June 9, 1993

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Dear Phyl & Shu,

Well, I guess it's past time that I finally wrote you a letter, to acknowledge the very many letters and notes that you've sent to us. Thanks very much for keeping us posted as to your activities, the kids, the deer and the bears

If I remember rightly, you're going to have, or have just finished having, a joint Hoffman/Yasui family reunion. We hope that everybody is healthy, happy and well.

Michi & Toshio's 50th. wedding anniversary party at the Bush Gardens went off without a hitch. There were 33 of us gathered, including:

Susan Hemsi (she's divorced from Claude) and their daughter Miko—unfortunately, they lost the U.S. Tennis Association match on the final round here at Lake Oswego (they'd been national champs for two years);

Bruce & Alison Pace and their two kids, Tommy and Susie;

Chrissy Sidney (Billy didn't come) & their two kids, Aurora and Toshio Raul;

Pammie & Riff Canaday & their two kids, Zen and Sage;

Miki & Virendra Desai & their three kids, Samir, Vijay & Misa;

Yuka

Mickey & me & Becky

Leslie & Tom Yasui & their kid, Mattie

Maija & Philip Yasui, and one of their kids, Niko

Tosh's brother-in-law, Yutaka Ando (he's a *yoshi*)

Meredith & Erin Flory

Nobody got too drunk, and there weren't any fights, although I'm told that both Tosh Ando got a bit loud—which isn't unusual after we've been drinking awhile.

Yuka has been with us for the past couple of days. Actually, she came in on Saturday, and because Barb & Bob their family will be coming down from Marysville this Friday, Yuka decided to stay over until Sunday. Mickey reserved a motel room overlooking the Portland Rose Festival parade [I think that this must be about the 90th. year, except for the war years], which was a very smart thing to do, because the curbside seating can be very fierce, and besides that, there's no potty anywhere near where we'd otherwise be sitting.

I can never forget when your family was in Portland one year—I think that it was at or near Rose Festival time, and all of us adults took all of our kids to a night time carnival somewhere downtown. I took Tim and Todd in hand for a short time, and we sedately rode

the Merry Go Round. Then Todd saw the Loop O Plane, and he wanted to go up on that next. When I demurred on the grounds that I couldn't watch two kids at the same time in one of those things, Todd accused me of being "chicken". He probably was all of 4 years old at that time. I'll never forget how amused I was at the time—this little squirt accussing his uncle of being chicken!

Anyway, at this motel room, we're going to stock it with all kinds of snacks and drinks, but more than that, we'll have a toilet that we can all take turns at using. Of course we'll be sitting on the curb—according to kids, the closer to the action, the better—with Mari & Danny, Amanda & Justine (Kip & Becky's two), Barb, Bob, Becky, Yuka, and Becky's mother, Bernice Price. If it doesn't rain this Saturday, which is when the parade is to be held, we will have a very jolly time indeed. But, if it rains, which it's been doing all this year, then we'll have a backup place from which to watch the parade.

Again, continuing on the Rose Festival, the project which a bunch of us have been working on, "In This Great Land of Freedom—Japanese Pioneers in Oregon"—Masuo Yasui's picture will appear on the illustrative catalog. This photo was taken in 1907, and it shows Dad and Katsusaburo Tamura and two unidentified Nikkei gentlemen all gussied up in white pants, shirts, suspenders, a Navy blue jacket and a straw boater. It's a great picture, and it was taken for the Portland (and Hood River) Nikkei to participate in one of the very early Rose Festival parades. We also have a photograph of the float that the Nikkei community entered in that parade. These men all looked so very young then, and of course they really were, but in my eyes, Dad has always appeared old to me. And now, at my ripe age of 68 plus, I understand it when my grandkids tell me, "Grandpa, you're <u>really old</u>! Durn kids.

I don't know if you recollect the family mythology, Shu, but our folklore has it that the reason why the Yasuis wound up in Hood River, was as follows: Masuo was said to have volunteered to go Hood River from Portland in 1906 or 1907, to recruit donations and help from the Japanese then working in Hood River, to participate in the Portland Rose Festival parade. There were a lot of single Japanese men there in those days. Upon getting off the train at the Hood River depot and looking the place over, Masuo was deeply impressed by the beauty of that little valley, so then and there he determined that we was going to make that his home for the remainder of his life. So goes the legend……it makes a nice story. And it might have been true, because we definitely have those dated photographs.

Yuka, bless her, lugged two large Yasui family photograph albums, and about 6 scrapbooks (the latter of which are mostly filled with predominately negative newspaper stories concerning the Nikkei during the second world war, and shortly thereafter) here in her baggage. So today I spent most of the time looking these things over, and pondering the past again, just like I've been doing for the past three years.

Of course you understand that I'm all bonkers on the subject of our family history, so this gives me more treasures that I can dig into, and you'll forgive me for harping on a subject which I believe I've become more or less expert on.

An ongoing big problem with me is that I haven't—can't—decide what to do with all this memorabilia—this vast collection—of truly fascinating material. Others who have seen our papers and things have said so before me, but there are enough data in our collection, and in the material already donated to the Oregon Historical Society, that there is at least one—and probably several—Ph.D. theses in these papers and artifacts.

When all is said and done in this regard, it seems to me that it would be best to donate the rest of the bulk to the OHS. However, the problem is really in deciding which papers and photographs to hold back for whoever of our family members who are truly interested in this stuff. For example, what shall I do with Grandpa Masuo Yasui's 1903 diary, written almost entirely in Japanese? I'm working on a process now to reproduce the pages, through Meredith, without too much handling, because it's old and fragile. Yuka thinks that she could get it translated for free. But that's a real problem.

So far it's proven to be impossible to find anyone willing to translate all these papers written in Japanese, because that is one heck of a lot of work. The one little slender hope I have for a translator who might be interested, is a young man named Eiichi Azuma. He's a Japanese from Japan, but he's bilingual, and he can read the Meiji era writing. He received his M.A. in Japanese American history from UCLA this year, but now he's back in Japan. He's seen some of our stuff, and he was impressed. I'm hoping that he will come back and decide to go for a Ph.D. in JA history—with an emphasis on immigration—because we have an awful lot of background material on that—plus a lot of other stuff.

Mickey and I are involved in another project, which while on temporary hold now, will no doubt come to life again soon. That's a book project which has tentatively been entitled the Greater Portland Nikkei Book Project. Essentially, the idea is a small book—almost a monograph—written by local Nikkei, with a target audience of the larger society. I think that that's a pretty large order, because the stuff that we write and produce is ethnic stuff, which has always had a limited readership. But for whatever its worth, that's another thing that Mickey and I are doing now. This little book **might** come out this fall, and if & when it does, I'll send you a copy.

I realize that you're anxious to read Lauren Kessler's book, which we have in manuscript form. Yuka's reading it right now while she's here. Since it's so long—over 400 pages—she won't be able to finish it, so we're going to let her take it back to Rockville with her. When Lauren sent us the manuscript, she asked for Mickey and my corrections and critique. We've done this, although we made no comments about style nor contents, because that's her prerogative and domain. However, we never asked Lauren if we might circulate this to some members of our family, although as you will understand, Barbara and Meredith have already read the manuscript, and now Yuka is reading it also.

Because I've never specifically asked her, I'd feel a lot more comfortable if you'd wait until I've written, or called Lauren, and asked her permission to send it to others in our family. Knowing her quite well as we do, I don't think that she would have any problems with that. She's a sensible, sensitive, understanding woman, in my judgement. And also, in a sense, she owes me, because a lot of the information that appears in the book appears because I pointed out the trail. I'm quite sure that she'll say okay, and when that's given, I'll ask Yuka to mail it to you. Until then, I ask that you wait until I hear from her. O.K? It's a wonderful book, Shu & Phyl, and you'll learn a number of new things about our family from her work.

Come this December, Lauren and I will appear on a program jointly sponsored by the Oregon Historical Society and the Japanese American National Museum, and we'll talk about her book, and for my part, I'll tell a few anecdotes about the family. Oh, my my. This letter is a lot longer than I intended, but then I owe you a long one. Sorry to have rambled on about what's going on with us here in the *Old Oregon Trail* country. Regards and best to all.