

HISTORY OF  
JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

Valley Civic League Chapter Questionnaire #1

I - ORGANIZATION

1. Date organized 9 15 1930  
Month Day Year

2. Number of charter members 13.

List below the names of charter members:

Frederick S. Okimoto	Mineral M. Okura	Thomas Iseri
Toshio Naito	Minoru Terada	
Henry I. Arai	Kiyoshi John Arima	
Jiggs J. Naito	George Yasumura	
Kimio Hirose	James Yasumura	
Charles Nagata	James S. Okimoto	

3. Give an account of the organization of your chapter, including the cause or incentive for the formation (was the need of a JACL chapter the gradual outgrowth of circumstances, or did a specific incident provide the impetus); the leaders actually instrumental in organizing your chapter and any interesting facts regarding their background; what, if any, aid was received from the parent generation; and any assistance or encouragement received from JACL bodies in your vicinity with respect to your organization or formation. Please include any other matters which pertain to the formation of your chapter that may be of interest or historical value.

Meeting at Thomas, Washington on the 15th day of September 1930, a group of American citizens of Japanese ancestry met with the purpose of forming what is now known as the Valley Civic League. It was with the following aims in view that the league was formed: "to encourage friendly intercourse, promote intellectual and cultural advancement, and by organized effort, to ameliorate themselves and their posterity to the highest standard of citizenship".

Some of those leaders instrumental in the formation of this chapter were: Mr. H. K. Fukuhara, Minoru Terada, Thomas Iseri, James Y. Sakamoto (who gave a brief talk on the object of the league) and George Ishihara, who explained the Constitution of the Seattle Progressive Citizens League. The league was attributed to having been an outgrowth of the JACL convention held in Seattle in 1930.

The inaugural banquet was held in the Auburn Chamber of Commerce rooms on Saturday, October 4, 1930, with more than one hundred and fifty in attendance with Mayor McKee giving the opening address. Fifteen prominent American business men were honored guests, besides the parents and several prominent Japanese of Seattle, Washington

4. (In most cases, this question will probably apply to the rural districts.)

Do the members of your chapter or their parents more or less follow similar occupations? yes . /

If so, please state the occupation farming .

Did the problems of the stated occupation have some bearing on the cause for formation of your chapter? No . / If so, just how did these problems provoke the formation of your chapter?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have these problems continued to affect the policy or activities of your chapter? \_\_\_\_\_ . If so, how? Farming as a problem effecting the nisei has often arisen, but the league itself has not materially aided its members, as the parent generation still hold control over their young.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## II- DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

1. Year by year, list the following information:

19 30 (1st year of existence)

- a. Names of President and his cabinet, briefly outlining occupation and background of President.
- b. Notable activities or accomplishments during the administration and how such activities aided in the furtherance of JAACL aims.
- c. Number of total membership.

19 \_\_\_\_ (2nd year of existence)

- a. b. c. - as above.

Follow this outline from the time of your chapter organization up to the present year, listing the information for 1939 for the first six months. Please utilize the space below and on the following page, if necessary.

*See attached sheet*

## II- DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

1930 -- President: John Arima, occupation farming. Graduate of  
1931 -- University of Washington.

Vice-President: Mary Maeda, and Fumi Yamanaka

Secretary: Goerge Yasumura

Treasurer: Fred Okimoto

As the year was almost gone, little besides the formation of the league was accomplished. At this time no record of the attendance was kept, but upon a survey of the Kent, Auburn, O'Brien, Algona districts, the membership possibilities were ranged around seventy-five. Nothing notable was accomplished in 1931 outside of minor things of interest to the club itself.

1932 -- President: George Yasumura, occupation farming, and produce shipper.

Vice-President: Henry Arai (Kent) Min Terada (Thomas)  
James Yasumura (Auburn)

Secretary: Mineral Okura

Treasurer: John Arima

Addition made to Article V of the Constitution, in that one vice-president from each district should be elected.

Northwest District Council formed.

V. C. L. received a letter from the JACL chapter of Los Angeles submitting to the various chapters for consideration of bills--(Immigration Act and Laws) which directly effect the Japanese race, and which were being introduced in the 72nd Congress at that time. V. C. L. decided upon sending a telegram to Senator Bingham of Connecticut, Representative Dyer of Missouri, and Houston of Hawaii.

Amendment to Article V to read as follows: election of officers to be held in the third week in January.

Min Terada and Min Okura were chosen to be the official delegates to the National convention in Los Angeles.

Approximate members at that time were: 26.

1933 -- President: Minoru Terada, occupation farming and buyer for packing shed.

Vice-President: Tom Hiranaka (Kent) KoKo Tsujikawa (Thomas)  
Frank Natsuhara (Auburn)

Secretary: Thomas Iseri

Treasurer: George Yasumura

Northwest Board Delegate: John Arima

Upon hearing a talk given by James Sakamoto, a telegram was sent to Washington D. C. favoring the Dickstein Bill without the Kramer insertion.

II - DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

1933 (continued)

Charles Nakata was the VCL representative in the oratorical contest of the N. W. District Convention.

Approximate members at that time were: 30.

1934 -- President: Thomas Iseri, occupation, produce business.

Vice President: Henry Tsubota (Kent) Mike Iseri, Toshio Naito, (Thomas) Tom Mayeda (Auburn)

Secretary: Koko Tsujikawa

Treasurer: Frank Natsuhara

Northwest Board Delegate: Min Terada

Thomas Iseri and Min Terada were elected as official delegates to the National Convention in San Francisco.

VCL secured two subscriptions to the Pacific Citizen in compliance with the resolution as set forth at the Nat'l JACL Convention.

The chapter quota of twenty-five dollars set by the Nat'l JACL was made.

1935 -- President: Thomas Iseri, occupation, produce business.

Vice President: George Yasumura (Auburn) John Arima (Thomas) James Matsuoka (Kent)

Rec. Secretary: Henry Tsubota

Corr. Secretary: Katherine Okimoto

Treasurer: Frank Natsuhara

N. W. Board Delegate: Min Terada

Japanese movie held in March.

Oratorical cup won by Helen Kojo.

Pre Convention skating party held at Playland in Seattle.

Convention held in Auburn and Kent. Dance at Redondo Beach.

Realized a profit of over \$300.00.

A speech given by Tomatsu Murayama was sponsored by the VCL. VCL to donate \$25.00 to the Nat'l Convention.fund.

Miss Kazuko Tajitsu's violin concert held in Auburn at the high school was sponsored by the league.

1936 -- President: Thomas Iseri, occupation, produce business.

Vice President: Walter Tatsumi (Auburn) Min Terada (Thomas) James Matsuoka (Kent)

Rec. Secretary: Eiko Tsujikawa

II - DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

1936 (continued)

Corr. Secretary: Katherine Okimoto

Treasurer: Frank Natsuhara

N. W. Board Delegate: Minoru Okura

National Council to be formed including N. W. and South to be kept up during the year.

Joint meeting held with the Puyallup JACL.

The president and the board delegate were made the official delegates to the Nat'l convention.

A new treasurer was elected (Tomio Itabashi)

VCL to raise \$1,000.00 for the Nat'l Endowment Fund.

Meeting with parent generation and banquet to discuss means of raising funds for a club house to be built or rented.

1937 -- President: George Yasumura, occupation, farming.

Vice President: Walt Tatsumi (Auburn) Charles Toshi (Kent)  
Min Terada (Thomas)

Rec. Secretary: Eiko Tsujikawa

Corr. Secretary: Lois Namba

Treasurer: Tomio Itabashi

N. W. Board Delegate: Thomas Iseri

Installation banquet for the new officers held the 30th of January. Donated ten dollars to the Red Cross relief.

Recreational nights instituted.

Motion passed to have pictures of the present and past officers taken and framed.

Shibai held in March.

Second Generation Development Plan brought up.

Commission on Research: Walt Tatsumi and Min Tsubota

" " Records: William Maebori and Ruth Watanabe

" " Progress: Mike Iseri and Chas. Toshi

Oratorical held June 11, chairman, Mas Yamashita

Ethel Maebori elected to fill vacancy left by recording secretary.

Five dollars contributed to Yakima chapter for program on confab.

Picnic held at Star Lake.

Banner made to be presented at the convention in Yakima.

Chapter received a charter of the proposed constitution incorporated in the state of California.

Citizens Welfare committee formed to take care of problems arising within the second generation group. Mike Iseri appointed chairman.

James Sakamoto spoke on the purpose of the Second Generation Development Program.

II - DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

1938 -- President: Min Okura

Vice President: Charles Toshi (Kent) George Yasamura (Auburn)  
Mike Iseri (Thomas)

Corr. Secretary: Taeko Yasamura

Rec. Secretary: Ethel Maebori

Treasurer: Tomio Itabashi

N. W. Board Delegate: Thomas Iseri

Patrolmen given dinner for aiding the first and second generation in obtaining their driving licenses.

Letter of thanks received from the V. F. W. for their support at the President's Ball held in Auburn.

Joint picnic held in August with Puyallup and Tacoma.

JACL constitution read and adopted.

Delegates to the Nat'l convention were: Thos. Iseri, Min Okura.

Report given by Thos. Iseri on the Nat'l convention held in Los Angeles.

1939 -- President: Charles Toshi

Vice President: Tom Hiranaka (Kent) George Yasamura (Auburn)  
George Terada (Thomas)

Corr. Secretary: Shimojima twins

Rec. Secretary: Frances Itabashi

Treasurer: Tomio Itabashi

N. W. Board Delegate: Thomas Iseri

Willie Maebori appointed publicity chairman.

Mrs. Y. George Yasamura appointed Social Welfare chairman.

James Matsuoka appointed Vocation chairman.

Kee Murakami appointed as chairman for the oratorical.

Installation banquet held with Tamotsu Murayama as guest speaker.

President appointed the following as troupe committeemen of the

Taylor Boy Scout Troupe : R. H. Fergin, Thos. Iseri, Frank Jensen, George Terada, Geo. Yasamura, Tomio Itabashi, Chas. Toshi, and Gordon Hirabayashi.

Women's Committee formed with Mrs. George Yasamura as chairman.

Tadashi Okura chairman of dance held at Golden's North Lake held for new members.

Joint picnic to be held at Redondo Beach and dance at the Spanish Castle. Held jointly by Puyallup, Tacoma, and White River Valley chapter.