of assemblage. Instead, they were essentially and primarily detention camps to hold people against their will. "Assembly Center" is a misnomer and misrepresentation, and therefore is unacceptable for use as a landmark name.

First Induction: 27 April, 1942 Center Closed: 5 July, 1942

Peak Population: 3,608

Date of Maximum Population: 23 June, 1942

Origin of Detainees: Monterey Bay Area

Monterey County: 1,578 detainees, Exclusion Order No. 15

Western Defense Command & Fourth Army

Santa Cruz County: 1,160 detainees, Exclusion Order No. 16

Western Defense Command & Fourth Army

San Benito and

Santa Clara Counties: 835 detainees, Exclusion Order No. 77

Western Defense Command & Fourth Army

Permanent Camp Destination

of Internees: Poston (Colorado River), Arizona and Tule Lake, California

SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL

E.A. Rose Center Manager

Supervisor — Finance Division James C. Orchard Supervisor — Works Division Paul H. Baker

Supervisor — Service Division Lindsley C. Lueddeke

John V. Kirsch Supervisor — Housing & Feeding Supply Officer William F. Taylor In Salinas, the historic rodeo grounds were converted by the United States Engineer Department into the "Salinas Assembly Center" which, at its peak population, held 3,608 Japanese American evacuees. The first induction was on April 27, 1942. The center was vacated on July 4th.

The internee quarters in Salinas, as in other Temporary Detention Centers, were located in units or "apartments," a euphemism for single rooms, four to six of them in a 20-foot by 100-foot shack called barracks. There were rows and rows of these barracks, fourteen barracks making up a block, each serving about 800 people. Each block had its own mess hall, its own laundry, and, at least theoretically, its own recreation room. One place looked like another and evacuees frequently became confused and could not find their way home. At the Salinas Assembly Center children spent time fishing in the marshes and puddles. When it rained everybody slipped around on the treacherous adobe soil.

A typical single family unit had one window that looked out on the street. Some quarters had no windows at all. There were no shades or curtains except when people were able to find material with which to make them; no shelves, closets, or lockers; and, to keep their places neat, evacuees stored their belongings under the beds.

Originally living units housed up to eight persons per family in a 20-foot by 20-foot room. If families were small, other persons were often moved in with them. Extra children might be housed next door. Three families might live in one room.

As new people poured into the centers, carpenters came in and proceeded to partition the larger family-sized rooms in half, making them 8 feet or 10 feet by 20 feet in order to house twice the number of evacuees. Single iron beds with link springs lined the walls of the "apartments". Evacuees were issued two or three army blankets, often used, and little else.

Barracks were constructed of rough green lumber. These thin pine boards buckled and separated, and the tar paper glued to the outside of the barracks did not keep the searchlights from shining between the boards at night. Cold also entered the cracks at night, and dust entered in the daytime. Doors might or might not fit the openings meant for them. Sometimes they were at least two inches too small all around. Floors made of the same raw lumber developed cracks between the boards, and one enterprising young woman, Helen Aihara (Kitaji) commandeered some discarded cardboard boxes, cut them into rectangles, and covered the floor to keep the Salinas winds from coming up into her room.

Mess halls in the "assembly centers" served thousands. Evacuees thus learned to eat rapidly in deference to the multitude waiting patiently outside in lines which stretched endlessly. With little else to look forward to, food assumed a place of supreme importance for the young and the old, and the queuing up, which began well before the meal hour, turned into an accepted ritual of camp life. In the driving rain and mud, in whipping sandstorms, and under the blistering midday sun, the line heading to food was always doggedly held.

However, a scarcity of cooks made difficult the filling out of kitchen crews and only twelve members of the kitchen staffs had any experience in mass cooking. During the first days of the center, many complaints were received by the management concerning the operation of the mess halls and the quality and quantity of the food served.

In the early days of the "assembly centers," camp fare consisted largely of canned goods: hash, pork and beans, canned weiners, and beans of infinite variety. Conspicious by their absence were the fresh fruits and vegetables which Japanese Americans had once raised in succulent profusion.

Mrs. Atsuko Obata, a former Salinas internee, recalls that several internees lined up for dinner one night looked at their plates which bore only a single sardine. Later investigation revealed that the supervisor of food distribution had been pocketing the purchase money. He wound up with a term in San Quentin.

Hunger drove restless adolescents into invading neighboring mess halls. A teenager chronicled his personal escapades: "One day I and some friends went into Mess Hall One and saw on a table reserved for doctors and nurses a lot of lettuce and tomatoes, fresh. We just went wild and grabbed at it like animals. When it goes down to your stomach they can't take it back. It was the best treat I ever had."

After lining up for meals three times a day, internees lined up to wash their own dishes in a washtub with soapy water, then put them through two tubs of greasy water for rinsing. By the time they were through after breakfast it might be about time to line up for lunch.

Evacuees ate communally, showered communally, defecated communally. The communal shower rooms were disturbing to many reserved evacuees. The typical bathing facility consisted of an open shower room with perhaps eight shower heads jutting out from the walls. Here again long lines of people awaited their turn. Later doorless stalls were installed, and some evacuees obtained shower cur-

tains which they carried with them. Others bathed in their underclothes. A few washed between twelve and one at night when they were not likely to find other people about. In the initial construction of the bath houses, turn-on valves were installed at such height that most internees could not use them. Washbasins were also too high for women of average Japanese height, and children could not manage at all without help. Occasionally women were forced to take sponge baths in the sinks of the lavatories when the showers were full.

Communal privies had the same drawbacks as the showers. The older models consisted of two long wooden planks made of fresh-sawed unsand-papered wood with six holes each and no plumbing connections. New models with plumbing connections flushed automatically about every fifteen minutes and might be lined up ten to a row. Women in particular were not happy sitting back to back and side to side with strangers. Eventually partitions were built in the latrines at Salinas, but no special provisions were made for children. A woman walking by a men's room one day heard a small boy screaming for help. She got a man to go in, and the child was found hanging by his elbows in the overlarge hole. It was a good twenty-foot drop to the bottom.

Education programs in the "assembly centers" started with no plans and no materials. Since the centers were considered temporary, no initial budget for education was provided. Though progress was discouraging, evacuee teachers and undergraduate amateurs drew up a curriculum, begged materials from outside sources, and scrubbed down bare rooms for classes. In Salinas Helen Aihara (Kitaji) recorded in her diary the gradual setting up of a nursery school and the training of girls as teachers day by day. From discouraging beginnings she built up the little school in a laundry room.

The religious life of the Japanese American community in Salinas also suffered as a result of the internment.

Reverend Yoshiaki Takemura of the Buddhist Temple of Salinas points out that before World War II there were about 400 Buddhist families and three Buddhist priests in Salinas.

The three reverends, Koyo Tamanaha, Bunyu Fujimura, and Hoshin Fujikado, along with the intellectual leaders of the Japanese American community, were arrested by the F.B.I. soon after the outbreak of the war and sent to Justice Department internment Camps.

In 1946 twenty-six Japanese American families returned to Salinas and requested

continued on next page

continued from previous page

Reverend Fujimura, who was living in Chicago at the time, to come back to Salinas and head the Buddhist Temple.

The Lincoln Avenue Presbyterian Church had a congregation of 250 before the war. In 1946, when the Japanese Americans were beginning to return to Salinas, the congregation consisted of about sixty members.

And, in the concluding benediction at the Kinenhi groundbreaking ceremony for the monument we are dedicating today, Rev. Umeko Momii of the Lincoln Avenue Presbyterian Church said that, although after the war her church had lost a large part of the congregation because many of the Japanese Americans were afraid to return to Salinas, "The groundbreaking of this monument gives us a warm feeling because it symbolizes that the Japanese Americans are no longer aliens in Salinas, but accepted and esteemed fellow-citizens."



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HARVEST QUEEN





The traditionally famous annual Harvest Ball, sponsored by the F. F. A., was reigned by the beautiful and charming Harvest Queen, Betty Oku. Her three lovely attendants were Miyeko Abe, Edna Kato, and Natsuko Taniguchi.

One of the most outstanding events of the year was the selection of the queen, and the solemnizing of her coronation. She was graciously crowned by last year's queen, Miyoko Hironaka, who also honored the attendants.

... AND ATTENDANTS



MIYEKO ABE



EDNA KATO



NATSUKO TANIGUCHI













































1942-45

Prior to mass West Coast evacuation of Japanese many prominent isseis were arrested without any reasons and were placed in concentration camps. They were separated from their families.

This photo shows few of the internees from Watsonville, Salinas and Monterey area who were held at the Santa Fe Internment Camp, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

























The Democratic

The War Department has authorized all persons of Japanese ancestry whose loyalty has been investigated and attested by the Army or Navy intelligence or the F.B.I. to return to their homes. All re-location centers will accordingly be closed by the end of this year.

The majority of these people will re-locate in different parts of the United States. Some, in the coming months, will return to their homes here on the Monterey Peninsula. Among them will be veterans of this war and relatives of Americans who are no war fronts. These fan many years and have be Their sons are making

Quoting from a st leased December 17, l

"The outstanding fighting for the United Pacific, has shown con SOUND JUDGMENTS

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Vay Of Life For All

ighting for democracy on all our shave made their homes here for part of the life of our community. same sacrifices as our own boys. ment by the War Department, re-4:

ord which these men have made ates in Italy, in France, and in the sively that it is possible to make to their loyalty.

"The War Department believes that the people of the Pacific Coast area WILL ACCORD RETURNING PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY ALL THE CONSIDERATIONS TO WHICH THEY ARE ENTITLED AS LOYAL CITIZENS AND LAW ABIDING RESIDENTS."

We, the undersigned, then believe that it is the privilege and responsibility of this community to cooperate with the National Government by insuring THE DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

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Once again, thank you all for your support . . .

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Greetings from George & Joan (Kitamura) Oki!

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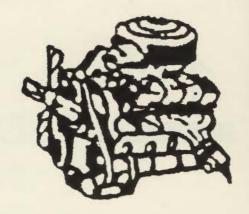
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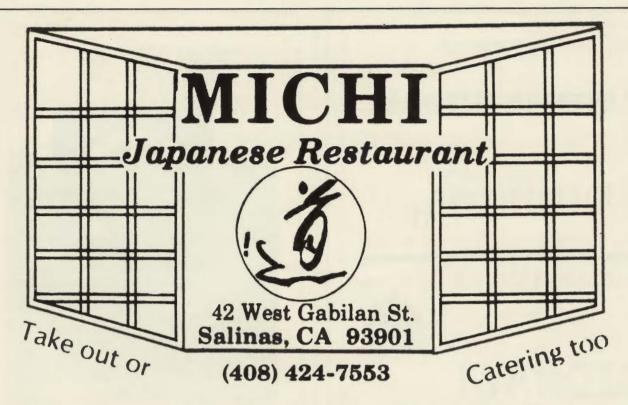
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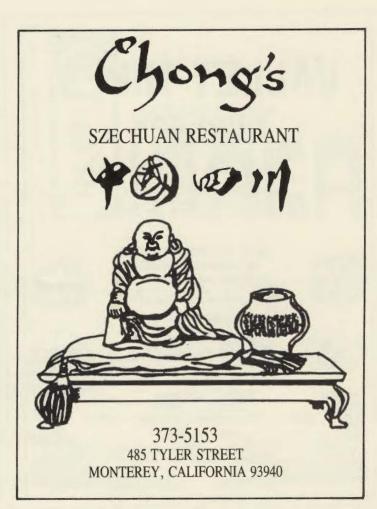
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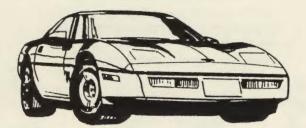


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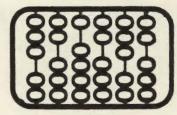


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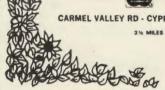
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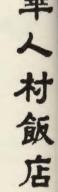


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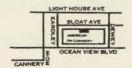
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Mrs. V. Hanae (Ichikawa) Hatano 64 Manley Court Sacramento, CA 95820 On behalf of the 1989 Poston II Reunion Committee — Thank you all for attending the 47th Anniversary Poston II Reunion here in Monterey.

We also wish to express our sincere thanks to all those who helped us in hosting this reunion—either through actual help, photographs, articles, etc.

We hope that everyone had an enjoyable and memorable time reminiscing about camp life and renewing old acquaintances.

Hope to see and meet you all again for the 50th Golden Anniversary (1942-1992) to be hosted by Sacramento in 1992.

Sayonara . . .

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