

## Membership Application

Help us preserve our own history and the history of all generations of Japanese Americans. Membership donations (tax deductible) are needed to support the activities of the historical society. Membership is open to all. Won't you tell your friends and relatives about us, and get them to join?

### Membership:

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal, Member # _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$15                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$50    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular \$25                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing \$100 |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$35                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$500       |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Life, one-time payment \$1,000 |   |

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be made payable to NJAHS. Please return application to the National Japanese American Historical Society, 1855 Folsom Street, #161, San Francisco, CA 94103.

\* For proper recording, please remember to write in your member number. Your membership number is on the first line of your address label.

### NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1855 Folsom Street #161  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 431-5007

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NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# NJAHS FOCUS

VOLUME 6 No. 5

FOUNDED 1980 AS GO FOR BROKE, INC.

SEPTEMBER 1990

### ■ ANNUAL MEETING

The NJAHS annual meeting of members was held on July 14, 1990.

The NJAHS activities and programs during the past twelve months were reviewed, and long range plans for the organization presented.

A ByLaw amendment to replace the Honorary Board with an Advisory Council was adopted. The appointment to the council, the determination of the number of council members, term of office, duties and responsibilities were assigned to the board.

Fifteen members were elected to the board, of which three were new: Nikki Sawada Bridges, Ivy Makabe Down, and Rita Takahashi. Others were incumbents. They were elected to a two year term, and will join the other 16 board members.

There was a board meeting immediately following the annual meeting. There were three unexpired terms to be filled. Alice Nakahata was appointed by the board to fill one of these. The other two positions will be filled at the next meeting in September.

The board elected the NJAHS officers for the coming term: President, Clifford Uyeda; Vice President, Chizu Iiyama; Chief Financial Officer, Tom Kawaguchi; Secretary, Hiro Takusagawa.

The four elected officers, plus Anne Saito Howden, Stephanie Miyashiro, John Sadanaga and Tom Sakamoto were elected to serve on the executive committee (EXECOM). Three other members to the EXECOM will be selected at the next meeting.

An address by Professor James A. Hirabayashi, given at the annual meeting, is presented in this issue (p. 4-5).

■ ANNUAL PICNIC

The 5th annual NJAHS fundraiser barbeque picnic will be held on Sunday, September 2nd at the Shibata Japanese garden in Mt. Eden.

There will be something for everyone: display by the Northern California Japanese Swords Club, Issei senior photo essay, family name quilts, video on Japanese American women, plant/flower sale, games, raffle, door prizes, entertainment by George Yoshida band, an encore performance by The Happy Tappers (Nisei).

A complete steak luncheon will be served between 11:00 AM and 2:30 PM. Tickets to the event are \$25 per person. Children under 12 are free, with hot dog lunch provided. For ticket and information, call (415) 431-5007.

■ CAMP EXHIBIT

The Hewlett Foundation had funded the production of the NJAHS photo exhibit, "U.S. Detention Camps, 1942-1946."

Dr. Roger Heyns and Mrs. Marianne Pallotti, president and vice president respectively of the Hewlett Foundation, both stated that they were pleased with the quality, the depth and the scope of the subject treatment. The exhibit is now available as a traveling exhibit.

■ SAN JOSE JAPANTOWN

Japanese Americans in San Jose, 50 miles south of San Francisco, have been working to build a new cultural and commercial center in the heart of existing Japantown.

The San Jose city council voted unanimously (6/9/90) toward the acquisition and development of a six acre site by the Nihonmachi Corporation.

Tom Sakamoto, of the NJAHS board of directors, is the president of the San Jose Nihonmachi Corporation.

The Nihonmachi project will include a theater, department store, a hotel, conference center and spa, retail shops and senior housing.

■ ALASKAN ISSEI

We were delighted recently to have been contacted by Sylvia Kobayashi of Anchorage, Alaska. Sylvia is researching the little known Issei story in Alaska.

The adventurous Issei left an indelible mark on the development and the lore of Alaska.

NJAHS's primary interest is to be able to assist Sylvia in reaching her goal. Her work will contribute an important chapter to the Issei story in America.

■ NJAHS AND THE JANM

There is a certain amount of confusion concerning the NJAHS and the JANM (Japanese American National Museum) in Los Angeles.

We both deal with Japanese American ethnic history. Our interests are common, but the functions differ.

NJAHS is free from constructing and maintaining an expensive museum building. Our energies are focused on programs and in producing exhibits.

Historical societies perform a vital local function in researching and documenting the Japanese American history unique to each area.

The healthier and more productive the local historical societies can become, the JANM in Los Angeles will directly benefit from the exhibits produced and loaned to them.

One group cannot do it all. We need the Los Angeles museum, and the L.A. museum needs the historical societies throughout America to bring in exhibits to L.A.

The networking and the helping hands extended to each other will benefit us

all.

c.i.u

■ OPINION

Comment to statements made in the FOCUS are always welcomed.

Concerning a piece on "Japan or Nihon" in the July issue, a reader commented: "What was that all about? As a filler, jokes are standard. If a person or society wants to apply epithets, they'll find one (if that was the point)."

That was not the point. The point was - accepting an unpopular name just to please foreigners seems a strange sense of pride in one's country. In a recent survey "Nihon" was preferred over "Japan" by over 70 percent of the people of that land.

It makes good sense to strive toward refraining from the use of terms offensive to a group.

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 Editor: Clifford I. Uyeda

## Japanese American Culture and the NJAHS

What is Japanese American culture? It's what we think, what we do, and how we go about being Japanese Americans.

We are all Americans, but we are not all alike. Do you know any other Americans who mix gin with sake instead of vermouth, put in an *umeboshi* instead of an olive and call this Nikkei martini?

There is no doubt as to the existence of Nikkei culture. Cultural heritage notwithstanding, it is quite distinct from a Japanese life style.

Why do we need a NJAHS? Why aren't we just a part of the California Historical Society?

First of all, America is a nation of immigrants and we haven't merged into a single uniform culture and society. This is what is meant by diversity and pluralism in America.

Japanese Americans have been an active part of this country for over 100

years. There is a need to document the history of this ethnic group so that all members of our society will come to understand and appreciate the part played by Nikkei as citizens of the United States.

A couple of examples will illustrate the significance of perspectives. If you were to view Gilbert and Sullivan's interpretation of Japanese life in *The Mikado*, you would probably gain a better understanding of the English than you ever would of the Japanese.

Have you ever had an encounter with a visitor from Japan and ended with an uneasy feeling that the communication exchange was less than complete? The dilemma was with the ways in which people of different cultures perceive and conceive of life.

Have you ever gone to a Japanese movie and found the subtitles somewhat lacking, that they didn't quite capture the essence of the meaning? Perhaps the denotation of the word

*Excerpts below were taken from an address given at the annual meeting of NJAHS members (7/14/90). James A. Hirabayashi is professor of anthropology emeritus, former dean of the school of ethnic studies, and former dean of undergraduate studies at San Francisco State University.*

was there but the connotation wasn't.

Japanese Americans have to be involved in the interpretation of Nikkei culture. Accounts of a culture from an outsiders' perspective invariably reinterpret that experience.

The kimono, an article of clothing which has not changed in form is not used in the same way in Nikkei America. Here, it is tucked away in a cedar chest and taken out on special occasions. Kimono took on a new meaning in America. Here it is a symbol of identity, a reminder of our heritage.

This symbol of identity is a new idea which does not derive from Japanese culture nor from American culture. Japanese women don't wear the kimono as a symbol of identity.

It's not just objects like the kimono that changed. There are new patterns of organizations, new patterns of behavior. Nikkei institutions serve as good examples. The Buddhist church in Amer-

ica is a far cry from temple Buddhism in Japan.

The Issei freely adapted and innovated. This style of life which characterizes the Nikkei experience is the subject matter of the NJAHS.

Do we sit back and let Smithsonian tell our story from their perspectives? Are we going to let Hiroshima Museum and the Japanese tell our story from their perspectives?

If we are to truly understand the Japanese Americans, we must begin by examining the Nikkei experience from our own perspective.

We are self-conscious, active participants in the process of evolving our own culture. We are the creators of our own identities.

So let's get on with it and let everyone know who we are as we see it.

James A. Hirabayashi

■ MIS ANNIVERSARY

Under Tom Sakamoto's chairmanship the MIS committee is meeting frequently and regularly to plan for the 50th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS).

The MISLS was founded at the Presidio of San Francisco on November 1, 1941.

A committee is also working on the commemorative booklet for the occasion. The purpose of the booklet will be to make it a valuable resource material on the MIS role in the Pacific War.

The MIS story is one of the least known chapter of WWII. For nearly half a century the government's efforts to hide facts from potential enemies also hid the MIS story from the American public.

■ VETERANS AFFAIRS

Tom Kawaguchi, director of the NJAHS's veterans affairs division, is seeking a person to succeed him.

Any one interested in the position, or if any NJAHS member can suggest names, please contact Tom Kawaguchi at the NJAHS office.

■ VETS REUNION

Over 1700 AJA veterans, wives and friends attended the reunion at Kona, Hawaii, June 27- July 1, 1990.

The welcome and farewell banquets were held at the huge outdoor field at the Kona Surf hotel. Tables were laden with assortment of delicacies.

MC Nelson K. Doi, former Lt. Governor of Hawaii, introduced various speakers including Senator Daniel K. Inouye. There were presentation of plaques from JACL/LEC to various Hawaii veterans organizations for their war-time services which played a significant role in the successful redress campaign.

A Sunday memorial service at the Kona Surf convention center concluded the reunion.

■ DACHAU FILM

NJAHS is working closely with Katriel Schory, producer of "Yankee Samurai," on the liberation of Dachau film.

The 522nd Field Artillery Battalion chapter in Oahu, the Go For Broke National Veterans Association, and Judge Daniel Valk of Brooklyn, NY, who has been providing input and contacts from the Jewish community, are all intimately involved.

■ JAPANESE FAMILY NAMES

Japanese Americans are constantly surprised at the "unusual" Japanese names they encounter. It is no wonder. There are more than 100,000 Japanese family names in use.

China with its population six times greater than Japan has only 300 names. Korea has about 500.

One of the reasons for so many Japanese family names was the practice of taking surnames from: 1) place names, 2) occupations and 3) official positions.

Another reason was the early practice of mandatory change in family names except that of the eldest son. It was not until the early Tokugawa period (ca 1116) that family names came to be restricted to the forefathers' surnames.

Until the Meiji restoration (1868) only the military caste was permitted to have a family name.

Thus, tens of thousands of new names were created for the common people during the early Meiji era.

The most common Japanese surnames are: Sato, Suzuki, Takahashi, Ito and Tanaka in that order.

■ FINANCIAL REPORT, FY 1989-90

Income	\$143,532.54
Major items:	
Membership	\$71,687
Grants	22,500
Fundraising	16,745
Donations	22,506
Interests	4,978

Expense	\$168,081.39
Major items:	
Salaries	\$46,795
Rent	24,974
Printing	4,067
Office exp.	5,127
Women's exhibit	48,527
Camp exhibit	4,374
Calendar	6,392
Postage	5,309

(\$24,548.55) is accounted for by grant incomes received prior to 7/1/90, and payments made for exhibits (women's and camp) during FY 1989-90.

Exhibit costs to NJAHS:  
 Japanese American Women \$50,000  
 Detention Camps 25,000