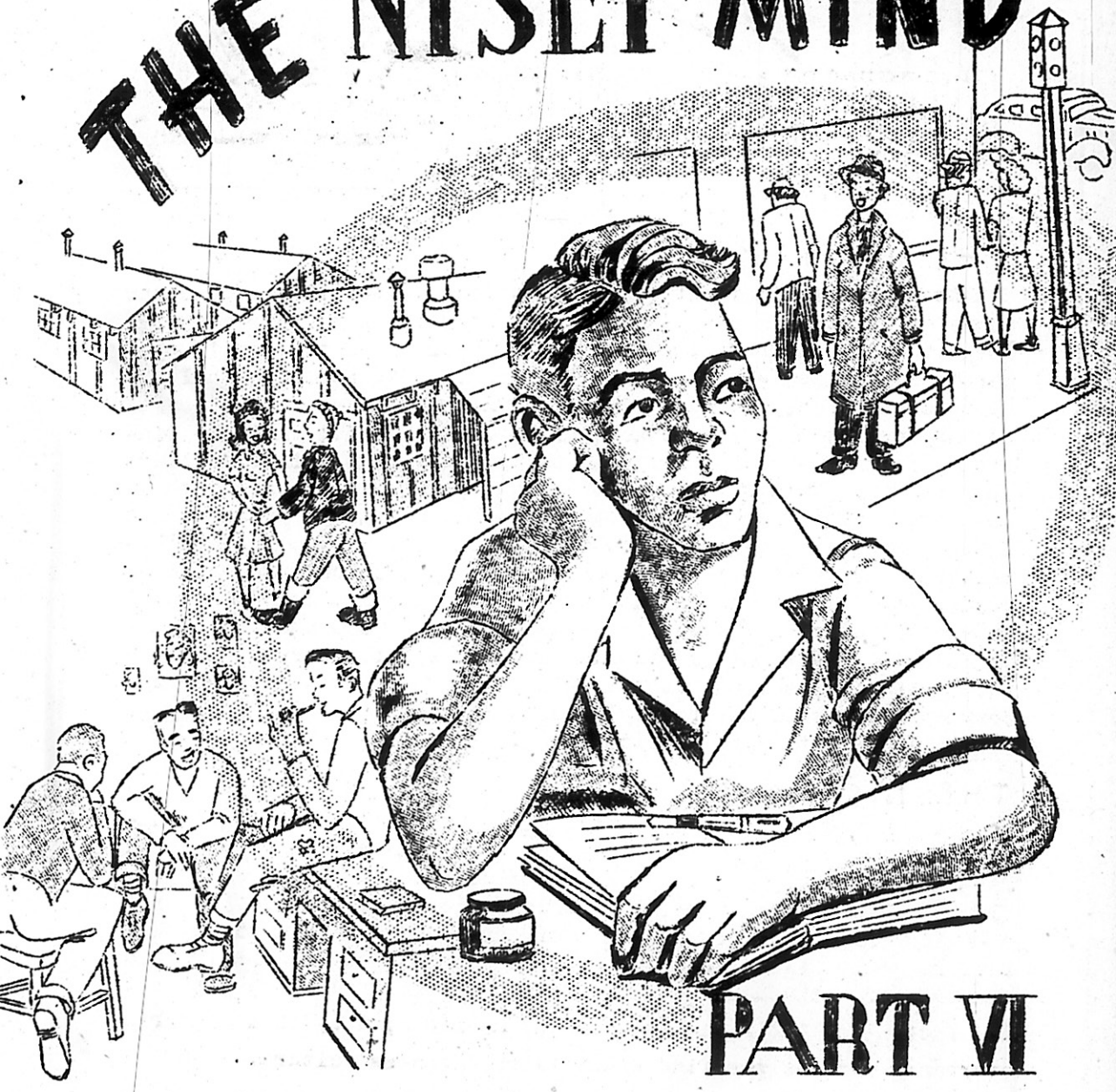
# THE NISEI MIND



## PART VI


## THE ISSEI

The Japanese immigration to the United States is a recent one compared to other racial and national migrations to this country. The original settlers still make up a majority of the adult population of Japanese-Americans. Their youth, the period of cultural determination, was spent in Japan. Although they rather quickly adjusted themselves economically, became useful and law-abiding members of society, they did not greatly change their cultural pattern. They retained their language, their religion, their manners, and other parts of their social heritage. This is not unlike other immigrant groups but became even more ingrown because of certain other factors. The Japanese culture was more divergent from the predominating Western culture, and then legal and social discrimination on the West coast caused them to cluster together for mutual aid and for social intercourse. Evacuation into relocation centers has further narrowed the American contacts for these older people and will add to the difficulty of cultural adaptation to American life.

## THE NISEI

The younger generation, the nisei, is a product of two cultures: their home background and their American environment. For the great majority, the American culture is the stronger influence. Their education, their occupational contacts, their recreation all incline in that direction. As they mature, they realize that their chances for happiness and success in this country are increased by the extent of their adjustment to it. In fact, in their anxiety to be American, they tend to throw overboard some of the fine elements of Japanese culture.

The cultural difference between generations naturally creates some dissension, although the Japanese quality of parental loyalty which has been instilled by home training prevents the gap from becoming too wide. Life in a relocation camp has been especially hard on the nisei from a cultural standpoint. It has sharpened some of the differences and made the conflict more overt. Then too, they have been thrown into intense contact with more Japanese background when most of them were struggling to free themselves from it. Also they had to give up the occupations and contacts that were helping them to a more complete Americanization. What is even harder to overcome is the brand, "Japanese", which has been put on them by the mass evacuation and the war psychosis when they rightly considered themselves Americans. It has been an important factor in turning the faces of some away from America; it has disheartened others; but to the great majority, after temporary discouragement, it has been a challenge to prove their real Americanism.

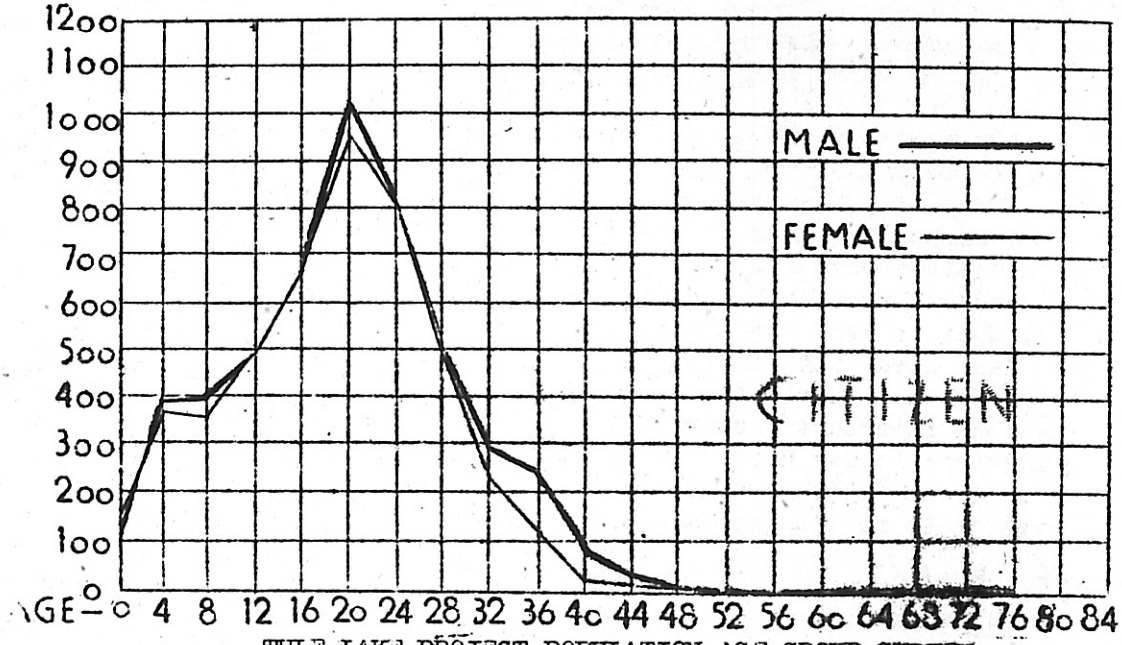
## THE KIBEI

The kibei, American born Japanese who have returned to Japan for education, present a special cultural problem. However, their numbers are relatively small. Depending upon the number of years of foreign study, they find their difficulties of adjustment to American culture increased, and during the war they are especially apt to be confused. They are American citizens and yet may differ more culturally from the nisei than the nisei do from Caucasian Americans. Due to their dual cultural training, they have the opportunity to make an outstanding contribution to the Japanese in America and to all Americans by making possible to a greater extent the fusion of the cultures.

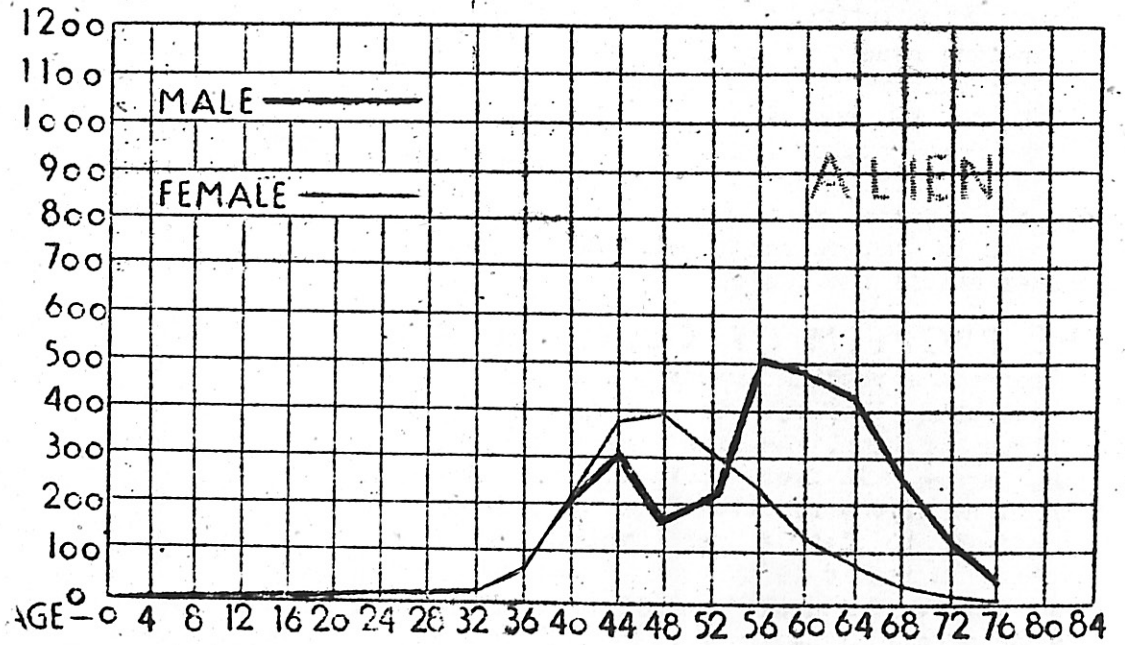
## THE PROBLEM OF CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

From the foregoing summary, it can be seen that this question of cultural conflict is not just a Japanese problem; it is an American problem. America has faced similar situations many times before. In fact, there is no American culture except as a rich blend of contribution from many lands and peoples. We cannot afford to let a war involving American ideals distort our thinking in regard to the very basis upon which this country has been built. Cultural assimilation of the Japanese-Americans is the job of all of us.

--Arthur Ramey




TULE LAKE PROJECT POPULATION AGE-GROUP SURVEY



# OUR FOREIGN PARENTS

There are two terms in Japanese that are used to distinguish the American-born from the Japan-born Japanese in America. We who were born and reared in this country are called nisei, meaning second generation. Though we may not differ appreciably in our outward appearance, our attitude toward many things is as different as are black and white. Our parents, the issei, trained from birth in their life at home, school, and work, in the age old-customs of Japan, frequently cannot understand the nisei who were born and raised in America much as are other boys and girls in this country.

The most noticeable difference is in our speech, for the languages of Japan and America are so dissimilar that fluency in both tongues is quite uncommon; and because language is of utmost importance in the transmission of ideas, the inability to use a common language is perhaps the most formidable cultural barrier between the issei and nisei. We try to correct the English diction and grammar of our parents, but with very poor results. Our parents in turn often send us to Japanese language schools hoping that the schools might succeed in giving us fluency in their language, but most of us, despite several years of schooling, seldom learn to use Japanese with facility. People often remark in their conversations, "I can't find words to express what I feel and think," and this is literally the case between issei and nisei in their everyday life! The army intelligence school, in trying to find instructors among the nisei, learned to their surprise that few if any of them could read or write the Japanese language.

The barriers exist not only in language but in many other customs, and they are only slowly removed. Twenty years ago, the issei considered the American form of ballroom dancing a most undesirable form of recreation. "Imagine, a young man's arm encircled about your daughter's waist, and in public too!" Such comments were frequently heard among parents. But occasionally some of the more daring young nisei would sponsor a dance, perhaps once on Fourth of July and again on New Year's Eve, and these events would be well attended by dance-loving boys and girls who

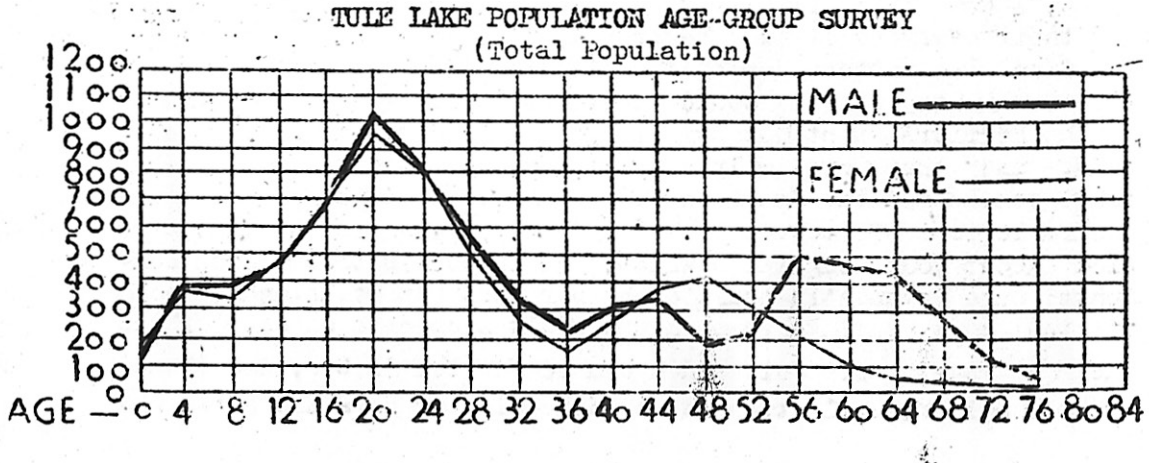
would always arrive "stag", and return home "stag". However, after every "affair" the local Japanese papers would strongly reprimand the wild nisei in their editorials.

Within ten years we saw the sons and daughters of these same editors on the dance floor; another two years and we saw their parents on the floor.

## "GO-BETWEEN"

Can't you imagine, then, the issei parents' dismay at requests from young people for simple weddings without expensive wedding gowns, elaborate banquets, and "go-betweens". Among Japanese these things are considered indispensable to the well conducted wedding, and especially does this attitude hold with regard to the "go-between".

In Japan when a young lady reaches the ripe age of say eighteen without an offer of marriage, or a son is discovered to have grown as old as twenty-three without having found a suitable mate, the worried parents call in their closest friend and asks him to do something about the situation. Does he know of some young lady or youth from the same prefecture as themselves (and this is quite important), with a similar educational background, without any known hereditary illnesses? Of course, the girl should know how to cook and sew, know her manners, and show evidence of making a good mother; the young man should be respectable, have at least enough for a dowry, and preferably be a little bright.



So with all these instructions which he already knows from past experience, the go-between inquires about until he meets another person on the same mission. Only for the opposite sex. Now they compare notes, and if everything seems all right, the parents are told the good news. A meeting is arranged for the young couple where the prospective bride and groom meet for the first time, or it should better be said that they are present in the same room for the first time, for the blushing young lady never raises her head and the bashful young man looks at everything but the object upon whom he is to pass approval. The well-bred children usually agree to marry the choice of their parents and go-between, and strange as it may seem, such marriages often prove more lasting thanour "love at first sight" type of union.

## NISEI BREAK AWAY

A few nisei first broke away from this old custom. Now we hear of courthouse marriages and even of elopements, and without may eye-brow raising or fainting parents.

But if there are these cultural conflicts, these barriers to mutual understanding, we also come to realize that our parents are just as human as anyone else, and that we can understand them as human beings. If our parents show parental concern over our welfare, we can understand that the impulse towards concern for us is not different from the parental impulse anywhere else. If they show us kindness in little deeds from day to day, we can see that kindness is not substantially different from kindness anywhere else. It is on this common ground that cultural conflicts are compromised and gradually disappear.

## FOR A HIGHER CULTURE

Because the average of issei is not about 50 to 55 years, it will not be long before the issei generation disappears. The cultural confilcts may then no longer exist, but the significant things of life which the issei convey to us will remain. If there are things which we may think strange or wrong in Japanese culture, there is also much that it has to offer in its calm and quiet way. It would be well for us nisei if we might inherit their love of beauty in simple things and learn their patience. If we should combine and temper these virtues with those of our American background, I feel that a higher culture would evolve.

--Nobu Naito

# "The Heart and Mind"

## ARE NISEI LOYAL TO U.S.?

Pick at random any cross-section of 110,000 people in the United States. You will find men, women, children of varying kinds and occupations, some aliens, most citizens, the greatest majority loyal, some luke-warm, a few actively disloyal. Those of Japanese ancestry in the United States are such a group. No one doubts some of them may be passively or actively pro-Japanese. The Justice Department has interned 1,974 such suspected individuals for the duration, along with 1,448 Germans and 210 Italians.

But for the groups as a whole, "the loyalty of the overwhelming majority...has not been seriously questioned by informed persons." So states the Director of the Department of Justice's Alien Enemy Control Unit. The Congressional Committee investigating National Defense Migration, headed by Representative John Tolan, after hearing all sides, corroborates this: "We cannot doubt, and everyone is agreed, that the majority of Japanese citizens and aliens are loyal to this country." The War Relocation Authority's former director, Milton S. Eisenhower, brother of the United Nations' commander in North Africa, reports:

> "I have visited with many people, some of them technical experts in whom I have confidence. I would say that from 80 to 85 per cent of the nisei, who are American-born citizens of Japanese descent and who have never been out of the United States, are loyal to the United States." (June 15, 1942)

Many persons, such as race-baiting Congressmen Martin Dies, Leland Ford and John Rankin, or sincere citizens misled by racial propaganda, have questioned the loyalty of the Americans of Japanese descent. But against their ill-informed opinion is the word of President Roosevelt; Secretary of War Stimson; the War Relocation Authority's present director, Dillion S. Myer; James C. Baker, Bishop of the Methodist Church for the California Area;

Lieutenant General Delos C. Emmons, commanding general, Hawaiian Department, U.S. Army; the editors of Time; Ray Lyman Wilbur, chancellor of Stanford University; W. C. ("Tom") Sawyer, former national vice-commander of the American Legion; August Vollmer, noted criminologist and professor of police administration at the Universities of Chicago and California; Monroe E. Deutsch, vice-president and provost at University of California; John Dewey, philosopher; Professor Reinhold Niebuhr of Union Theological Seminary; Chester Rowell, distinguished San Francisco newspaperman; Frederick J. Koster, chairman, San Francisco Chapter of the Red Cross. All these and many more testify to the loyalty of the typical American-Japanese.

A United Press dispatch of April 23, 1943 reports that "according to WRA tabulations, 95 per cent of the total Japanese-American population is loyal to this country. A number are working in war industries, including two in factories making bomb sights and others in airplane plants. Thousands of American-Japanese are serving in the armed forces; more thousands are now being recruited. The commander of a battalion of these soldiers reports:

> "I've never had more whole-hearted, serious-minded co-operation from any troops."

The War Department says this is typical, and a War Department statement adds: Americans of Japanese blood...are wanted because the government and the army are convinced of their loyalty." One hundred seventy-five are already on special missions in the South Pacific, mainly as interpreters. Others are fighting in that area, in infantry companies in North Africa, or behind the guns of bombing planes. Three have been decorated. (These figures are as April 22, 1943.)

# EFFECT OF EVACUATION ON NISEI

Just how loyal are the nisei, is, I suspect, an interrogation which has long been in your minds. Due to the unpardonable deeds committed by a few of the nisei the good reputation of the nisei has been somewhat stigmatized. Thus, it is quite easy to discern why the integrity and the faithfulness of the nisei as a whole have been questioned.

Just what per cent of the nisei are loyal and what per cent

are disloyal is a question which I can not accurately answer. However, I am fully convinced that the vast majority of the nisei are staunch Americans, steadfastly and unmistakably loyal to this nation which has given them and their parents so much. You may inquire--what about the other nisei--those who are disloyal? I would answer that question in this way. It is, undeniably, true that as the result of this war a great change does exist in the hearts of a number of nisei. That a number of nisei have lost faith in America is, also, true. It would be wrong to assume, however, that these nisei became disloyal because they were in sympathy with the Japanese scheme of world conquest; or that these nisei have given their allegiance to the land of their ancestors instead of to the country of their birth. It would be folly for me to assume that hidden in the deep recesses of the hearts of those who have lost faith in democracy were seeds of Anti-Americanism that needed only the element of war for the seeds to blossom. No, the war was not the stimulus which prompted many of the nisei to lose their faith, if not permanently, at least, temporarily in the goodness of American way of living, and in democracy. No, the war was not responsible for the change of hearts, for the loss of faith and love of country. No, the stimulus was the evacuation.

It was the evacuation which unjustly herded the nisei into camps without trial and without justice that prompted many to question whether this sort of thing was actually democracy in action. It was the strange likeness to the Nazi technique that made many wonder whither goeth democracy. The evacuation was a cruel, malevolent thing, utterly unnecessary. In its wake of economic ruin, the evacuation committed the very dastardly crime of changing many loyal, good Americans into apathetic, bitter, questionable Americans. It would be well to remember that the thing which caused many to become disloyal was not the innate predilection for Nipponism, for there is no such predilection existing among the nisei. The cause was the evacuation.

I, honestly, believe that these wayward children of America can be brought back to the fold again. I feel that you can do much in the restoration of the faith of those, THE DISILLUSIONED, by redeeming that which was lost through the evacuation. It can be done through kindness, good-will, absence of racial discrimination, and the perfecting of democracy to see the real democracy practiced.

--Frank Hijikata

# A NISEI DIARY

This is a year's retrospect of my life in this relocation center. It may be a narration common to typical nisei-off-the-street; a brief sketch of how he reacted to the incredible new environment on the barren, dust-caked enclosure with thousands of slant-eyed Americans like himself.

I was born in Sacramento, California 23 years ago. My father is a Japanese immigrant who worked in the fruit orchards as a farm laborer. I was sent to school with Chinese kids, Negro kids, Portuguese kids, blonde kids and kids of all colors and nationalities. As I grew older I became conscious of my race and my social contact became more and more confined with people of my own race.

My father scraped enough money to send me to University of California. There, my future outlook was a dilemma. I changed my course frequently to fit the narrow pattern of nisei's economic status.

Evacuation came as a relief to my post-graduate worries, but its effect was a death-blow to any aspiration I may have had. I'm looking ahead to resettlement with a mixed feeling of hope and doubt.

## NOV. 25, 1941 MIDNIGHT COFFEE

It was my turn to cook tonight. We're having hamburger almost every other night and the guys in the dorm are starting to kick. Feeding five hungry college boys is not an easy task. They eat like bears and fuss like mules.

Yesterday Mrs. Miller paid me a dollar for cleaning her basement, and I figured on going to Campus Theater to see a picture, but Sumio's brother, Albert, came up from Sacramento to visit us for the weekend. We made some coffee and "bull sessioned" till one. Al said he was still working in the country pruning grapes. It's a pity, a brilliant graduate in engineering like him couldn't get a decent job simply because he is a "Jap".

I went to bed wondering what I was doing in college. Maybe it was because I didn't have anything to do after high school. But someone said college was a sound investment.


## DEC. 3, 1942 "HASHING"

University's Bureau of Occupation called me up and asked me if I wanted to "hash" at a Phi Gamma banquet party tonight. The fraternity was inviting a neighboring sorority over. They were willing to pay me 50 cents an hour plus dinner and carfare. I needed the money badly, so I took the job. Why is my father so late with my monthly allowances? (Oh well, I can't ask too much of

him. I feel like a parasite living off the money he sweated on the asparagus field.)

Gad, the banquet was swank! The coeds came with their boy friends in breath-taking evening gowns, perfuming the whole place. We served the entree in a dimly lighted dining hall and they ate luxuriously.

After the dinner, they retired to the living room where they smoked, sang and danced to sentimental recordings. Few couples lingered in the garden. I dropped in intermittently to serve drinks. The girls were tall, slim and extremely beautiful. In the kitchen, plenty of untouched and perfectly good foods were dumped into the garbage and thrown away. I took a piece of pie and some slices of roast beefhome to the gang.

Gee, I wish I was born a "hakujin" and able to live in a fraternity.

## DEC. 6, 1941 - MID-TERM CRISIS.

Mid-term is coming next week. I'm cramming like heck and tonight I sat up late reviewing my notes. I shouldn't have left everything up to the last minute. I'll probably flunk my poly sci.

The student club is putting on a dance a week following the mid-term, but where in the heck can I get a date? Ratio of nisei coeds to men is almost 5 to 1 on the campus, and even the homeliest girl can be choosey as to whom she goes out with. I like to ask Yuri but most likely every Tom, Dick and Harry have asked her. She's plenty good-looking. I saw her this afternoon at the Bancroft book store. She stopped, smiled and said,"hello". I felt good all day.

## DEC. 7, 1941 SUNDAY

I had intended to go to the library and study for the mid-term. While preparing an early lunch of rice and sausages, Hiro tore into the kitchen and unceremoniously announced that Japanese planes were bombing Honolulu.

"What are you trying to do, scare us?" asked Kiyoshi Mano who munched his sandwich complacently.

"Aw forget it," said Jesse, "radio must have been misinformed. It could have been some sort of target practice. You've heard of the army dropping bombs into volcanos."

Radio literally kept on humming all afternoon on the latest

report from Hawaii.

I stayed home all day unable to study, to think clearly as to what happened. My mind is in a state of total confusion. What about my future plans? What's to become of us?

## JAN. 3, 1941 THE LABOR CAMP

Events have been moving so rapidly, my mind is hopelessly muddled. It was hard to tear myself away from the sheltered cloister of Berkeley hills when the fall semester ended. But I had to join my father here in a labor camp on the San Joaquin river delta to learn enough money at least for my tuition. With circumstance as it is, I don't know whether I should go back to school. The future is horribly blacked out and I cannot find my perspective.

The celery packing shed where we commute everyday is too damp to suit me and I have caught a cold which I haven't been able to rid for a week. I feel miserable physically as well as mentally.

We have been at war with Japan for a whole month now and a news commentator over the radio is excitedly reporting the accounts of the swift drive of the Japanese war machines down the Philippine archipelago. Also listening intently to the radio of the vicious onslaught of their native country are some Filipino laborers lying in their individual bunks under the same roof. They are quiet but cursing under their breath.

The labor crew here consists equally of Japanese and Filipinos, and my cousin's wife is doing the cooking. There have been no outburst of physical or verbal violence although a few Japanese residents in nearby Stockton were slain by hysteria intoxicated Filipinos. Japanese store windows were smashed after dark. I don't think there will be any trouble here 'cause the Japanese and the Filipino foremen have made an understanding to discourage any discussion of the war.

The other night, a Filipino, whom I have worked with before, took me into Stockton and treated me to a movie at Fox California. After a supper of chow mein, we returned to camp. We refrained from any serious conversation.

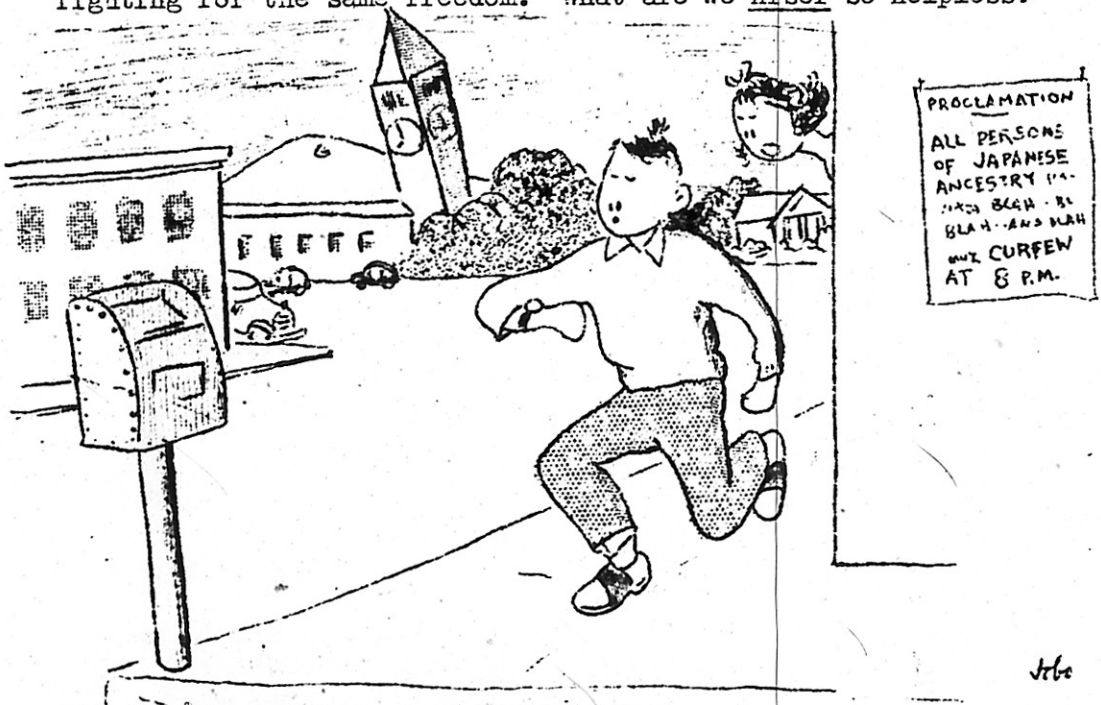
Letters-to-the-Editors in many of the coast newspapers are advocating that all Japanese in this country should be "sterilized" or "thrown into the sea." These intolerant outbursts make me wonder if the American people are losing their sense of fair-play and human decency.

## MAR. 5, 1942 "I TOLD YOU SO"

"I told you so! Old man Kawashima leered at me, baring his ugly yellow teeth. The weaseled old issei wiped his nose with his hand and brushed it on his only khaki trousers which he wore invariably even in town.

"You nisei are a weak spineless bunch," he chided. "You boast about your citizenship, your rights and loyalty but look what happens. The government is going to throw you into internment camps with the rest of us like sheep and cattles, and you still talk about faith in American democracy. Why do you keep on kidding yourself?"

I wanted to tell the old fossil to go lay a brick egg, but I sulked away with my soul half-crying, half-weeping because I wanted so much to keep faith. I see no logic in having to surrender my freedom in a country which I sincerely believe to be fighting for the same freedom. What are we nisei so helpless?




## MAR. 30, 1942 CURFEW

This curfew business is terrible. I can't go to shows. I can't go to dances. I can't go anywhere, not even to next door

to play bridge.

To top this, air raid practice is going on almost every night. I've draped all the windows and am studying by the feeble light of candles. Curfew prevents me from going to the library at night.

## APR. 3, 1942 FOR A BETTER WORLD

The weary chimes of the Campanile has bonged out its final notes and the Berkeley hills are quiet and dark beneath a starless sky. I am sitting at my desk trying to grasp the confusion that seethes in my mind like a nightmare...

What has the future in store for me? What is camp life going to be like?

The letter I wrote to The Daily Californian, to my surprise, came out in bold print with a box. It was a little note I wrote during lunch hour. Mrs. Snook (whom I befriended and remained a staunch friend during my college years) said that all the Caucasian employees of the University were touched when they read it. It moved her especially because she knew me personally. There were tears in her eyes. I didn't think a little note like that would have that much effect. I wrote:

"Fellow Californians: It is only a matter of weeks, if not days, that we will be asked to leave our state, our home, our school.

"It's difficult to describe the affection that wells within us as the thought of leaving the University surges upon us. We don't want to leave it. Yet, we know that in war-time, sacrifices will have to be made of everyone...saerifices of things we love dearly.

"Tolerance, justice and fair-play are not mere words. We have felt their warmness here on the campus even after they have been blinded by hatred and distrust elsewhere. We are firm in the conviction that democracy is not dead.

"We know that a better world, a better understanding among people will be recreated from the present confusion by such people as we met on the campus.

"In the years to come, we want to come back and be able to say with pride: "This is California, our school, our home!"

## MAY 16, 1942 WALERGA

Walerga Assembly Center is erected on a cow pasture, a stone throw from the outskirts of the city of Sacramento. At night, I

love to watch the city lights illuminate the sky pale yellow.

Although camp facilities are crude, we are provided with only the barest essentials, but the place is better than I expected it would be. The treatment is humane and I believe the WCCA men are trying to make us as comfortable as possible. I hate to be in their shoes.

I'm maybe so impressed because I'm accustomed to living in filthy camps while working in the fruit orchards. But it sickens me inside to watch women and children standing in line at the mess halls with the wind and the dust blowing in their faces.

The kids are having a jitterbug session next door and the entire barrack is vibrating with the noise.

I'm having lots of fun running the camp's mimeographed news sheet, "Walerga Wasp", with the assistance of Toko Fujii and Mary Hosokawa. Toko is covering sports and Mary does all the typing on my "portable".

## JUNE 21, 1942 MOVING AGAIN

I've been here in Walerga for less than a month, but I'm packing up my worldly possessions to move again. I'm getting tired of packing and repacking. I hope they'll put us in a place at least semi-permanent. It'll give me a sense of self-possession.

I hear Tule Lake is a barren desert and I wonder how long I could bear living on a place like that. My mind is numb towards any long range plans of the future. My only present concern is my bodily comfort.

## JUNE 26, 1942 SECTIONALISM

When I first walked into The Dispatch office early this week to inquire about a job, the reception was that of peaceful hostility. I felt the iciness of sectionalism borne against me simply because I ran the "Walerga Wasp" back in Sacramento. What actually provoked antagonism was the mistake I made in writing a letter to Frank Tanabe, present editor of The Dispatch, asking if the "Wasp" men being removed to Tule Lake ahead of me could be given a chance on the paper.

The "Dispatchers", wholly nisei from Oregon and Washington, misconstrued it as our intention to take over the paper.

I finally got a job as a feature editor today through the effort of Harry Mayeda, Asst. director of Recreation department.

Before I came here, I had the pre-conceived notion that nor-

thern nisei would be "snooty" and condescending. Stanley, who was transferred earlier, wrote to me that girls went to dances with high heels. He added that he was having difficulty getting along with them.

The whole picture is too generalized. The northerners regard us as rowdy and ill-mannered. Because we were tanned bronze under the naked sun in the assembly centers, we are called "California niggers". I can readily recognize a northern girl by her pale white complexion. It seems apparent that they're generally more Americanized because they did not live in congregations of Japanese colonies back home.

What I resent most is that they came here first and got all the good jobs. But I feel that as long as all of us are going to live here together there should be no room for petty differences.

## JULY 12, 1942 NEW SIGNIFICANCE

I have always been indifferent towards religion, in fact, skeptical. When I was in town, I had conceived church as a social center for exchanges of current gossips.

Religion gained a new significance in my life; a brighter outlook into the future.

This morning, having nothing better to do, I decided to attend a service conducted in one of the empty barracks. There weren't enough benches to accommodate everyone; some brought their own folding chairs, and some brought empty crates. I stood in the back leaning against the wall listening to Rev. Tanabe's sermon.

There weren't the customary flowers and the elaborate altar. The minister stood with a bible in his hand before a group of earnest young faces and presented his sermon eloquently from the heart. The simplicity of it all reminded me of a story I once read of forlorn travelers kneeling and praying in the wilderness.

I felt God very close to me.

## AUG. 25, 1942 DUSTSTORM

Today is no day for anyone to be outside. The sky is bleak and overcast. The wind is relentlessly blowing and churning up the loose ground and no nook or crevice is immune to the ubiquitous dust.

I came home from work and found the room gritty and filthy with grime. Powdery white dust had sifted through the edges of windows and settled on the bed, the shelves, the books and all

the clothings hung on nails.

The dust disgusts and sickens me inside. One sleeps and eats with dust.

No one acts human in a duststorm. Like animals, all evacuees seek shelter and all activities come to a standstill. Human rationalization is blotted out and all minds are assailed with rancor and hatred.

It's only fortunate that these duststorms are sporadic and are usually accompanied by refreshing rainfalls. The ground hardens and evacuees return to normal routine.

## AUG. 29, 1942 STORY OF A STARRY NIGHT

The U.C. Club presented its first dance last night at Block 7 mess hall. Hardly knowing any of the girls in the neighborhood, I mustered enough courage to ask one if she would go with me. She said she would.

I wore my loud sports jacket. I didn't have anything else to wear. She looked pretty in her yellow dress and I fumbled for something to say but I just simply said she "looked nice."

Mas Sakada, Eugene Okada, Sakae Hayashi and the rest of the fellows I knew in Berkeley spent the afternoon sweeping and polishing the linoleum floor. We strung the bare rafter with blue and gold crepe papers and attempted to make the dining hall as presentable as possible for dancing purposes. For music, we rented a portable public address system.

We danced fox trots and waltzes all evening and there were so many new faces to meet. One heartening thing about camp life is that I'm making more acquaintances. Eventually, there's bound to be some friction in a closely knit community such as this.

The young girls in the block, Martha, Edna, Edith, Mariko, Aiko, are working in the mess hall as waitresses. It's colorful to watch the young girls in bright aprons glide from one table to another with pitcher in hand. "Tea, milk?" Their voices are cheery and light.

It gave me the inspiration to write a short story of a miserable boy who developed a sudden "crush" on a pretty waitress and was disappointed. I called it "Story of a Starry Night" because it happened to be the favorite hit song at the time and had it published in the Dispatch magazine which I'm editing. Singular advantage of being the editor is that you could use your own story no matter how corny it is.

An adolescent girl who read "The Starry Night" said she liked it: "because it did something to me inside". The older readers thought it was naive but amusing.

Life is new and exciting here. There's so much to do and there are so many people to meet. I wonder what will happen if the novelty of these new experiences wear off.

## SEPT. 7, 1942 LABOR DAY

Ye gads, was it hot today! The heat was blistering. Shirrell declared a Project holiday today to celebrate Labor Day, and the entire population gathered at the firebreak to pay tribute to Old Glory.

There was a deadening silence as the stars and stripes fluttered and climbed high into the empty blue sky up the 102-foot mast. The Boy Scouts' bugles sounded "To The Colors", and a stirring emotion unconsciously gripped me when the flag unfurled itself in the breeze high over the rows of drab, brown barracks.

The Boy Scouts and Girl Reserves stood at rigid attention and before I knew it, young kids began to keel over with sunstrokes. I counted five in half-hour.

I have always known Labor Day to be the hottest day in the year, but today was exceptionally terrific.

## OCT. 18, 1942 BLOCK MEETING

Block meetings were held in all block mess halls tonight to decide on whether or not we should construct a movie theater in the Project. It so happened that Mr. Kendall Smith of the Administration took the initiative of purchasing lumber with the community enterprise money without the knowledge of the evacuees. The issei, who never did attend movies in the cities, are infuriated to a hysterical pitch of being obstinate enough to deny their movie-crazy children a wonderful recreational outlet. (Ironically, when the movies were shown block by block in the mess halls a few months later, issei literally fought for admittance tickets.)

I suppose idleness and mental effect of evacuation have much to do with their bitterness. Some issei, blinded with heated emotion, are even "taking it out" on the WRA staff here for being forced out from their homes, businesses and farms. I'm terribly dismayed to watch our parents' mind pervert so. It's pathetic.

It seems that at every block meeting, the precarious citizenship status of the nisei is sarcastically jeered by few of the

impetuous issei. I worked myself into such a rage tonight that I stood up to speak. I felt heroic but later it occurred to me that I projected myself as a "martyr".

Momentarily forgetting my position as one of the editors of The Dispatch, I openly stated that I was in favor of building a theater. My youthful impudence enraged the issei. Fearful of being reproached by their parents, the nisei in the crowd failed to "back me up". Consequently, some of the issei suggested that I might be an "inu", or an informer of the Administration.

I may have jeopardized my reputation in the block but I personally don't give a damn.

## NOV. 6, 1942 A BIT OF "OUTSIDE"

The entire Dispatch staff took a day off to assist the farmers in their harvest. All felt good riding down the highway seeing signboards and gas stations again.

## NOV. 18, 1942 FISH FISH FISH

Air is biting cold outside and the flimsy barracks quiver like jello on a chill morning. It's a good thing, WRA had the foresight of insulating these army barracks and installed coal stoves in each apartment; otherwise we'll freeze this winter. The G.I. blankets are itchy but nevertheless they keep us warm.

We had fish again today. It's fish, fish, fish, almost every other day. Issei love fish but I will go for hamburgers any day.

Tonight I toasted some bread on the stove to avert "starvation". I'm dreaming of a thick juicy tenderloin smothered with raw onions.

## DEC. 1, 1942 NOSTALGIA

I've been going to The Dispatch office every night for two weeks now to run the magazine pages on the mimeo-machine. Kunio Otani stayed up with me till one in the morning with gawdy green and red ink smeared on our faces.

Frank Tanabe dropped in after a dance and joined us. He related his experiences working in the salmon canneries of Alaska. We walked home slowly and weary between the dark rows of barracks reminiscing the "civilization" we left behind. We thought of the pink salmons sparkling in the sun, the hardness of the sidewalks, the sophomore hops, the favorite hot dog stand, The Big Game, the splotches of golden poppies on the green hills of Moraga, the

thundering clatter of trolleys on Geary and the kindly old professor in his dark office in Wheeler hall.

I slipped in between dust-ladened blankets quietly so as not to awaken my father who snored and creaked in an army cot nearby.

## DEC. 27, 1942 NEW YEAR PREPARATION

You can always depend on these dye-in-the-wool issei to have the traditional 'mochi', or rice biscuits, on New Year wherever they may be. Men in the blocks are busily pounding steamed rice in improvised 'usu' built in the laundry rooms. Women are molding patty cakes, singing and laughing. The spirit is extremely high. Men will have to do without their beloved sake this year.

## JAN. 2, 1943 WHITE CHRISTMAS

A heavy blanket of virgin white snow had settled down on the dust-caked floor of Tule Lake during the night; everything is white as far as the eyes can see. The hills in the distance are like mounds of ice cream. The drab brown barracks sparkle in refreshing drape of white. It gives a guy a healthy, crisp feeling.

Christmas and New Year had passed by eventlessly. Little tykes are playing in the snow, unmindful of the sharp chill wind. These kids have never seen snow in their lives.

A letter came from Private Phil Oda from Missouri. A couple weeks ago, he sent me a woolen army scarf for Christmas. "The Christmas for us nisei soldiers was very different from that of the whites," he remarked. "They received gifts from folks back home but we gave to our people in camps. Nobody expected gifts and only a few received them but everybody saved and bought very heavily out of their army pay. All nisei soldiers were glad to have been in a position to make their people happy. It was indeed the first time when Christmas meant something to us."

## FEB. 18, 1943 DECISION OF A LIFETIME

The army is in the process of registering all male citizens to find out where their loyalty lies.

"What the hell," says a guy, "we have to plan our future courses according to how we were treated in the past. All our lives, both our parents and we have been kicked around like unwanted dogs. We never got a chance. There is no future for us in America. Being pushed into camp such as this is evidence enough."

Although everyone is entitled to his or her own conviction,

down in my heart I hope people with sentiments like these are in minority. It is too much for me when some of my friends whom I have associated closely all my life talk like this. Evacuation was a tragic mistake. The effect is slowly warping everyone's minds to cynicism and defeatism.

I don't want to be bitter and cynical. I want to look ahead: to be far-sighted enough to look beyond my petty grievances, whims and desires. I have a lifetime to live in America and I'm not going to throw it away now. I realize that I'm making a decision of my life and my mind is made up. My conviction has always been the same.

## FEB. 19, 1943 UNSHAKABLE FAITH

This morning I strolled over to the Ad building and registered. The questions were simple. Question 27 and 28 asked me if I were still loyal to the United States. I signed 'yes' to both of them and walked out feeling relieved.

## MAR. 4, 1943 SIDE BY SIDE

A few of Washington's cigar smoking congressmen in their soft leather chairs are charging that we are being pampered and coddled. I certainly would like to have one of them live with me for a week and eat and sleep with us in our dingy barracks. I'd like to see him sit side by side with me in the latrine. It wouldn't be long before he'll start yelling about his constitutional rights.

## APR. 11, 1943 STRANGE HAPPINESS

I must admit that dancing is one of the few pastimes which seems to keep my morale up. Opportunities for social contacts are abundant and I'm not cramped with expensive formalities such as fancy clothes, car, barbecue stands and "big name" orchestras.

Last night, the Bachelors' Club, of which I'm the 7th vice president, sponsored the debut of Micky Tanaka's new dance orchestra. It was a gala dance and the club "brothers" had specially ordered gardenia corsages for their dates. My partner wore it in her hair. There were program dances and I gave on to Hiro Uratsu who wanted to see who I brought, and I exchanged others with Harry Inukai, Mas Ogawa and Mas Inada, the gang at the office. Mickey dedicated a number for me. He played, "The Waltz You Saved For Me," my favorite number. I came home with a

strange feeling of happiness. To feel happy in a camp like this struck me strange.

I'm looking forward to the "Spring Informal" next Saturday.

## MAY 12, 1943 GOING, GOING, GOING

Joni Shimoda is leaving for Chicago tomorrow. Grace Asai, Stan Sugiyama, Roy Yokote, I and some of his close friends were invited to a farewell party tonight. It gives me an empty feeling to watch the fellows, whom I've become attached to during my stay here, leave one by one. Riley also leaves tomorrow. Art Morimitsu says he has no other alternative but to volunteer for the Army to show his loyalty. He has applied for Camp Savage.

## MAY 15, 1943 THE OUTLOOK

Now that I have made plans to leave the Project, I feel like staying here a little longer. Life here has made me soft and indolent. I'm clothed, sheltered and I don't have to worry about where my next meal is coming from. I feel as though I've become a part of the dust. I no longer gripe about the physical conditions of this camp.

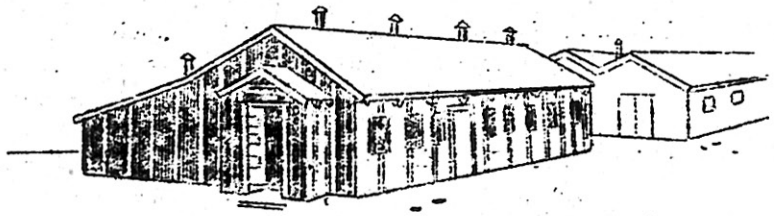
-There is no economic pressure living in a socialized world such as here, and I am living day to day in purposeless drifting, planning frivolous things to do tomorrow. It's funny.....I want to prolong this sort of life but if I procrastinated I'll be here for the duration and I don't want to be here when the war ends. My better conscience tells me that the sooner I re-establish myself in a normal American community, the better I would be prepared to meet the post-war future.

I must go out and make my living the hard way again. Yet doubt and fear disturb my mind. Would I be jumping out of a frying pan into the fire? Will I be happy outside in a strange community? To go out means to depart from my life-long friends. It means to tear myself away from a life of comparative ease and security to start life all over again. It makes me feel weary. I hope this will be the last time I'll have to move again.

AND.....

this is the brief story of a poor bewildered nisei and his many problems. Although government agencies and the public are doing all they can for him, he knows too well that in the end only he can save himself.

# Greetings
# ON NEWELL'S FIRST ANNIVERSARY



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