Staying Sunny

How the Nishimotos Persevered Through WWII

By Valerie Shelton & the Madera Method Historians
of the MSHS 2022-2023 Historical Literacy Course

Staying Sunny

How the Nishimotos Persevered Through WWII

By Valerie Shelton & the Madera Method Historians
of the MSHS 2022-2023 Historical Literacy Course

Staying Sunny: How the Nishimotos Persevered Through WWII.

For more information, contact
Madera Unified School District
1902 Howard Road, Madera, CA 93637
(559) 675-4500
madera.k12.ca.us

PRINTED IN MADERA, CA BY CREATIVE COPY (559) 675-8281 CREATIVECOPY.NET
●● REV 2023-06-26-1117

CONTENTS

FOREWORD i
INTRODUCTION iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS vii
TERMINOLOGY ix

CHAPTER 1 1
From Japan to California's Central Valley
CHAPTER 2 9
The Implications of Pearl Harbor
CHAPTER 3 23
The Barcrofts
CHAPTER 4 35
Life at Fresno Assembly Center
CHAPTER 5 51
Early Days in Jerome
CHAPTER 6 79
Loyalty
CHAPTER 7 97
Go For Broke
CHAPTER 8 127
Returning Home to Madera

THE SUNNY NISHIMOTO TAPES 143
FAMILY CRESTS 178
NISHIMOTO FAMILY TREE 182
KAWANO FAMILY TREE 183
WWII TIMELINE 184
NISHIMOTO FAMILY ALBUM 189
ABOUT THE AUTHORS 221
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 227

FOREWORD

It is an honor to have our father, Sunny Nishimoto, at the center of a historical study of the Japanese-American experience during World War II. The lens is on the Nishimoto family within the context of the forced removal from homes and the unconstitutional imprisonment of 120,000 Japanese-Americans in U.S. incarceration camps, and our country's call for duty. This project began in the fall of 2022, a befitting year to commence the project, because our father's 100th birthday was May 20, 2022. Now at the end of the school year, Ms. Valerie Shelton and her students in the Madera Method historical literacy course at Madera South High School have completed this book that they can be proud of. The book brings together factual historical information based on primary source materials and narrative accounts that the students wrote from the perspective of members of the family. We see the understanding and empathy of the students shine through in the diary entries and letters they imagined Sunny and his family would write of their experiences and feelings during tumultuous times.

During the course of the project, we were motivated to sort through a treasure trove of photographs that we discovered years earlier in a suitcase our father stowed away in the Bridge Store office. We are grateful to Mr. Jordan Mattox, the librarian at MSHS, for helping us begin to organize and archive digital copies of photos of our ancestors that date back to the late 1800s. My sister, Ruth, has become the family archivist, thanks to this project. It's been a rewarding challenge to trace back the lineage of our grandparents with the help of relatives, Ms. Irene Taraoka in Hawaii and Mr. Tad Kozuki in Parlier, California. Mr. Mattox and Ms. Shelton produced the family tree in the book that visualizes our roots. They've also had some fun with us piecing together names with faces in the photo archive. When Ruth and I visited the class in April 2023, we toted in the old, beat-up suitcase. It was a pleasure to see how interested the students were in delving into our treasure trove. Some of the photos are included in this book.

There would be no book project without Mr. Bill Coate, who is the Madera Tribune's man about town, historian, and friend of my father and the Nishimoto family. Mr. Coate, the mastermind of the Madera Method and founder of the Madera Unified School District program proposed the Japanese-American history project to Ms. Shelton and wanted a video interview of Sunny to be the cornerstone research material to build the project upon. Our father was one of over 1200 Japanese American veterans interviewed by the Go For Broke National Education Center for the purpose of preserving their histories so that others might learn from their experiences.

Our father was interviewed on April 17, 2005 and in the next year, he became ill and passed away on August 2, 2006. It was bittersweet to watch the video soon after its release while still feeling the pangs of losing him. Because of this project, I watched the recording recently, and felt him come to life. I was struck by the interviewer seeming to know that this interview would someday serve an important purpose. In addition to the historical perspective Sunny provides in the interview, we are extremely grateful to the brilliant Ms. Shelton for capturing in her writing Sunny's buoyant spirit, his love for family and friends, community, and country, and his sage advice about valuing education, having a strong work ethic, taking opportunities to better yourself even when times are rough, and teaching love. All of which we hope Ms. Shelton's students will take to heart and carry with them as they move forward in life.

On behalf of my mother Dorothy, my sister Ruth and her husband Gaylen Thelander, my brother Wally, and his wife Kathy, my husband David Fedorko, and Sunny and Dorothy's grandchildren, Carly, Jared, Tommy, Lauren, Brandon, Ryan, and Zoe, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to Madera South High School's 2022-2023 Historical Literacy Course for producing this book. We applaud the Madera Method Historians: Alyssa Cerda, Jessica Giron, Emily Herrera, Ailin Leon-Torres, Ana Miguel-Leon, Javier Ornelas, Esequiel Padilla Gurrola, Joshua Perez, Mia Reyes, Brianna Tudon-Mendez, and Josiah Zamudio for your hard work and dedication to the project.

Sincerely,

—Mary Nishimoto
May 16, 2023

INTRODUCTION

This Life of Ours

Regardless of the things
Everybody says,
This life of ours
Has its sunny days.

—Betty Natsuhara
Fresno Assembly Center
The Vignette

The above poem discovered in a Fresno Assembly Center publication serves as a fitting introduction to this historical narrative on the lives of the Nishimoto family. The Nishimotos of Madera endured the unconstitutional incarceration of Japanese Americans following the attack on Pearl Harbor that thrust the United States into WWII. Despite the mistreatment they experienced simply due to their race, the Nishimotos, like the overwhelming majority of those incarcerated, remained unflinchingly loyal, and Nisei—American-born sons and daughters of Japanese immigrants—stayed sunny, making the most of a tough situation. One could say, Sunny Nishimoto, our main protagonist, embodies the spirit of Natsuhara's brief poem and not solely because his name appears in the last line.

When my class of 11 students and I began this journey researching the Nishimoto family, a series of video interviews with Sunny, filmed in 2005 as part of an oral history project sponsored by the Go For Broke National Education Center and subsequently published with the Japanese American History Collective, was our guide. In these four videos, we found Sunny to be reserved, honest, kind, cheerful, sometimes tearful, and above all humble. Without hesitation and with utmost modesty, Sunny shares the story of how at age 19 he, along with his parents Tamaichi and Kameyo, and sisters Mildred, Mary, and Patty, were forced to leave behind their Madera home and family business and spend months behind barbed wire, first at the temporary Fresno Assembly Center facility and then in

the more permanent incarceration camp in Jerome, Arkansas. This had soon followed brother Keith's draft induction into the Army. He also details his military service as a draftee for the renowned segregated 442nd regimental combat team and eventual Military Intelligence Service (MIS) linguist. He also discusses life in Madera both before and after the war, focusing on the operations of the family grocery store, a prominent establishment in Madera from 1928 to 2017.

Using Sunny's interviews as the primary source, students branched out to research what life was like in the incarceration camps. Amazingly, they found that each camp had its own published newspaper and Jerome was no exception. Even the Fresno Assembly Center kept detailed records in newspaper format. Reading through these newspapers, students could ascertain the goings-on in each camp from day to day and envision themselves as a member of the Nishimoto family reading the news or participating in the camp activities mentioned therein. Students also uncovered the military records of Sunny, his older brother Keith, also an MIS agent, and their cousin, Tetsuo Kawano, who was among the first wave of casualties in Italy serving as part of the 100th Infantry and 442nd. Zooming out for a broader perspective, students also read articles published in Madera during the time to greater understand the perspective of the general public and consider how the Nishimotos may have been perceived upon their eventual return to Madera in 1946.

The wealth of information the class was able to glean from this substantial body of primary source material was used to create this volume, which we feel is an accurate representation of the Nishimoto story. To provide context, the layout of this book interweaves factual historical information with narrative accounts in the form of journal entries and letters written by students from the perspectives of the seven Nishimoto family members. The majority of narratives are written from either Sunny's or his mother, Kameyo's perspective, as we had the most information about them from the source material, but some students challenged themselves by writing as one of Sunny's siblings or his father. Rather than commit to a single perspective, students were encouraged to write from multiple perspectives as we moved from chapter to chapter. Each student had at least one narrative entry per chapter, with many

students having multiple narratives in the chapters on the Fresno Assembly Center, Jerome, and the 442nd and MIS. All narratives were composed entirely by students with my edits, with the exception of one letter I wrote from Kameyo's perspective and provided as an example to students (Chapter 4). The historical accounts which serve to introduce each narrative section were written by this teacher based on all the primary source information the class compiled.

This Madera Method project has been the pinnacle of my career—both as a journalist and as a teacher—thus far. The historical literacy class at Madera South High School has been my pride and joy for the past two school years. Nothing is more satisfying as a teacher than seeing my students engaged with history and continually growing as writers. This 2022–2023 class of mostly high school freshmen, worked tirelessly to tell the story of the Nishimoto family and I couldn't be more proud of what they have produced. For each of them, this book is a prime example of each of the components of the Madera Unified School District's graduate profile—it demonstrates their depth of critical thinking, their ability to adapt their writing based on the facts they find and based on routine teacher feedback, their ability to collaborate with one another on a class project, their ability to communicate what they have learned effectively in writing, their ability to produce high-quality work, and their ability to contribute to the community at large. It is our sincere hope that our readers are enlightened and inspired by the Nishimoto story and also learn a bit about our nation's history through their eyes.

—Valerie Shelton,
ELA Teacher, M.A.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our class would be remiss if we did not thank the following individuals for their gracious support and contributions to this project. First, we want to express our immense gratitude to the Nishimoto family, namely Sunny's three children Mary, Wally, and Ruth, for allowing us to dig into their family archives and for sharing so many family photographs and primary source documents. We would also like to thank Madera Method founder Bill Coate for his exemplary mentorship and continuous feedback. To our school librarian, Jordan Mattox, a huge thanks for assisting us with some of the more tedious tasks of this project, namely transcribing Sunny's interviews and digitizing the Nishimoto family's photographs and documents. Thank you to our guest speakers and incarceration camp survivors Marion Masada and Carlene Tanigoshi Tinker for sharing their stories and providing us with the context of what life was like in the camps. And thank you to all our school and district administrators who have supported us throughout this project, in particular Dean of Curriculum and Instruction Stephanie Hamblen, Principal Jon Steinmetz, and Superintendent Todd Lile.

TERMINOLOGY

It is essential to note the differences between the euphemisms coined by the federal government in 1942 to make the unconstitutional imprisonment of Japanese Americans palpable to the general public and the accurate terminology preferred by generations of Japanese Americans today. Throughout this book, we attempt to use the preferred terms as often as possible, though oftentimes direct quotations from those interviewed or from sources, such as newspapers, from the time period, do contain euphemistic phrasing. To alleviate confusion for readers, the following table, provided by the National JACL Power of Words II Committee and constructed from Ishizuka's list (Ishizuka, 2006, p. 72), summarizes the euphemistic terms versus their more accurate counterparts.

EUPHEMISM	ACCURATE TERM
EVACUATION	**Exclusion or forced removal**
RELOCATION	**Incarceration in camps**
NON-ALIENS	**U.S. citizens of Japanese ancestry**
CIVILIAN EXCLUSION ORDERS	**Detention orders**
MAY BE EXCLUDED	**Evicted from one's home**
NATIVE AMERICAN ALIENS	**Renunciants (citizens who, under pressure, renounced U.S. citizenship)**
ASSEMBLY CENTER	**Temporary detention facility**
RELOCATION CENTER	**American concentration camp, incarceration camp, illegal detention center, inmates held here are "incarcerees"**
INTERNMENT CENTER	**Reserve for DOJ or Army camp holding enemy aliens under the Alien Enemies Act of 1798; enemy aliens held under this act are protected by the Geneva Conventions**
ANY OR ALL PERSONS	**Primarily persons of Japanese ancestry**

CHAPTER 1

From Japan to California's Central Valley

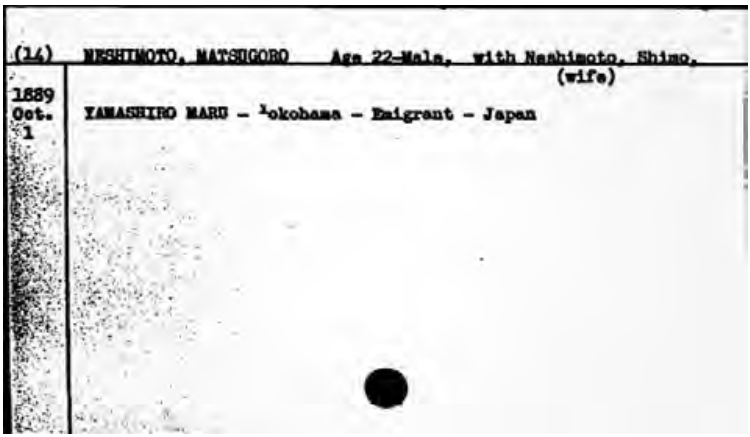
"America is made of immigrants who all came from somewhere and you need to know their stories." This simple yet profound statement from 90-year-old Marion Masada, one of the few surviving Japanese Americans incarcerated during WWII serves as a fitting introduction to the story of one immigrant family—the Nishimoto family—who first established roots in California's Central Valley in the mid-teens of the 20th century. The Nishimoto patriarch, Tamaichi Nishimoto, was born on May 14, 1891, in Hawaii. His parents, Matsugoro Nishimoto (1866-1924) and Shimo Manzuko (1869-1928) emigrated from Japan to the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1889. The newly married young couple arrived via the Japanese ship Yamashiro Maru on October 1, 1889. It is unknown why then 22-year-old Matsugoro and his 19-year-old wife decided to make the long journey from Japan to Hawaii, but beginning in 1885, Hawaii's King Kalakaua increased incentives to attract Japanese laborers to the island to work in the sugar cane fields. As part of the stipulations of the Japan-Hawaii Emigration Treaty, signed on January 28, 1886, the Kingdom of Hawaii agreed to pay the ship passage for Japanese immigrating to work for a contract of three years, with possible extensions. As part of each working contract, the Hawaiian government would pay wages of $9 a month ($6 for wives), plus food provisions of $6 a month ($4 for wives, and $1 per child). The $9 a month wage was equivalent to 11 yen, which on its own was a low wage, but when combined with the provisions was an attractive sum for many Japanese farm workers.

The Nishimoto Family. [TOP L–R] *Patty, Sunny, Keith, and Tamaichi.* [BOTTOM L–R] *Mary, Kameyo, and Mildred.*

The incentives worked, with nearly 30,000 emigrating from Japan to Hawaii in the 10-year period from 1884 to 1894. During that same period, there were 26 emigration voyages from Japan to Hawaii and nearly half were aboard the Yamashiro Maru. The voyage the Nishimotos set sail on was the second of 12 such voyages for the ship, and the Nishimotos were but two of 997 immigrants aboard. We aren't entirely sure of Matsugoro and Shimo's reasons for immigrating to Hawaii, but their

great-granddaughter, Mary Nishimoto, said she believes her great-grandfather was enlisted as a contract plantation worker for either the Hawaiian government or a private contractor.

A few decades later, Matsugoro and Shimo's son Tamaichi would migrate to California and start a farm of his own in the small, Central Valley town of Parlier. When he made the move, Tamaichi was around the same age his father was when he made his journey from Japan to Hawaii. Like father, like son, Tamaichi wanted to forge his own path and made his way to California sometime between 1910-1915. Tamaichi was the oldest of five, with two younger brothers, Kenji and Kiyoichi, and two younger sisters, Shizuyo and Sueko. We know at least one brother, Kiyoichi, 7 years younger than Tamaichi, established a life for himself in California as well, laying down roots in Los Angeles.


(14) NISHIMOTO, MATSUGORO Age 22-Male, with Nashimoto, Shimo, (wife)
1889 Oct. 1
YAMASHIRO MARU – Yokohama – Emigrant – Japan

At the time of Nishimoto's arrival, legislation in the golden state had long been discriminatory against Asian immigrants. Such discrimination dates back to 1850 when California officially became part of the United States. While not many Japanese immigrants were to be found in the state then, 25 percent of miners were Chinese who immigrated during the 1949 gold rush. Having just defeated the Spanish and Mexican Californios in the California Conquest, and having established dominance over the natives in the land, the growing Caucasian population had a low tolerance for any minorities they perceived as a threat and thus, made it their mission to drive out the Chinese immigrants. Once California became a state, Article 19

of the California Constitution restricted Chinese immigrants to segregated areas. Other laws prohibited Chinese immigrants from obtaining American citizenship, voting, testifying against Whites in court, working in certain occupations, attending schools with Whites, and marrying Whites. At the federal level, in 1870 the U.S. Congress granted naturalization rights to free whites and people of African descent only, omitting mention of Asian races.

At the same time the Chinese in California were being pushed out, big businesses, mostly in the agricultural industry, sought Chinese workers for menial work. Such businesses were at a loss when the Chinese population dropped to 10 percent following the exclusion laws. With the Chinese population decreasing, these businesses needed to pull from another group of laborers willing to do hard work for low wages and they looked to Japan to aid in filling the void left by the Chinese. At this point, the country of Japan had barred permanent emigration, but the United States pressured Japan to relax the ban for laborers, and in 1884 Japan relented, allowing Japanese laborers to immigrate to the western United States, as well as the Kingdom of Hawaii.

By 1900, the Japanese population exploded to 61,000 Japanese immigrants in Hawaii and was steadily growing on the mainland with 24,000 immigrants mostly residing in California. As the Japanese population grew, so did the animosity of west coast Caucasians. In California, the exclusion laws first created to drive out the Chinese were revised to apply to all Asian immigrant populations. Major labor unions denied Japanese and other Asian immigrants membership and as a response, Japanese farm laborers, in collaboration with Mexican laborers, formed independent unions, leading to the first agricultural strike in California in 1903. As one would expect, the Caucasian population felt threatened by the growing independence of these minority groups. As a result, elected officials were pressured by the public to institute stricter exclusion laws. In 1911, the U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization ordered that declarations of intent to file for citizenship would only be accepted from White Europeans and people of African descent, thus allowing the courts to refuse the naturalization of the Japanese. Then, in 1913, the passing of California's Alien Land Law prevented Japanese aliens from

owning land. Finally, in 1924, the U.S. Immigration Act declared that no alien ineligible for citizenship would be admitted to the United States, stopping all immigration from Asian countries, including Japan. In addition to bad news for Japanese immigrants, this action increased growing tension between the United States and Japan, as Japan was insulted that the United States would first beg them to relax emigration laws and send laborers and then renege by rejecting Japanese immigrants less than 40 years later.

Being born in Hawaii, Tamaichi was considered an American citizen and was able to get around the discriminatory laws of the time that prevented Asian immigrants from owning land. Shortly after migrating to California, Tamaichi purchased farmland in Parlier and started a cooperative with other Japanese immigrants who were unable to buy land for themselves. While all legal documents were in Tamaichi's name, having a lease of sorts with non-citizen Japanese immigrants was risky, but for a time it was a risk worth taking as the grape harvests were bountiful. It was during his time as a Parlier farmer that Tamaichi sought a bride overseas in Hiroshima, Japan. In 1915, Kameyo Kawano came to Parlier as a picture bride to marry Tamaichi, who she only knew through photographs and letters. According to her son, Sunny, when she arrived, she was disappointed, not in her husband, but in his primitive living conditions. "She said he was living in a chicken coop," Sunny told Madera County Times reporters in a May 14, 1998 article. "Times were hard then and many people living and working in agriculture were just surviving."

Gradually, Kameyo came to accept the rough lifestyle, while also setting her sights on aiding Tamaichi in his work in order to provide a better life for their children. Together, Tamaichi and Kameyo had five children, Mildred, born in 1917, Keith, born in 1918, Mary, born in 1920, Sunny, born in 1922, and Patty, born in 1923. With five young mouths to feed, the family fell on hard economic times along with people throughout the nation in the years leading up to the Great Depression. By the stock market crash of October 1929, the Nishimotos had already lost their Parlier ranch. Though only around five or six years old at the time, Sunny recalls moving from Parlier to Madera

in 1928. "They couldn't sell the grapes so they couldn't make the payments," Sunny said in a 2005 oral history interview for the Go For Broke project.

Having lost the Parlier farm, the Nishimoto family decided to relocate to Madera, where Tamaichi and Kameyo had friends, the Inami family. At first, Tamaichi worked in the fields and the couple would sell firewood to make ends meet, but Kameyo had higher ambitions and saw a need for a grocery store on the north side of the small, expanding town. The Inami family were the proprietors of a similar grocery store on the opposite side of Madera. With starting a business in mind, Kameyo secured a $500 loan from the Inami family to open a small market located near the Fresno River bridge, which she

appropriately named the Bridge Store. Since Kameyo was not an American citizen and could not become one at the time, she and Tamaichi decided to keep the business in the Inami's name at first. Even with rough economic times, Kameyo's intuition to start a store in the area paid off, with the Nishimotos selling $1.80 worth of goods and making a profit of 39 cents on their first day in business. "It may not seem like much now, but we're talking about 1928 and people were making very little money in those days," Sunny told Madera Tribune reporters in a 1998 article on the store's 70th anniversary. "It wasn't unusual for folks to earn 25 cents an hour. A pair of shoes cost 99 cents."

In the early years, Tamaichi and Kameyo partnered with local farmers to bring produce up into the foothills to sell and trade for firewood which they would turn around and sell for a small profit at Bridge Store. The store was small, no bigger than a modern convenience store, and had glass double doors facing North D Street. The oiled floorboards would creak as customers shopped the narrow aisles for staples like flour, bread, coffee, and firewood. Unable at this tight time to afford two properties, the family of seven lived out of the back room of the store. This cramped space consisted of one bedroom all seven shared and a kitchen. "Everyone was poor during that period and everyone lived that way, so I wasn't different from anybody else," Sunny said in his Go For Broke interview. As the five Nishimoto children grew up, they attended Madera schools and immediately came home after classes to work in the store and help serve customers. Kameyo, who spoke no English when she first emigrated from Japan, gradually picked up English phrases so she could better serve her customers. Over time Kameyo became known to the kids in the community as "Mama Nish." Often, kids would come into the Bridge Store because they knew they wouldn't leave without being gifted a piece of candy from Mama Nish.

While the laws of the time excluded the Nishimotos, and in particular Kameyo as a non-citizen, from many things, in Madera, the Japanese American family had a thriving business and a strong, supportive, customer base. Growing up Sunny Nishimoto and his siblings rarely, if ever, felt mistreated due to their race. "We didn't know of discrimination during that period," Sunny said in his Go For Broke interview. "We knew that we couldn't go swimming, because the community pool was

off-limits to the Mexicans, Blacks, and Asians. We knew that and we also knew something was happening [with Japan in the War] but the neighbors were very kind to us ... We lived in a Mexican neighborhood and they were in the same position that we were in."

This shared position among the disenfranchised minorities of Madera would soon shift, however, as the United States entered WWII and the Japanese Americans at home were suddenly grouped with the enemy forces in their native Japan and labeled as "enemy aliens."

CHAPTER 2

The Implications of Pearl Harbor

As Japanese Americans were instructed to leave their homes, businesses, and belongings behind and report to "temporary relocation facilities" by fliers hung on phone lines and light polls throughout West Coast communities [RIGHT]*, media coverage of the mass "evacuation" dominated the headlines* [LEFT]*. These are just a fraction of the headlines in the Madera Tribune in the Spring of 1942.*

President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared December 7, 1941 "a date that would live in infamy." The unexpected attack on the strategic American naval base Pearl Harbor by the Japanese Imperial forces, which killed 2,300 sailors, awakened a sleeping giant, pulling the United States into WWII. For first-generation Japanese immigrants, called Issei, and their American-born children and grandchildren, Nisei and Sensei, respectively, living and working on the West Coast, this monumental date in history would prove to be more than just the catalyst that brought America into the War. It was also an event that triggered their forced removal from their jobs and homes and

into confined, prison-like facilities surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards.

As a result of Pearl Harbor, many Americans developed a distrust for their neighbors of Japanese ancestry, fueled by beliefs that Japanese persons, who comprised 37 percent of the Hawaiian population, fed information to the Japanese Imperial military that led to the attack. This suspicion was only confirmed by a singular incident, the Ni'ihau Incident, of Japanese citizens in Hawaii aiding a fallen imperial pilot who had crash-landed on the island of Ni'ihau. The mass hysteria across the continental United States spread, especially along the West Coast, where most Japanese Americans lived. Engulfed in fear, many Americans reasoned that enough Japanese lived near the coast to potentially intercept American military intelligence information via radio transmissions and sabotage the Allied efforts by tipping off the imperial government. To the average non-Japanese American mind, the Japanese were the enemy. Almost immediately, Japanese fishermen were dismissed from their jobs. Those who were Issei had their fishing licenses revoked, and in many cases, radios belonging to those of Japanese descent were confiscated by the authorities. In some cases, such as one recounted in *Farewell to Manzanar*, Japanese fishermen who owned boats and operations, complete with radios aboard, were detained for questioning at Fort Lincoln, one of several Department of Justice (DOJ) detention facilities. Altogether, more than 5,500 Issei, including school teachers and religious leaders, were arrested by the FBI after Pearl Harbor and sent to DOJ internment camps.

These actions were deemed necessary by the United States government. To officials, this was war and the Japanese fishermen and Issei leaders on the West Coast had the access and ability to aid the imperial government had they had the desire to do so. They had to at least be questioned. However, questioning the few was not enough for an American public terrified of their Japanese neighbors. Plus, President Roosevelt reasoned the conditions in some areas were so hostile that it wasn't safe for some Japanese Americans to remain in their West Coast communities. Military General John L. DeWitt decided it would be safest for the security of the United States to detain all those of Japanese ancestry on the west coast and advised the president to sign Executive Order 9066 on

February 19, 1942. The order authorized the forced removal of all persons deemed a threat to national security from the West Coast to relocation centers further inland, leading to the incarceration of approximately 125,000 Japanese Americans.

In Madera, before the order, the Nishimoto family felt relatively secure. Pearl Harbor had shaken them as much as other patriotic Americans, and they did have some concerns that anti-Japanese sentiment would cause them to lose some business at the Bridge Store. For the most part, Maderans, largely Hispanic, continued to frequent the Nishimoto grocery store and did not treat them any differently than they had before the attack. "We figured my dad was a citizen, so they weren't going to pick on us," Sunny Nishimoto said in his 2005 interview with Richard Hawkins of the Go For Broke National Education Center. "But, they took everyone."

NOTICE

Headquarters
Western Defense Command
and Fourth Army

Presidio of San Francisco, California
May 11, 1942

Civilian Exclusion Order No. 63

Like all Japanese Americans, the Nishimotos had little notice before they needed to evacuate. Signs posted throughout the community announcing Exclusion Order 63 directed them to report to Madera's Memorial Hall, which coincidentally would one day become the meeting place of Sunny Nishimoto's beloved Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 1981. By May 11, 1942, they would be transported to the temporary Fresno Assembly Center facility, where they would be detained until October 1942. Within just a few short weeks the Nishimotos would need to decide what they would take with

them—just one suitcase per family member—and what would be left behind. They also had to figure out what to do with their business or risk losing it altogether. Faced with all these difficult decisions, we imagine the news of the evacuation was devastating for the family.

February 19, 1942

Dear Journal,

The Pearl Harbor attack was terrible news, not only to me but to every Japanese family in America. I knew what this meant for my children and my family in general. I knew it was strange, the way some were looking at my son and me earlier today at the grocery store, but I wasn't aware of the situation until Tamaichi informed me. It was a few hours after the initial announcement of Executive Order 9066. Madera is a small town so we were informed later since there isn't a good source of information here in public other than the newspaper. We have very little time to pack up all our belongings and make arrangements for our properties. It is heartbreaking, but we have no choice but to cooperate.

—Kameyo Nishimoto

February 19, 1942

Dear Journal,

I, Sunny Nishimoto, a 19-year-old resident of Madera, am forced to leave my hometown because of the attack on Pearl Harbor. It was recently announced that the president signed Executive Order 9066, which authorizes the evacuation of all persons deemed a threat to national security from the west coast to relocation centers further inland. It has not only affected me and my family but it has had a huge impact on many lives. Over 100,000 men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry are being moved to assembly

centers and it's happening so fast. We are being forced to take only what we can fit inside one bag. I don't even know what I should take and what I should leave behind, perhaps never to see again. I will take all I can. All I keep thinking is "How is this happening?" Why are we being forced to leave when we are innocent? We have not broken any laws so why are we being punished? I wonder what will happen to our store. Who will run it? We are left with no options but to close our beloved family business and hope we can lease the building. The moment I found out we must leave Madera, my life flashed before my eyes. Madera is all I've ever known and now, as a man, my life was just about to begin. I graduated high school not too long ago and have been contemplating what I'm going to do with my life. Until now, I was just planning to help my family run the store. The store was always so full of customers so I knew they needed and appreciated the help. Now, I can't even plan on doing that for a living. It may be years before we return, if ever, and who knows if we will be able to reopen and if things will be as they were before. With Keith drafted into the military, I'm the sole son here with my parents and sisters, and I know I will have to be tougher to push my family through these hard times. I hope one day we will be free again and be able to return to our home, to Madera.

—Sunny Nishimoto

February 20, 1942

Dear Journal,

When I first heard about Pearl Harbor I was shocked, but I never thought it would lead to this. I was devastated when I found out we would need to vacate our home and business. Having to leave all

this behind, everything Tamaichi and I have built in Madera with our children hurts beyond measure. I'm despondent to leave our family business. It is hard after everything we worked for. I wish things were different and that we could stay. I hope somehow we can keep our business.

—Kameyo Nishimoto

February 20, 1942

Dear Diary,

I love sweets. I always loved sharing dessert recipes with my mom that others at my school talked about or that I heard on the radio. Times like these were our little bonding moments. I rushed to the store office in the morning to drop off the list of ingredients my mom and I would need later on to make a Gold Nugget Cake before preparing to open the store. There, I noticed while putting on my work shoes and apron that there were unopened mail and newsletters set aside in my parents' office. I was curious so I looked through them. I regret being so nosy but curiosity killed the cat and an article in the newspaper caught my eye. It was titled, "Madera County in Ban Order Repetition of Pearl Harbor Will Not Be Experienced ..." The article was informing my family

and me that we were no longer welcome on the West Coast as Military Area No. 1 had been established on the western halves of Washington, Oregon, California, and the Southern half of Arizona. We would be forced out of everything we had ever known. Of course, questions that I had were "What even is Executive Order 9066? Why can't we just ignore Executive Order 9066?" Executive Order 9066 was enacted by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Fear was consuming the country. People were urging for action from the government. Finally, the President took action and decided to issue Executive Order 9066. What did this exactly mean for us Japanese and Japanese Americans? Well, this order calls for the removal of Japanese and Japanese Americans from the West Coast into assembly centers. Fortunately, our assembly center is located in Fresno, California, just a city over, but essentially this meant our 14th Amendment rights were being violated. Of course, my mom isn't a citizen but she has finally achieved her lifelong goal of owning a business–this grocery store–and now she has to resort to finding someone to lease it or risk losing it permanently. We are at war amongst ourselves. It is not just Japan at war with the United States. What about those of German or Italian descent? My fellow Americans see a difference when compared to them. My physical characteristics and heritage are the difference. I look foreign, therefore I am a traitor. I am one of them. That evening, as closing time came I asked my dad if he had seen it and he told me to shush and not bring it up to my mom. That was his job. He told me he would tell her they were going on a trip, a vacation. A bittersweet vacation. He made sure we packed our bags before we needed to be there and instructed us to only bring one bag as we wouldn't stay long. Of course, he didn't

know that. None of us did. Mom was an intelligent woman. Father couldn't hide the truth from her for long. She quickly realized we weren't going on a fun vacation and began arguing with my dad. He broke down in tears and told her the truth. He didn't like lying to my mom. He knew she was a wonderful and educated woman and she deserved better than this. We all deserve better than this.

—Sunny Nishimoto

February 21, 1942

Dear Journal,

Something terrible has happened to me and my family. We have to leave our homes and our business because of a new law passed by President Roosevelt—Executive Order 9066. This law states that all those of Japanese descent living and working on the west coast must vacate the area and be moved to an internment camp. We don't know where the permanent camp will be, likely out of the state, but for now, we have just a couple of weeks to prepare before we must report to the Fresno Assembly Center. I think this is really unfair. Even if we are able to lease our business until our unknown date of return, we are losing our ability to make money—a monthly amount from a lease will likely be much less than the profits made at the store. Of course, we've been assured we should want for nothing as far as food, water, shelter, and clothing, in internment, so what would we need money for? But still, we are losing our entire way of life and have to move out in just a month. It is terrible.

—Sunny Nishimoto

February 22, 1942

Dear Journal,

Why is my family being forced to leave our home? Why are we being asked to leave everything behind? Mom and dad are making my sisters and I pack, but I'm confused. I mean, I am a United States citizen, along with everyone else in the family aside from mom. I just don't understand why we have to leave and sell everything. Our store even has to close and everything in it has to be sold in a matter of days. I can't imagine my mother is too happy about that. I know she is staying strong for us, but she worked so hard for that store. This is only day one of this so-called evacuation order going into effect. Who would have thought that the attack on Pearl Harbor, tragic as it was, would personally affect us this much? I knew some people would stop shopping at the store, but most in Madera know us and know our loyalty. I never thought it would go beyond that; that the government would force us to leave Madera because we are Japanese. I'm 19 years old and just graduated from Madera High School and have no idea where I'm going to go or where my family will go. We are told we must be bussed to Fresno, and from there, a more permanent place is being built to house all Issei and Nisei from the west coast. In the meantime, we have to find some way to save the store before time runs out.

—Sunny Nishimoto

February 27, 1942

Dear Journal,

When Pearl Harbor happened, we, like all our fellow Americans, were surprised that the Japanese attacked it, but afterward, everyone began referring to us as aliens. When I was first called that,

I started thinking about why. Why were they calling me an alien when I'm from here? I was born here, but it made no difference because I looked like the enemy. I couldn't help but start worrying about what this misconception would mean for the store and my mom. Would fewer people shop with us? Now, with Executive Order 9066 forcing us to abandon our homes and our business, there is more to worry about. Luckily, our family lawyer, Mr. Barcroft, has been able to find another family willing to lease the store from my parents for the duration of the war and he has assured us that everything will be okay. I'm still stressed about the whole ordeal but I had a long talk with my mother about why this is happening and she is surprisingly calm and understanding. Like the rest of us, she doesn't agree with the order. I think it is very wrong. However, she wants to cooperate and do what she can to support the war, including fleeing to make fellow Americans feel comfortable. Just as Keith was drafted and must serve this country, so we must, in this way, serve the country we call home, even as they discriminate against us.

—Sunny Nishimoto

March 20, 1942

Dear Journal,

When my family and I found out about Pearl Harbor being attacked, we knew something might happen to us. We read the newspapers in February and found out we were going to have to evacuate Madera. Luckily, we are very close to our neighbors because we go to church with them. When they heard about the evacuation order, the Ramer family came over to talk with us. They are German and they remember being discriminated against during the

first world war; they assured us everything would turn out okay. We also received support from Mr. Barcroft and his family. They helped us by arranging a lease for the store. Mr. Barcroft took care of everything without charging anything. We are lucky to have such supportive friends in Madera.

—Sunny Nishimoto

April 30, 1942

Dear Journal,

I'm being kicked out of my hometown. I haven't done anything wrong but perhaps it is understandable, given the war. I can't understand it, yet somehow I must have anticipated it after Pearl Harbor. I should have anticipated that no matter how much I believed I was an exception, or how much I believed our family members were all exceptions as we are all good, upstanding citizens, I would be seen as "one of them." I'm not, I'm an American, but my fellow Americans don't see it that way right now. I can only hope that one day those in control will share my sentiments, but for now only a goodbye is in order.

—Sunny Nishimoto

May 6, 1942
Upon arrival in Fresno

Dear Journal,

When Executive Order 9066 was first announced, I was angry on the inside, but I didn't show it because if I did it would be against my morals. I was sad and mad, but now I've decided to put that past behind me because I don't like to hold grudges. I hated the fact that I would have to be stuck here in internment,

> but now that I'm here, I feel at peace. I know thankfully, this will one day come to an end. This can't last forever.
>
> —Sunny Nishimoto

As loyal citizens, the Nishimotos obeyed the demands of Executive Order 9066 and Civilian Exclusion Order No. 63, even though doing so meant relinquishing their constitutional rights. While the majority of Japanese and Japanese Americans complied, there are a few notable instances of resistance. Two young Nisei fought against the 8 p.m. curfew imposed on West Coast Japanese leading up to the forced evacuation. Gordon Hirabayashi was a college student at the University of Washington and disagreed with the Army's regulations, arguing that they went against his civil rights. Min Yasui was a new attorney working in Portland when the curfew was implemented in early 1942. He was so outraged by the suspension of his constitutional rights that he deliberately violated the curfew and was arrested so he could make himself a test case. Both curfew cases went before the Supreme Court which ruled in favor of the United States Army and government, citing wartime military necessity as a valid reason to impose restrictions on citizens that contradict the freedoms granted in the Constitution. Probably the most well-known case of Japanese refusal to submit to Executive Order 9066, however, was that of Fred Korematsu, a Nisei who ignored the evacuation orders in order to stay with his Italian American girlfriend in Oakland. Korematsu underwent plastic surgery, went by an alias, and posed as a Spanish Hawaiian until he was eventually caught by the authorities. He too took his case before the Supreme Court, claiming that due process was not followed and that his constitutional rights were violated, however, once again the court upheld the Army's actions based on wartime necessity.

Eventually, the Supreme Court would rule in favor of Mitsuye Endo, a Japanese Nisei who, rather than refuse to obey the order, filed a petition in April 1942 for habeas corpus—a writ requiring that a person under arrest be brought before a judge or court of law before imprisonment unless lawful grounds are shown for their detention. In the petition, Endo protested her detention at the Topaz Concentration Camp in Utah. She had

to wait two and half years for justice, but ultimately the court ruled in December 1944 that Endo was right: the government cannot detain loyal citizens against their will.

From early 1942 to the end of 1944—nearly three years—however, the United States used military and wartime necessity as justification in its imprisonment of an entire race of people living and working on the West Coast. Regardless of professed loyalty, absence of a criminal record, community contributions, or even citizenship, all those of Japanese ancestry living in California, Washington, and Oregon, were coerced to report to local assembly centers to await permanent incarceration for the duration of the war.

CHAPTER 3

The Barcrofts

Joseph Barcroft, with his wife and granddaughters.

The effects of Executive Order 9066 were swift. With only a few weeks' notice, Japanese American families along the West Coast had to make hasty arrangements to vacate their homes. Those who had businesses, like the Nishimotos, had to shut their doors and faced losing them altogether. Most in such situations lost everything. In *Farewell to Manzanar*, arguably the most well-known account on the subject of Japanese incarceration, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, who was a mere 7 years old at the time, recounted how her family had lost all but the few bags that they were able to carry. Her father, a fisherman, would no longer be permitted to work on the water again and lost two boats he'd strived to save for, in addition to the family home in Long Beach. Also lost were sentimental possessions and family heirlooms. Wakatsuki Houston describes

in one instance her mother's reaction to having to relinquish a beloved china set in the following excerpt:

> The secondhand dealers had been prowling around for weeks, like wolves, offering humiliating prices for goods and furniture they knew many of us would have to sell sooner or later. Mama had left all but her most valuable possessions in Ocean Park, simply because she had nowhere to put them. She had brought along her pottery, her silver, heirlooms like kimonos Granny had brought from Japan, tea sets, lacquered tables, and one fine old set of china, blue and white porcelain, almost translucent. On the day we were leaving, Woody's car was so crammed with boxes and luggage and kids we had just run out of room. Mama had to sell this china. One of the dealers offered her fifteen dollars for it. She said it was a full setting for twelve and worth at least two hundred. He said fifteen was his top price. Mama started to quiver. Her eyes blazed up at him. She had been packing all night and trying to calm down Granny, who didn't understand why we were moving again and what all the rush was about. Mama's nerves were shot, and now navy jeeps were patrolling the streets. She didn't say another word. She just glared at this man, all the rage and frustration channeled at him through her eyes. He watched her for a moment and said he was sure he couldn't pay more than seventeen fifty for that china. She reached into the red velvet case, took out a dinner plate, and hurled it at the floor right in front of his feet. The man leaped back shouting, "Hey! Hey, don't do that! Those are valuable dishes!" Mama took out another dinner plate and hurled it at the floor, then another and

> another, never moving, never opening her mouth, just quivering and glaring at the retreating dealer, with tears streaming down her cheeks.

Wakatsuki Houston's mother's reaction was understandable. She had lost nearly everything and not letting her precious China go for such an insultingly low price was a point of pride. While Issei and Nisei mostly cooperated with the evacuation orders and largely kept completely valid emotions concealed, this story illustrates the experiences of most Japanese Americans—they had to leave everything behind, for good. The Nishimoto family faced the same threat and also nearly had to leave their home, belongings, and the Bridge Store, without any hope of reacquiring them upon their eventual, but unknown, return date. But, unlike many such families, the Nishimotos had an influential friend, Madera lawyer David Barcroft, who was able to secure a 5-year lease of the store on their behalf, as well as make sure the Nishimotos didn't lose their home or possessions.

The Barcroft family has a rich history in the area. David's grandfather, R.W. Barcroft, first came to California as a forty-niner, hailing from Ohio, making a claim and establishing a quartz mining operation in nearby Mariposa County. This mine was intermittently active from 1880 to 1912, and then again from 1935 to 1940. The last hauls of ore reportedly produced 0.3 ounces of gold and half an ounce of silver per ton. David's father, Joseph, though primarily a businessman working at his eldest brother Fred's hardware store in Madera before transitioning to life as a lawman, even worked for two years in the mines during his youth. Joseph and his brother Fred brought the Barcroft name to Madera, but it was arguably Joseph who became the most well-known of the brothers. Joseph was actively involved in the Republican party as a secretary of the local Republican Country Central Committee, and he was later elected the justice of the peace, by a majority of eighty-one, in 1902. During his four-year term, four-fifths of all cases in Madera County were presented in his courtroom. He has been described as an impartial and efficient judge.

As an attorney, Joseph was also known for advocating on behalf of the defenseless, namely those in the growing Hispanic population in Madera. Joseph's mother—David's grandmother—was the daughter of a Spanish pioneer, thus Joseph was fluent in both English and Spanish and was often called upon to interpret for Hispanic people called to testify in court. In one famous case for which Joseph served as a translator, it was he who, having understood the nuances of the Spanish language, picked up on the fact that the main witness in a murder trial was not entirely secure in her testimony, which had resulted in an innocent man being sentenced to life in Folsom Prison. It was a suspicion that Joseph pursued relentlessly for 10 years until finally securing the confession of the true murderer.

Joseph Barcroft passed away on August 14, 1941, before the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the passage of Executive Order 9066. For many years, he was a dear friend of the Nishimoto family, as well as their advisor, and frequented their store. His apparent compassion for those in the Hispanic community was inherited by his son and fellow attorney David, who likewise held the same empathy for the Nishimoto family when they were confronted with the injustice of the evacuation orders.

In his interview with Richard Hawkins of the Go For Broke National Education Center, Sunny Nishimoto breaks down in tears when speaking of how much the Barcrofts meant to him and his family. At first, he recalls how when the family first came to Madera, his parents befriended Joseph, who Sunny says "adopted" the family and made arrangements for Tamaichi and Kameyo to borrow $500 from "an aunt" to open the store. Fearful that they could lose the store as Kameyo was not an American citizen—and not permitted by law to become one—and especially leery considering that Tamaichi had lost the ranch in Parlier partly because he worked with several immigrants who were not citizens and thus not permitted to own land, Kameyo was determined to ensure all paperwork was correctly in order so the store would not be in danger of being taken away lawfully. Joseph Barcroft, Sunny explained, gave Kameyo the reassurance she needed and made all the necessary legal arrangements for the Nishimoto family. From that point on, the two families maintained a strong friendship.

Being half Mexican, Nishimoto said, Joseph Barcroft understood some of the racial barriers they faced, even though he—Sunny—was less aware of the discrimination as a young child. From where Sunny stood growing up, nearly everyone was in the same situation—Black, Mexican, or Asian, you were not welcome in certain establishments, like the community center pool, he explained. With a majority of his peers being Hispanic, Nishimoto did not feel he faced much discrimination. Even when considering the White families in the community, Sunny said he felt all "the neighbors were very kind to us." But, this shifted after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Suddenly, there were some white families who refused to purchase groceries at the Bridge Store. Family photographs of Kameyo at the time show her standing in front of the store, as they were forced to close for evacuation, and in the window on display are signs stating "We are American."

Though Sunny doesn't remember much discrimination, clearly enough Maderans held a negative opinion of the Japanese after December 7, 1941, to warrant such signage. What Sunny remembers most, however, is the kindness and support shown by a few outstanding families. He recalls one German family, the Remers, approaching his parents before they left Madera for the Fresno Assembly Center. During WWI, Nishimoto said, this family was ostracized; one of the sons even committed suicide as a result of depression over his mistreatment, but they came to offer their support to the Nishimoto family. "They said that everything would be alright because they were leading citizens in Madera and they knew that things would change later, so they told us everything would be okay," Sunny said. But it was the memories of Barcroft that made Sunny break down when he was asked about the biggest influencers in his life. It was David Barcroft who put together the paperwork for Lloyd Hart to lease the store from the Nishimotos for 5 years.

According to a Fresno Bee article published December 7, 2003, Sunny told reporter Guy Keeler that they only had 30 days to prepare to evacuate which was so quick that Hart didn't even have time to complete the paperwork on his financing before they had to leave for Fresno. Luckily, David Barcroft was able to iron out the details and the Nishimotos left with the assurance that they would receive $200 a month for the next

five years—such assurance few Japanese families received with such a hasty departure. Additionally, Barcroft arranged to rent out the Nishimoto house, located just a few blocks from the store. In the article, Barcroft's niece, Harriet Sturk states, "This was a really tough situation for the Nishimoto family … My mother, Genevieve Conn, made up little care packages for them as often as she could."

Thus, we know it wasn't just a matter of paperwork, the entire Barcroft family showed its support, including Genevieve, David's daughter, who was a young girl at the time. In the same article, Sunny also explains that David did not charge the Nishimoto family for these expedient services—they were all free of charge out of the goodness of his heart, in the name of friendship. To this day, though the Barcrofts are gone, the Nishimoto family as a whole still credits the Barcrofts with protecting the family store that was Kameyo's legacy, and then Keith and Sunny's.

Now in 2023, although there is no longer the Bridge Store business, the property still remains in the family. On the corners across the street from the Bridge Store, Sunny founded two businesses: Fastway Chicken and Fastway Market. Living and working in the neighborhood, Sunny saw the community needed these services that were not in the area at the time. Sunny's son Wally and his wife Kathy now own and operate the popular Fastway Chicken take-out restaurant. Sunny's daughter Ruth helps her husband Gaylen Thelander manage the gas and convenience store, Fastway Market. Next to the market is a laundromat, the family's long-running operation. None of this, the Nishimotos say, would have been possible without the generosity of the Barcrofts.

Knowing this, we suspect Tamaichi and Kameyo, and perhaps even Sunny and his siblings, would have written letters of gratitude to Barcroft.

> Dear Mr. Barcroft and the Barcroft family,
>
> I would like to say thank you for everything you did for me and my family. I appreciate what you did for us. It really meant a lot that you maintained our things safely. The fact that you and your family were willing to take in what we couldn't when we were

sent to the concentration camp is amazing. We are very grateful to you all and are blessed to have such great friends. You mean more to us than you could ever know. You will forever be a part of our lives and in our hearts.

—Sincerely, Kameyo Nishimoto

Dear Mr. Barcroft,

I am very grateful for everything you have done. You helped us with the business and our home. We are truly lucky to have such a great friend. We are thankful for your continued support.

—Sunny Nishimoto

Dear Mr. Barcroft,

Thank you for being there for us. We don't know what we would have done without you and your family. You helped out so much by taking care of the lease and ensuring our stuff was stored properly and our home was rented out. Mr. Barcroft, I also want to thank you for being such a positive influence on our son, Sunny. We just can't thank you enough for all you have done for us. We truly appreciate you and your family and don't know what we would have done without your kindness.

—Tamaichi and Kameyo Nishimoto

Dear Mr. Barcroft,

It has been a privilege to have met you within my lifetime. Though I must say I wish we had met under different circumstances than the ones we met under, I do have to recognize that with your education and knowledge of the law, you were able to assist my family in keeping our grocery store. People are not always the kindest; this is a tough lesson I've had to learn. But

you have been very kind, and I will forever be thankful to you for helping our family. I know other families were not so lucky, losing all their material as well as sentimental valuables. As a tribute to you, I vow to make higher education a priority.

—Mary Nishimoto

Dear Mr. Barcroft,

Thank you for finding someone to lease our family-owned store. Although these past five years spent in imprisonment, and then in Minnesota, have been long and extremely hard and painful for our family, it has been a comfort to know our store is still doing wonderful and has continued to prosper in our absence. I'm so thankful Mr. Hart decided to lease it and for the timely payments he has made on the lease to keep us afloat here in Minnesota. We are excited to return soon, and it is wonderful to know we are coming home to a thriving business.

—Sincerely, Kameyo Nishimoto

Dear Mr. Barcroft,

I'm writing this letter as a way to thank you for the huge impact you and your family made on our lives. There is no way to ever repay your kindness or the help that we received from you but the least we can do is thank you. What we went through after Executive Order 9066 with our forced imprisonment in the assembly center and later the incarceration camp in Arkansas, was life-changing in a negative manner, but I think we would have struggled much more if it were not for your help. Finding us someone to lease our business and rent our home was not something you had to do—we didn't even pay you—but you did it anyway from the kindness of your heart. As a mother, I'll never be able to stop thanking you.

> My children describe me as tough, but I have had to be tough for my children. The circumstances we endured were some of the hardest I have ever had to go through and the most unjust. Your help, however, took a lot of the weight off my shoulders and I am forever thankful. So thank you. And please, thank your family for me as well!
>
> —Best wishes, Kameyo Nishimoto

A couple of students, knowing the depth of thankfulness Kameyo, in particular, would have felt toward David Barcroft for helping to save the business, wrote diary entries expressing how Kameyo would have felt about Barcroft's kindness.

> Dear Diary,
>
> When we lost the ranch in Parlier. We were afraid we wouldn't have anywhere to go, but we met a lawyer, Mr. Joseph Barcroft and he essentially adopted our family. When we moved to Madera, where the Barcrofts are from, we were welcomed and were able to achieve my dream of opening a grocery store. Even with the language barrier, we were successful because many Maderans also struggle with English as I do, but instead of Japanese, their native language is Spanish. Still, we made it work, and the customers were kind. Now, having to leave again for this evacuation has been devastating. We had to leave everything behind once again, but luckily, the Barcroft family helped us. While the elder Mr. Barcroft recently passed away, his son, David, who took over his father's law firm, took care of everything and made sure to find another family to lease our store for the next five years. The Barcroft family has taken such good care of us over the years. They are truly wonderful people and the best of friends.
>
> —Kameyo Nishimoto

Dear Diary,

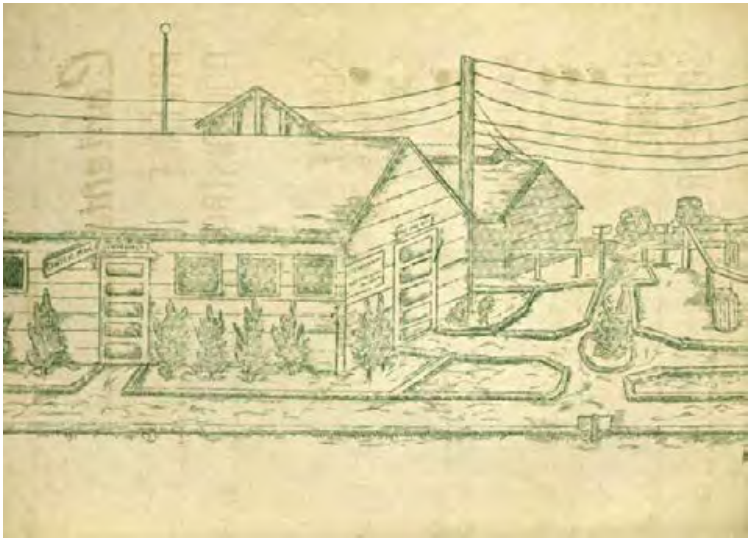
I miss the things I left behind. I miss things as they were. I miss the people of Madera and wonder if they also miss me. Regardless, I have decided to be strong and focus on how lucky my family and I are. I am lucky in the sense that this situation has allowed me to experience things I never would have otherwise had the tragedy of Pearl Harbor and the subsequent evacuation of all Japanese not occurred. For instance, being relocated to the Fresno Assembly Center has forced me to slow down because I'm not working, and though my family and I are all huddled up in one room, I get to spend time with my now adult children that I would never have spent before. My optimism seems to be contradictory to the ambivalent feelings of others who have shared my experience but were less fortunate. I feel they—other Japanese families imprisoned here—think I'm privileged or worse, ignorant, in comparison to them because they have it worse in that they have lost everything and will have nothing to return home to when this war is over. To an extent this is true. I do have it so much better than others, but why shouldn't I be grateful for my good fortune during this tragic time? That is what I wish other people would understand; I only want to show how grateful I am for all the good people and opportunities we do have in this country. One person to whom I am especially grateful is Mr. Barcroft. Mr. Barcroft is someone of great importance to my family because of everything he has helped us through. It is due to his kindness that our store remains open, though it is being run by others until we can return. This kindness is representative of who he is, who those in his family are, and who many in Madera are. While some may be fearful after Pearl Harbor, by and large, that is not my experience. In my experience, most Americans accept

us and so many friends in Madera like Mr. Barcroft don't agree with the evacuation of Japanese and Japanese Americans. It is my hope that I can give back and be a light for someone else as Mr. Barcroft was for us. He has been so helpful that I can never repay him and I doubt helping one person in my future would be enough to compare. He has given us a pause and resume button of sorts by extending his sympathy, kindness, labor, personal time, and understanding. For all of this, I am eternally grateful. Mr. Barcroft has become yet another fantastic role model for my children. He is a great man whose best qualities have been brought out during this war. War brings out the truth in all and for so many, it has brought out fear, but for the Barcrofts and other Maderans, it has brought out camaraderie and empathy. I will forever remember what Mr. Barcroft did for us. I didn't intend for this entire journal entry to be about Mr. Barcroft, but with the amount I've written about him, I suppose there is nothing left to say other than to dedicate this page of my diary to Mr. Barcroft, a truly honorable and noble man.

—Kameyo Nishimoto

CHAPTER 4

Life at Fresno Assembly Center



A drawing of the Fresno Assembly Center as presented in the center's final publication, The Vignette.

In its haste to remove those of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast, the government-operated War Relocation Authority incarcerated families first in temporary detention facilities as the larger concentration camps were under construction. For Central Valley Japanese families, including the Nishimotos, this meant moving into the stables at the Fresno Fairgrounds. At the time, the site was referred to as the Fresno Assembly Center. The Fresno Assembly Center received its first residents on May 6, 1942, and remained open until October 30, 1942, making it the longest-running of all the temporary detention facilities.

All the immediate Nishimoto family members, except Keith who was already enlisted in the army and was stationed in Minnesota, spent five months in the Fresno Assembly Center before being transferred to the permanent concentration camp in Jerome, Arkansas. In his 2005 interview for the Japanese American Military History Collective (JAMHC), Sunny Nishimoto, who was 19 years old while living in the center, paints a vivid picture of the subpar conditions he, his parents, and sisters had to endure.

"We had asphalt, black tar buildings we stayed in, and they had crude toilets outside ...they had a trough, with people on one side and then the other side. They had cut toilets ...They had a system where they had a big tub that would fill up with water and it was counterbalanced so that when it got full it would spill and it would all wash down to the [drain]...I felt sorry for my mother, you know, because [she was private] and to go with 35 ladies around you; she was a very strong lady."

As unsanitary and lacking in privacy as the makeshift restrooms were, Sunny said the members of the younger generation, especially the males, took it in stride, embracing some of the positives of the confinement. For adolescents like him, Sunny said, life in the camp was an "adventure," and he "didn't mind it too much." In fact, free of the monotony of his responsibilities on the outside, as a boy who would go to school and immediately come home to go to work in the family store, he had fun during his time at the Fresno Assembly Center and later in Jerome.

"I was raised very [strictly]," Sunny said of his upbringing in Madera. "[In the camp] we had danced and we played baseball, which I had wanted to play when I was small and, you know, in high school, but I had to go home to work. [In camp] I got to play baseball ...then when we went to Arkansas, I learned to play basketball...Then I was a pantry carpenter, and then, you know ...out in the universe there, when you're going out, you were supposed to go with Caucasian girls, but now there are all these [Japanese] girls out there and ...you're happy." Sunny even made some money—$16 a gig—playing saxophone in the center band on Saturday nights.

As Sunny found ways to make the best of his time at the Fresno Assembly Center, we know from excerpts in the Fresno Assembly Center's sendoff publication, The Vignette, that his

young sisters also kept themselves occupied. Eldest sister Mildred, who was 24, taught high school and young adult courses; Mary, age 21, worked as a nurse's aide in hospital three, closest to the family's barracks in H-8-3; and youngest, Patty, age 18, led a troop of girl scouts in the center. Meanwhile, Sunny stocked shelves while his father, Tamaichi, washed dishes, both contributing to the operation of their mess hall. What the family matriarch, Kameyo, did during her time at the Fresno Assembly Center is largely unknown, but Sunny describes her actions as "strong" numerous times in his JAMHC interview. Like most mothers in the concentration camps, we can assume she did her best to make the conditions of the barracks the family of six shared as homelike and bearable as possible as she grappled with her own insecurities over being robbed of her privacy. The heartbeat of the family, we imagine Kameyo thought endlessly of her children, including Keith, who she missed dearly.

In the following letters, students envision how the correspondence between Kameyo and Keith may have read:

June 20, 1942

Dear Keith,

In case I haven't told you enough: I am proud of you. At this time when the whole world is at war, as chaos plagues all of Europe, Asia, and the various island territories, you made the courageous decision to serve your country. And make no mistake, despite the mistreatment we are enduring at this time, this is still your country. I believe it is still the best country, and I say that as an Issei, born and raised in Japan. I immigrated here to be with your father and pursue the great American dream. Up until the attack on Pearl Harbor, your father and I were able to achieve great things—we farmed the land and opened our own business, a task unlikely to be achieved by any but citizens of the highest social class in Japan. I love this country and we are all indebted to you for bravely defending it. It is my sincere hope that your bravery

and the bravery of other Nisei are recognized and are able to turn the tide of overall American opinion toward our culture.

The assembly center in Fresno is not terrible—your brother and sisters have certainly made the most of this unfortunate situation. Sunny helps in the mess hall along with his father, and your sisters, bless their souls, are volunteering their time as a teacher, nurse's aide, and girl scout troop leader. Sunny has also expressed a desire to join you in the service if the incarceration in Arkansas proves to be much the same as here. I'm so proud of all of you. At the same time, it breaks my mother's heart that you must all face these troubling times and the discrimination that comes with them. Prior to the evacuation, your sisters were all college-bound. Now, who knows how long they will need to wait to finish school and start their fruitful lives? They are all taking it in such stride, but as their mother, I can't help but weep for their loss, and yours as well—to spend your youth fighting or trapped behind barbed wire. It pains me so much.

Moreso, I feel helpless here. Not yet fluent in English, there isn't much I can contribute—all the jobs in the center are given to those who are bilingual or are fluent in English while adequate in Japanese. In one respect, I'm glad to see Sunny and your sisters interacting with more Japanese and learning more of our customs and traditions, and even picking up the language. That is one silver lining. But I feel out of sorts. The restrooms here are terrible—no privacy, and our house—if you can call it that—is a tiny stable. I can still smell the manure from the animals they would pin in here for the fair.

I pray that conditions in Arkansas improve. I long for more space to stretch my legs. Mildred said perhaps an adult class in learning English may be

offered in Arkansas—I would be happy to take it. An American government class for adults has also been proposed. I'm very interested in that because I have to wonder how American law justifies jailing innocent civilians as a "wartime necessity." Perhaps, since you are in the military now, you can enlighten me as to the government's reasoning. Alas, I'm rambling. There is only so much I can really say about our circumstances here.

We all miss you but are also glad you are paving your own way as a patriot. You are in all our thoughts and prayers.

—Love, Your Mother, Kameyo

September 3, 1942

Dear mother,

Even though times are tough, I'd like to thank you and father for migrating here for me and my siblings to have a better dream, a dream most people call the American dream. Wherever I was in life and whatever my dream was is now far from my reach. I am unable to obtain it. That is why Pearl Harbor will forever have a huge impact on my life.

I sometimes ask myself why am I fighting for a country I thought was mine, but has now turned on me and discriminated against my people, locking up my family! I don't know if it's right to fight alongside these people who consider me an opponent or a threat, but it sure does beat being stuck in a concentration camp. I wonder how it has changed everyone's day-to-day lifestyle. It's been hard mother, really hard being away from home. It's harder not actually having a home or a place to even call home. I miss you, I miss my father, I miss Sunny, Mildred, Patty, Mary, my home, and most importantly, my freedom.

Up until the attack on Pearl Harbor, my siblings and I had a great life. No matter how hard things are I want you to know this isn't your fault. You did not fail as a mother. You are hard-working, supportive, and my personal hero. If you ever feel in doubt, look back at what you and father have achieved. You were able to farm on the land and open your very own business. This is unlikely to be achieved by just any ordinary folk.

I'm sorry for not being able to comfort you and my siblings. I know I'm the oldest son. I'm the one that's supposed to lead an example for Sunny, Mildred, Patty, and Mary and it pains me to leave this all up to Sunny, along with dad. I know he will be a great example for my sisters. I have no doubt in my mind that he will lead them down the right path. Sunny is to promise them nothing more than prosperous, glorious, bright days.

I'd tell you about my life here but I know there aren't many nice things to tell about its hard training. Sometimes I feel as if I'm too weak to be fighting in a war but I use you, father, and my siblings as my personal strength to do better. I want to be strong for you all. I hope you're all doing well. Stay safe mom and don't forget to eat well. I know when you're stressed, you tend to eat less.

Take care, mother. I wish you and everyone nothing but the best. I hope one day soon we'll be reunited again.

—Love, Your eldest Son, Keith

As we conceptualize what life must have been like in the Fresno Assembly Center, we must consider not only the letters being written to those on the outside, but the private thoughts recorded in the journals of individuals.

The following journal entries penned by students explore Sunny's perspective.

May 20, 1942

Dear Journal,

I am beside myself due to this horrible situation. Regardless of that, I feel I've still managed to have fun with the people that I've met. I don't really feel the need to sulk and maybe that's because I see my mother, a strong, brave woman, who is able to work through this situation, and my father, an indescribable, yet incredible man, both my inspiration to make this experience memorable in the best way possible.

They're right, you know, there's no point in being angry at the world because most of the people in it right now just don't care. However they may feel, it won't deter me because I must admit, I do understand their feelings and thoughts, even their hatred too, even if it is misdirected at me. It is this understanding that'll allow me and my family to hopefully move forward, and live through this experience as normal as we can while facing this persecution. I know in spite of it all, I'll enjoy my time here if I'm able to maintain this mentality.

However, to do that I have to find a way to fully let this anger go. Realistically, it does pain me. It hurts to be hated and demeaned by people you were actually trying to get along with. It also may sound crazy, but I'm fine being treated this way. I know I can handle it but what gets under my skin is when I imagine my experience with this discrimination happening to either of my parents or my younger sister. It's not that my older siblings aren't as important to me, no, it's just that my parents and younger sister are more vulnerable in a way. However, my mother, as long as I've known her, has been one of, if not the strongest,

people I've met, so when I say I worry for the vulnerable people in my life I am really speaking of my younger sister and my father.

My father, although he is strong, is also a great man, and a great man along with being strong must be connected with his emotions, as my father is. My younger sister isn't alarmingly emotional but she's still my little sister and a part of me refuses to give up seeing her as a vulnerable little girl, someone that I should be taking care of. Either way, I know that even though some comments made by people who hate her Japanese side will hurt her she won't let it tear her down. If they somehow do manage to tear her down she will build herself back up and I will proudly help her while she does. Thinking about this makes me happy. The fact is that even the people I consider to be most vulnerable are strong enough to maintain and build themselves back up independently.

Even though this judgment is definitely negative, the people in my life have somehow found a way of turning this into a positive. So I'll continue pushing through with a great smile knowing this will only make me and everyone in my situation stronger.

July 23, 1942

Dear Journal,

I was forced to come to the Fresno Assembly Center because of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor last December. Although we are all American citizens, except my mother who would become a citizen were she allowed to, the president, afraid of his own citizens turning on him, signed an executive order forcing me and my family to pack up and go. We were loaded onto a bus and taken to this camp in Fresno surrounded by barbed wire. As if that weren't enough of a safety measure, there are armed American guards

around the perimeter to dissuade escape attempts, which are highly unlikely since all the area Issei and Nisei have been agreeable thus far. It isn't pleasant to be here and although we cooperated and left the family business and all our belongings behind without putting up a fight, the family is worried about what may happen next. If it weren't for Mr. Barcroft, my parents would have lost everything they worked so hard for. Thank God he was able to secure a 5-year lease on the store so we will have something to go back to, whenever we get to go home.

For me personally, surprisingly, life in this assembly center has opened up a whole new world. Before all this happened I used to just go to school and work. Now, I have some free time so that is a good change for me. I do miss seeing my friends on the outside and I did start missing my old life outside of the camp. I miss having freedom and not being surrounded by armed guards and a barbed wire fence. Then, there is still work. I work in the mess hall with my dad, unloading boxes of food and sorting them on the pantry shelves. When I work, It starts to feel like my old life outside of the camp, but in a disappointing way. What I do really enjoy is a new job I got playing the sax at dances on Saturday nights. That has really kept me busy and having fun. So mostly every day I will practice on my sax trying to get better. Whenever I play, I'm surprised by how many girls my age are there. Honestly, it's the reason I keep practicing and getting better. That's the best thing about this place—all the nice Japanese Nisei girls.

Contrasting the experiences of those from the Issei generation to those of the Nisei is one thing. With Kamayo, we examine the struggles of incarceration through the eyes of a mother overcome with grief over the normalcy her children have lost

and the anxiety over their futures, while through Sunny, we see how a newfound sense of responsibility weighs on him in Keith's absence, and while he feels somewhat at peace with his circumstance in the Fresno Assembly Center, he worries for his parents, who face harsher discrimination as Issei, and his younger sister, Patty, who has faced little discrimination to such an extent previously. But in addition to comparing thoughts and feelings about incarceration across generations, it's imperative to consider how viewpoints may differ by gender.

In the following journal entries, students conceive how one of the Nishimoto sisters, Mary, may have experienced life at the Fresno Assembly Center.

May 30, 1942

Dear Journal,

I'm sad that my chance to finally start college was taken away from me. I was so eager to start my career as a nurse. I'm slowly trying to understand everything that has happened to my family and me.

I should start from the beginning, as I sat there in my bedroom thinking as to why mom and dad made me pack all my important things. I was sitting on my bed still thinking until I heard a knock at the front door. As I was getting up to answer it, dad got to the door before I did. I peeked out my bedroom door to see who it was, only to find out it was two guards telling dad that we had to leave the house. As we left the house and went on this bus I can't remember what it was but one thing that will always be in my mind is seeing other Japanese Americans in there too.

I really don't remember how long the ride was but we ended up at the Fresno fairgrounds. At the fairgrounds, there were hundreds of Japanese Americans. I have never seen this many Japanese people all in one place. As we got off we were told by the soldiers to go to the mess hall. I remember it was packed so we could not really move that much. Some guy came

into the room with soldiers behind him and told us something none of us could have even thought of while coming here. He said that, since Pearl Harbor was attacked, the government ordered the army to gather each and every one of Japanese descent into relocation areas. He told us this was our new home and advised us to get comfortable because he didn't know how long we would be there. I was shocked and confused. I really didn't know how to feel at the time. Before we all left he also said that all families were assigned to different buildings with other families.

When we reached these buildings, which were actually animal stables, it was horrible. The space was so small I knew I would have to change while other people were in there and would not have any privacy. Even though it was horrible and unfair, I have slowly adjusted to everything here in the assembly. I volunteered to be a nurse aide here in the hospital. Being able to volunteer at the hospital gives me some relief that I can still do what I love.

Mom, on the other hand, is having a hard time here at the assembly. I think she feels left out. Mom doesn't work but I think it's because she doesn't know English so maybe she is scared. I don't blame her though. Dad helps in the mess hall with Sunny helping him. Sunny actually volunteers to help dad. I was scared Sunny wasn't going to fit in here but he did a really great job fitting in. Mildred teaches in the high school and adult school that they have here in the assembly. I'm happy that she still gets to do what she loves. And the last person in my family is Patty. She is leading a girl scout troop here in the assembly. I really don't know how it started but it just happened. So I guess we are all still trying to figure everything out here.

July 13, 1942

Dear Journal,

Today I had the best day and the worst day of my life.

The worst part of my day was that there was a nasty incident at the center. A guy had fallen and cut himself across his palm. I had to assist with the surgery and stitching of his hand. I also administered antibiotics to prevent infection.

The best part of my day is that he was super handsome. I was having the hardest time of my life. I could not pay attention to the surgery. He was that handsome. I even put a stitch in too deep as I kept staring at his glossy eyes and wondering if he had a girlfriend.

Later on that day, I saw him again. I went up to him and started talking to him and seeing how he was healing. He said that he was doing well and that he was better. I was talking to him for a while. Then I asked him if he was planning to go to the dance that night and told him my brother was playing in the band. He said he would like to go and asked if we could go together. I was so excited; I didn't think dating would be possible here, but here we are. He even volunteered to walk to my barracks to pick me up.

A few hours later he picked me up. We ate dinner at the mess hall and talked for a bit before heading to the dance. It was so much fun. At the end of the evening, he walked me back and we kissed goodnight.

When I went into the barracks, my mom asked me how the dance was, and I couldn't hide my excitement. I really hope I get to see him again.

August 25, 1942

Dear Journal,

At first, I didn't enjoy it here at the Assembly Center, mainly because it wasn't what I expected. It was pretty bad. People kept getting sick from the food provided for us at the mess hall. At first, it was too much to handle at the hospital. Kids and adults would come with fevers, stomach aches, infections, and diseases.

Then there was an outbreak of measles that started spreading around. Outside, this would be simple to contain, but here, in such a confined space, it was really bad to the point where most of the people at the Assembly Center caught measles if they hadn't had it before.

It started spreading after a 12-year-old boy got infected. It was hard trying to figure out what was wrong with him especially since he just had a fever, cough, and a bit of a runny nose. After a few days, he started to have rashes appear on his body. By that time we tried to keep him away from the rest of the people in the assembly center but it was too late. In the span of a week, seven more people had already been infected and the numbers kept growing. We would treat them as best we could but it was difficult.

After all that chaos, life here got better, or at least, fewer people got sick, mostly because our bodies finally got used to the new diets and the food we are being fed. Also, the measles outbreak came to an end. At first, it was difficult to get used to eating the food since the diet they put us on was a bit rough from what we had before. After a month or two, you get used to it although the food still doesn't taste good.

After a good three months have passed I've got the hint that we are not leaving anytime soon. It has been rough having to get through certain things, especially because I'm a nurse, meaning I have to look after people and care for kids, adults, and elders. I don't mind but sometimes it gets difficult especially when there are a bunch of people getting sick at the same time because there are not that many nurses here and we are not well equipped.

Other than that, my time at the Assembly Center has gone smoothly without too much trouble. All our neighbors and my patients are nice people. I've learned to get used to this place. The food still isn't very good nor is the diet compared to what we ate at home before but there is no changing that. The smaller children still don't understand what's really going on and most parents lie to them, but even then the little kids always find a way to have fun. Sometimes they invite me to play even though I am older than them. They always try to find a way to include the adults in their little games and adventures. I've had fun being able to talk to the same people every day, especially the kids. I'm just trying to make the best of the situation. I've even been on a couple more dates.

September 30, 1942

Dear Journal,

I have been at this center for four dreadful months already. The things I've experienced here in this center are both physically and mentally draining. I have begun to feel that I grow so much older and older by the minute. Time goes quickly and there is nothing I can do to stop it. It feels like an endless void. I still remember that eventful early morning in May, when the unexpected happened, and suddenly my entire life had changed. No one had seen it coming, no one

could have ever predicted it. We knew it wouldn't be the easiest, living our lives in a hateful world like this. Everyone was fearful and dreaded what could happen next. We are drifting from place to place, the fear following us to the next camp or center. Many have to travel across the country with illnesses, and some will die on the journey and never return home. We all deserve better. The mothers in this camp are strong women. Through everything, they needed to keep their spirit and thoughtfulness as mothers alive for the benefit of their children. Even as this event has affected everyone's lives, they have to keep on going and stay optimistic for future generations. The strength they have even after such a tragedy is admirable. Despite many of them losing everything they've ever known, they keep going. They stay motivated and shield their children from the darkness of this world.

It has been a tough battle facing all this discrimination because of my race, although it was not my choice. I am proud of my heritage and I will embrace it. I do not deserve to be treated like an animal in a time like this. None of us do. We have all been through the same tragedy and have grieved. No one should have to face discrimination after such a tragedy. After such a catastrophe as Pearl Harbor, we should be able to come together, mourn together, and be understanding of each other. But that's just how the world is. The world is full of hatred which has led to these unfortunate circumstances. This imprisonment has affected many greatly, creating countless struggles. Now I work in the center as a hospital aide and have also started serving with the girl scouts with my younger sister to pass the time. We manage, but the troubles we witness here and in our world are unbearable. But there is no time to mourn.

We have to set an example for future generations to be able to prevent something horrific as this from taking place ever again. We cannot waste time on tears and hesitation, we must be able to stay strong for those who have yet to even enjoy their youth. Many of the children don't even understand what has happened. It's not even easy to come to terms with as an adult myself. As time flies the world becomes more and more dreadful. We have to make a change to ensure our children don't have to live in a world where events like these take place. We cannot let future generations keep going through the devastations and tragedies of today.

Though it is true that what occurred is a terrible tragedy, we cannot deny that we did not partake in the prevention of this. Humankind must take responsibility for contributing to the violence which eventually spreads and creates countless problems. Victims such as myself must make an effort to educate others so these misfortunes are not repeated. We must come together to bring peace to this land. We must work together to find solutions to prevent this from happening again.

CHAPTER 5

Early Days in Jerome

For the four Nishimoto young adults, Jerome was a place to explore their talents outside of serving the family grocery business. Sunny, 19, enjoyed playing saxophone in the Jerome jazz band [TOP]*, while younger sister Patty started teaching first graders in the camp* [BOTTOM]*. Oldest sister Mildred taught home economics at the high school level, while sister Mary worked as a nurse at one of the camp hospitals.*

According to the WRA record, all members of the Nishimoto family except for Mary arrived in Jerome on October 24, 1942. As of October 23, 1942, the Arkansas concentration camp that would grow to house nearly 8,500 Japanese Issei and Nisei at maximum capacity had already reportedly received 4,000 incarcerees and counting, according to the inaugural issue of the camp's burgeoning newspaper, The Communique, later renamed The Denson Tribune. In the same issue, a "welcome letter" from the camp's project director, Paul A. Taylor, addresses the concern that few facilities in the center had yet been completed. He points to the rushed schedule to evacuate the centers on the West Coast, namely the Fresno Assembly Center and the Santa Anita Assembly Center, as part of the reason for the Jerome location's unpreparedness. He also explained that more apartments, as he described the living quarters, were being built to accommodate each family, as well as mess halls, laundry, and toilet facilities. Stoves, which were used at the time to heat each family space, had also not been delivered yet. This last fact was the most alarming as the nights were much colder than those from the Central Valley were used to and elderly residents in particular suffered. According to Poston camp survivor Marion Masada, her husband Saburo, who was incarcerated along with the Nishimotos in Jerome, had an elderly relative who passed away one of the first freezing nights in the camp. In The Communique editorial, Taylor seems to indicate a delay in the shipment of the stoves due to a backorder situation. "I want to assure you that when the project is completed there will be sufficient living space for each family to have an apartment, and that bath and mess facilities will be sufficient," Taylor wrote. Thus was the assurance the Nishimotos and others incarcerated would have received upon arrival, though it did little to assuage those who would fall ill or lose a family member to the bitter cold.

Whatever the reasoning for their home not being quite ready for them, we imagine this would have been frustrating for the Nishimotos after days of traveling across the country, undoubtedly filled with nervous anticipation of what this more permanent site so many miles away from California's Central Valley might be like. It must have been a disappointment to likely have to share a space with others, even temporarily, and have even less privacy when using the restroom facilities than

they had had in Fresno, again even if that situation was also temporary. Even with such disappointment, the Nishimotos, like all those imprisoned, had no recourse, and most offered up their "cheerful cooperation" to help out wherever they could.

In the journal entries below, the Nishimotos recall the early days of living at the Jerome Relocation Center.

October 24, 1942

Dear Journal,

We finally arrived at our new home in Jerome. Imagine my shock when I realized they were still building our "houses." So much remains unfinished, so until a new space becomes available, the five of us will have to share living quarters with another, smaller family. Hopefully, we will have our own apartment by the time Mary joins us. It's not just the living spaces that are not completed. Currently, there is only one mess hall serving meals to over 1,000 of us, and there are very few completed laundry or toilet facilities, so lines are already forming, and this is just estimated to be a fraction of the total residents on the way. But, even unfinished, this is where the government wants us and we must make the best of it. I'm thankful we at least were given a place to go and I think that once it is built, the facilities will be an improvement over what we had in Fresno, put together so hastily.

—Kameyo

October 25, 1942

Dear Journal,

Living in these concentration camps has not been the best experience. We do have a roof over our heads so I should not complain, but the living conditions in the internment are not great. There just isn't enough living space for our family, and I really hoped there would be more space here in Jerome

than back in Fresno. But the worst part, for me, is the lack of privacy, not just in our cozy apartment, but in the restroom facilities. The restrooms do not have dividers between toilets, so I'm forced to use the bathroom in front of women I don't even know. It has been really hard for me to adapt to that here. At least in Fresno, though it was bad, I knew most of the women or got to know them. Now, I fear using the restroom at certain times because another stranger will see me exposed. I really wish they would put up some walls. That one improvement would make my time here more pleasant.

—Kameyo

October 26, 1942

Dear Journal,

I'm not sure how to feel now that I'm in Jerome. It is not altogether much different than the Fresno Assembly Center, only here there are at least twice as many people. I thought the facilities would be an improvement, but there really isn't that much more space per family, although there is more land to roam around within the fenced area. What is unbelievable though is much of this relocation center is incomplete. They weren't ready for us! There is only one mess hall for the 4,000 of us who have already arrived—and more are on the way! And then the bathroom facilities are also not done. We don't even have a stove, which isn't a huge concern right now, but I've heard the nights can get cold in the winter in Arkansas. I'm trying to stay calm, but I know my mom is having a hard time; I can tell by the look on her face.

—Sunny

November 24, 1942

Dear Diary,

My name is Patty Nishimoto. I was born in 1923. The same year the KKK (Ku Klux Klan) refused to publish a list of its members as required by law, but, above all, with respect to the United States, the 30th President Calvin Coolidge was appointed after the death of the 29th President, President Warren G. Harding. Californians received their famous Hollywood sign to promote new housing development. Italy suffered its earthquake, named Mount Erna, which destroyed 60,000 homes. Japan also had its own earthquake, known as the Great Kanto, killing over 100,000 people.

I am 18 years of age. My family has cried a lot about having to be so far from home. We are not even sure how long we will be here. Currently, it's been one month. Showers do not have any privacy. The "apartments" are built from tar paper on pine boards, allowing dust to enter when the floorboards are separated from drying pine. The so-called apartments are an average of 16 by 20 feet. Wet and humid conditions have led to the spread of malaria, typhoid fever, and influenza.

Our camp director, Paul A. Taylor has so much pride and ego, and instead of asking for coal, he believed that the camp could have self-sufficient maintenance by employing the men imprisoned here, like my father, to cut wood from the surrounding forest to produce energy and heat. We are forced to stand in the rain, our feet in the mud, all for small portions of boiled potatoes, beans, or stale bread. I overheard that the high school physics class was taught in the laundry room because it was the only place with running water. There were no seats, so the

students sat on the floor. Sometimes temperatures are below freezing. It seems as if the older generations have become less strict with the younger generation in camp than they were on the outside. Here, young Nisei have been able to enjoy classes, clubs, high school yearbooks, and committees, something my older brothers and sisters are not used to. You see, Sunny, for instance, had to walk from high school every day to the store, and by the time he came there, he had to change his shoes to his work shoes, leaving him no time for extracurriculars.

The cost of a meal per person here is about 37 cents, which is an eight-cent difference compared to the 45 cents normally spent on American troops. Stories of laboring incarcerees being paid less than soldiers and white staff of the WRA are spreading. These facilities are the only ones where citizens live in fear of whether or not a civilian living outside the camp may feel compelled to shoot us. This is exactly what happened when a local farmer shot three Japanese American workers who were collecting firewood at Taylor's direction. Two were injured and one is dead, all because this civilian believed they were trying to flee. Unfortunate events such as these will lead workers to go on strike.

As Christmas approaches, we´re currently deciding how to split the funds raised from the camp-wide fundraising event of the blocks within the camp to purchase candy, decorations, and trees. Camp stewards ordered mochi and the preparation of the dish brought together many families and their different ways of preparation. Although I would have preferred that each of the families here lived in traditional homes, that is, with our families, part of me recognizes the bonds that are formed as a result of the union of families, but also the dangers. This is a time of spending alongside your family and having faith, so

I suppose that is what I will do. My mother had faith in seeing my sister Mary, soon, and sure enough 21 days before I am writing this she arrived at the center where my mother happily greeted her. Mary was not able to come with us initially because of the demand for nurses needed to travel with the ailing incarcerees from Fresno. At one point I was not sure if we would be alive to see her or if she'd become a victim of a hate crime while she was away from us. I suppose as long as my family is by my side I will look at things in a different light. I have their support, care, and love, unlike maybe some other incarcerees.

—Patty Nishimoto

While the facilities were inadequate, the WRA put forth the effort to make those imprisoned feel as welcome as possible. With a recreation center already completed and available for use, some ex-Fresnans decided to host a dance to mingle with their new neighbors from Santa Anita. The "get acquainted" dance, as it was called, was held at 7 p.m. on October 28, 1942. This would be the first of many such events held in Jerome, which, not unlike the Fresno Assembly Center where the Nishimotos were housed before, became its own bustling Japanese-American town. Below are three contrasting perspectives of the dance from the envisioned diaries of Mildred, Sunny, and Patty.

MILDRED'S DIARY

October 25, 1942

Dear Diary,

My siblings and I heard the news that our internment camp was hosting a dance, the Get Acquainted Dance. It is quite a name and it sounds like it could be fun. The news was released on Tuesday and the dance is on Saturday, today is Wednesday—not a lot

of time to prepare. I have about four days to find a date if you can even call it that since this dance is for couples only. I've never been to a dance before and I've heard from others that dances are fun so I really want to attend.

October 26, 1942

Dear Diary,

It's currently 12:38 p.m., past the curfew, but I've finally found a date! We are just friends but we agreed to go together just for the fun of it and mainly to be able to experience the dance. I don't have or own a "formal" dress at the moment so I will have to improvise. Luckily, I have seamstress skills and some materials from teaching home economics to work with. I only own one dress, but it is definitely not formal; it is beyond worn out and dirty. Difficult is certainly the right word to describe how hard it will be to fix this dress to make it pretty and presentable for the dance. Everyone is fast asleep, but I know I need to get started on the dress now.

October 27, 1942

Dear Diary,

It's difficult trying to fall asleep. I'm so excited about tomorrow. Finally, my first dance is at 7 p.m. tomorrow! I've been working diligently on my dress and I think I look really good in it, but that's really beside the point: the main point is I'm about to attend my first dance and it is here in Arkansas, in this camp.

October 28, 1942

Dear Diary,

I arrived at the dance, and it was not as pretty as one might expect from a typical luxurious formal or prom, but for being in internment, the decorations hastily thrown together are quite nice—some of my former students from Fresno Assembly Center even designed them. Everyone looks so happy with their dates. Patty and Sunny are here also with their dates. My sister was dressed up so nicely in a dress mom made for her—and my brother cleans up well too. A lot of the girls didn't have dresses at all so they just wore their best pieces of clothing. I've received a few compliments on my dress; perhaps if I can save up and order some new fabric from the store when it opens, I can start a little business or teach other girls how to make dresses. The music being played at this dance is blues and jazz, which Sunny is really into. They have a few people here forming a band and they have asked Sunny to join them on saxophone. He plays well with them like they've been playing together for years instead of days. My date and I are having fun dancing and talking with new people. I never went to my dances in high school; I always had to work, so I'm glad I came to this one. No one on the outside will be able to say they've been to a dance like this.

October 28, 1942
Midnight, after the dance

Dear Diary,

The music started in a setting that resembled a cafeteria; it wasn't the most expensive or eye-catching place, but it was an environment where I could meet people of the same heritage. There was a slight struggle in communicating, as funny as that may

seem, as some only spoke Japanese and others spoke English, so I had to wait for others to speak and translate some of the Japanese for me. I didn't have anything special to wear; after all, we were only each allowed to bring one bag with us to camp initially and who would pack formal wear? But, since we were all in the same situation, I went with what I had. I felt a sense of reassurance that, unlike a normal dance, this one wouldn't include people judging each other's outfits left and right.

I did feel this sort of gloomy feeling as I listened to the sounds of the music fade out at the end, though. This wasn't fancy by any means, but it had brought entertainment to the center and I forgot for a short while where we all were and why. I drank juice and I laughed, it wasn't even my favorite, but it was something different I hadn't tasted in a while. The same with the snacks. I hadn't eaten my favorites in some time and here there were a few special treats aside from the mess hall food we eat day in and day out. It was something. The dance was a brief escape from the monotony and the misery. While the dance made me feel happy and welcome, it also reminded me of what I was missing on the outside. I didn't do anything wrong, none of us did, but I happened to be of the same heritage as the enemy. I couldn't sleep thinking about it and sat up in the chair so as not to disturb my sister. I had no choice but to bury my face under a blanket and cry.

October 29, 1942

Dear Diary,

Last night, my sister Patty and I went to the "get acquainted" dance held here at our new camp in Jerome. We don't know a lot of people here so we went hoping to meet some new people. Once we were done

getting ready, we headed out to the dance held in recreation hall four. The announcement in the paper said couples only, but we are both single and decided to try our luck and sneak in with our brother Sunny and one of his friends. Who would know if we are related? How else are we to "get acquainted"? There were some nice gentlemen at the dance, but we were shy and mostly kept to ourselves and talked with the other young women.

Once we got used to everything and everyone, I opened up more. At one point, two gentlemen came up to us and asked if we would like to dance. Patty, clinging to my side, suddenly perked up and said yes to the younger-looking of the two, while I was a bit more reserved. The man before me was a handsome Nisei, lean but strong looking with a kind smile. I reluctantly took his hand and accompanied him to the dance floor. As I was dancing in this odd place with a handsome face before me, I couldn't help but wonder where exactly this night would lead. Would these new people become my friends? How long would we be here? I'd only seen half—the half from Fresno—before, and just six months ago I remember I'd seen none. I had known so few Japanese people outside my family before and now here I was, in a shabby yet clean dance hall built just for us. How long, I keep asking, will this go on?

SUNNY'S JOURNAL

October 29, 1942

Dear Journal,

Last night, I went to the get acquainted dance. It was pretty exciting to attend a dance here in the relocation center. We Nisei really know how to have

a good time despite all the turmoil going on in the world around us. We really are making the most of it. I accompanied my sister Patty and my friend went with Mildred. I went with my sister hoping I would be able to sneak in and meet a girl. My hopes were pretty high and the girls here do not disappoint. They were all dressed up as best as they could be. When I entered, a band was playing some upbeat jazz music, but I knew they could use a bit more soul so asked them if they would mind if I joined them and they said sure, so I went back and grabbed my saxophone and before I knew it, suddenly I was a part of the jazz band! I didn't really get to dance with any girls since I was playing, but I definitely drew some attention. I paused a few times to eat some appetizers and drink some punch and chatted with a couple of girls who commended my musical skills. I had the best time. I made new friends in the band and got to talk to some girls. It was better than I expected.

PATTY'S DIARY

October 25, 1942

Dear Diary,

We just arrived in Jerome yesterday, but it was announced there is a dance on Saturday. I really want to go to this get acquainted dance. It is being hosted by some of the Nisei boys from the Fresno Assembly Center and one of them, who was in my class there, invited me, but he said he'd meet me there. The dance is for couples only so I plan to go in with Sunny since he doesn't have a date. Mildred is going to, believe it or not, with one of Sunny's friends. I'm glad she

is deciding to reinvent herself here and be more outgoing. She is really introverted and serious as the oldest.

October 28, 1942

Dear Diary,

I don't have a dress! Isn't that the first rule of going to a dance? Having a dress to show off? Well, I was planning to go to the dance all the same. I came out of the dressing area in my most clean skirt, which resembles shorts, and a tight shirt overlapped it to make it somewhat appear like a dress. I walked over to the kitchen area where my mother was wiping off the table with some rags and I called for her while her back was turned to me and dropped what she was doing and turned. She looked at me and the way she did it almost made me sad. I could tell what haunted her face was an upsetting demeanor of disapproval.

"No," she said simply.

"W-what do you mean? I asked if I could go remember, and you said yes, remember?" I reminded her, hoping it would refresh her recent memory.

"No," she repeated.

"No?" My heart sank.

"That won't be what you're wearing," she said to me in a pleasant tone, clearing my nerves.

"What?"

"That won't be what you're wearing," she said again, continuing to wipe down the table. "Come with me." She dropped the rag and quickly moved toward the little cloth-covered closet in the corner, hiding whatever she now pulled out to show me. After emerging, she revealed a beautiful light blue-colored dress and held it out to me.

"I made this from some old table clothes we had and used to sell at our store," she said.

I eyed my new dress amazed at what she had made from such unconventional materials. It was perfect and even more so because it was made especially for me. It was a beautiful dress but it was really the gesture that meant more. The reality was she could have been focused on a more important deed. She could have made a blanket to help us keep warm while we waited for the stove, but she made a dress. The foggy haze that was the war didn't enable her mind to leave me behind or out of focus and now I held this beautiful dress, an important memory that I'd now hold onto forever. I knew I was important to her. I'm her baby girl, but I didn't know that something so small as my desire to go to this dance was of such deep importance to my mother.

"Thank you," I said gently.

She didn't speak. She only allowed a reassuring smile to escape her face.

My mother. No matter how terrible tonight goes, this moment cannot be ripped or wiped away from me.

I threw the dress on and left for the dance beaming with a smile.

October 28, 1942

Dear Diary,

I arrived at the doors of this dance, and I began to wonder why I was even there. Even though I was with my date and ready for a fun time, it is such a weird feeling attending this dance while being stuck in a place like this as a prisoner, and my dress is a bit uncomfortable which doesn't make me feel any better. I know I should make the best of it, just like Sunny always says, after all, I wouldn't be surprised if I didn't get another opportunity like this again while being imprisoned here. I should try to enjoy myself.

As I entered the dance, I let all those feelings of discomfort disappear. At first, I thought this could be a dreadful experience but honestly, it made me feel a little at home again. The music playing sounds like what my mother used to play when I would dress up and the scent of the food reminds me of my mom's home-cooked meals. The scenery even looks good with all the decorations. I love seeing other people enjoying themselves in their best dresses and suits. It gives me a sense of comfort and I felt better watching so many people able to be themselves. Perhaps, this dance wasn't such a weird idea after all.

October 29, 1942

Dear Diary,

Sunny is not too happy with me. I ended up walking with the guy I was going to meet at the dance—and Sunny almost couldn't get in! He was so mad but ended up going and grabbing his saxophone so he could get in with the band. It probably worked out for the best since they sounded so much better with Sunny playing. I ended up hanging around until Sunny left and he wasn't too happy about that either. He said I should have gone home with Mildred because I was out too late, but I'm not sure if he was being overprotective or if he just wanted the chance to flirt with some of the girls without his little sister hovering. Probably both. I think he'll get over it.

Whether the trio of Nishimoto siblings attended the "get acquainted" dance in reality or not, one thing we know for a fact is that it didn't take long for the habitually upbeat Sunny to make friends and acquaintances. An announcement in the third issue of The Communique headlined, "Cut Rugs to Local Jive Band" lists Sunny as a saxophonist and one of the original 14 members in Jerome's newly formed dance band, which was looking to grow into a 5-piece concert orchestra and a

90-piece band. This gig ensured that Sunny would be present at all the future dances held in the center during his time there. It also meant that he would get paid to have a little fun. In his interview with the JAMHC, Sunny recalled getting paid $16 a performance to play on Saturday nights as part of the band. "I had fun in the relocation center," Sunny said laughing. "I shouldn't say that I had fun."

He hesitated to say it because for others, including his parents, being in Jerome was not much fun at all, but quite the opposite. In the same issue of The Communique in which Sunny's fun is announced, the headline directly above boldly states "Meal Tickets to Control Diners," announcing the temporary suspension of family-style dinners in the mess hall due to lack of space. This would mean until all the mess hall facilities were completed, each person would have to have a meal ticket to receive their dinner. This was to control the number of people eating in each mess hall. Rain also brought with it adversity. A third article in the October 30, 1942 issue reports that as residents traveled to mess halls and washroom facilities in the rain the day prior, they became covered in two to three inches of sticky adobe mud which had to be "tediously scraped off at each door stop." We imagine such circumstances as essentially having to stand in a bread line outside the singular mess hall in Arkansas mud would have been disheartening to Tamaichi and Kameyo especially.

October 29, 1942

Dear Diary,

It is our sixth day at Jerome Relocation Center. It is not comfortable at all. It is not the dream oasis imagined when we were leaving the Fresno Assembly Center. In fact, it is a nightmare because, as it seems, we may not even get to eat with each other. It was devastating to read the news. To many of us, it feels like a personal attack on our familial structure. We have been placed in this facility without explanation except to be told if we try to escape we may be shot. People are slowly warming up to each other. We are trying to familiarize ourselves with neighbors and

pass the time. Throughout the day and night, people continue to arrive and are escorted to their temporary homes. I mean, surely, this will not be forever. Someone must do something about it before we allow generations of Japanese to be seen only in camps as if we were human zoo animals displayed in the United States for the world to see. We are not living too badly, I suppose because we have some extracurriculars. The Nisei are forming a theater group to entertain and distract us from our new reality. It was announced that we will be able to receive our mail subscriptions from our towns of origin. I feel we are witnessing a "historical" event. The first rain since the opening of this center has forced residents to get to work on solutions for dealing with thick mud. Boxing and wrestling classes for young boys and men began yesterday. Other sports are still to come. I feel as if we can adapt as long as we keep busy. I certainly have some complaints but I suppose I can live as long as I do not develop a disease or illness due to the wet weather and substandard living conditions.

—Kameyo Nishimoto

October 29, 1942

Dear Journal,

Mom, Mildred, Patty, and I stared outside the window watching the rain for a long time, only because we'd never seen it rain so much, and this is considered a "light" rain in Arkansas. Back home, we only ever really got a few light drops. We just got here and, already, here is the rain. I don't hate it, it would actually be nice if it weren't for the mud. As my siblings and I headed out to the dining hall, as soon as we got out the door we were met with sinking mud. It's an understatement to say that none of us were

happy about walking in that and getting it all over our only pairs of shoes. We noticed some of the older men, including dad, collecting wood, cardboard, and gravel, to create paths so people, especially the elderly and young children, could walk from their barracks to the mess halls and toilets without getting drenched in mud. No one was enjoying getting mud all over their shoes. This rain has taught all of us a lesson and next time we will be more prepared. The rain wasn't the only issue encountered today. Overcrowding in the center is prompting the WRA to require that we all have meal tickets now to control how many are served at the mess hall at one time. They will be handed out to each family tomorrow. This is so only a certain number of people will be eating in the mess hall at a time and we have been assured that it is only temporary until the other mess halls are ready. I hope they are built soon because I'm upset that I won't be able to sit with and talk to my bandmates and friends during mealtime now. Oh, that reminds me, one good thing I forgot to mention is that there is a jive band forming in Jerome and I'm a part of it! This is one thing I'm really excited about here. I have a lot more time to practice playing my saxophone without the constraining schedule of school and work. Another bonus is band members are getting paid for the gigs we do for dances and other events. I don't mind helping dad with stocking shelves at the mess hall, but this job is way more fun. Playing in a band allows me to escape from everything else happening here that is not so great—like the rain. Music helps me relax and feel free. Plus, girls love musicians.

—Sunny

While Tamaichi, Kameyo, Sunny, Mildred, and Patty arrived at the concentration camp in Jerome on October 24, 1942,

according to War Relocation Authority records, the second eldest Nishimoto daughter, Mary, did not arrive until about a week later, on November 3, 1942. We can only speculate as to why. Knowing that Mary worked as a nurse's aide at the Fresno Assembly Center, we can infer that, perhaps, some medical personnel needed to stay behind to help pack up equipment or in order to accompany their patients for whom it was a more arduous journey across the country. Whatever the reason, we imagine Mary's arrival to Jerome differently. We assume the 21-year-old had not been separated from family for a long time, and certainly at not such a great distance during an uncertain period in history, and the experience was likely simultaneously exciting and nerve-wracking. She was able to get a taste of independence, however, we think she would have greatly missed her family and would have been concerned about how they were faring in their journey and during their first days in their new, more permanent home away from home. In the journal below, Mary shares these conflicting feelings and her trepidation about her own impending arrival in Jerome, Arkansas.

October 25, 1942

Dear Journal,

It's been a long day and I miss my family regardless of the fact that I know I'll see them soon. Today, I suspect they have arrived in Arkansas and have started their first day in a new place. By the time I arrive, they will probably all know the ropes and I'll be on my own having that "first day of school" experience. I've been told by those who took charge of the assembly center hospitals that there will be more nurses needed to serve all the residents in Jerome. Apparently, there is a new work program that was passed for the camps, and it is believed that with this the WRA will have the ability to afford to give a permanent job to any incarceree with the ability and desire to work. With this program going into effect and the need for nurses, I hope a spot will open up for me as more than just an aide. I'm trying to stay

as optimistic as my brother, Sunny, about this whole move, but, of course, no one can hold a candle to his positivity. I've heard talk that the camp isn't actually ready for all of us yet and facilities are lacking and that is a bigger concern for me as a woman than it would be for Sunny. I'm especially concerned about my mother, who had trouble enough adjusting to using the public toilets in the Fresno Assembly Center and knowing now she will have to get used to even more strangers. At least those in charge have been open about the flaws of the camp, which in and of itself is a positive. I've never been a fan of propaganda or silencing the voices of others in need, but then again, who is? I suppose the people on the other side of the story, maybe? I'm not really sure since most of the white people I've known, I consider friends. Look at Mr. Barcroft, for instance. He's been such a great asset to my family. If more men like him were in charge, we wouldn't have to go to these camps in the first place, but that isn't how it is and I have to remember to stay optimistic. I'm not even in Arkansas yet and I can only imagine how it will be when I do make it there.

—Mary Nishimoto

Nov. 3, 1942

Dear Diary,

There is so much going on here! When I arrived I was delighted to see my mother ready to receive me. It's only been a few days of separation, but it was still an emotional reunion. Mom took me to our new apartment. I'd say it's slightly bigger than what we shared in Fresno and it is certainly cleaner, but there is a lot left to be desired. Thankfully, the newspaper

here has announced stores will be opening soon, so we will be able to purchase some things to make it feel more like home.

—Mary Nishimoto

Nov. 3, 1942

Dear Diary,

I've finally arrived in Jerome after a couple of weeks of separation from my family. It's odd to be here in Arkansas but I'm happy to be back with everyone. It seems I've come on quite a busy day because everywhere I go there is movement, which seems to be a good thing. We now have stoves and there is a store, both of which my parents were doing without until now. You honestly never appreciate the simple things until you realize how thankful you really are after having experienced a world without them. Stoves and stores are commonplace for those on the outside and nothing much to get excited about, but to my mother especially they were everything. She is the type of person that can take nothing and make everything, so they made due, but I can see the relief awash all over her face, not only from seeing me here safe but from seeing the stove installed in our apartment today and from walking past the store. There was also an announcement that they will be holding classes for adults soon—which is considerate. My mom plans to take advantage of that opportunity. It feels good to have normal things here, even if they would be casual anywhere else.

—Mary Nishimoto

Of course, Mary's mother, Kameyo, was elated to have her daughter back with the rest of the family. Here is how we envision her reaction to their reunion on Nov. 3, 1942.

Nov. 3, 1942

Dear Diary,

Today is a big day. Mary will be arriving here in Jerome. I can't wait to see her. It turns out she has impeccable timing—the stoves are also going to be installed today, finally, so no more shivering at nighttime. I'm grateful Mary didn't have to endure the rainfall we had earlier this week. Mud was everywhere and without a stove to hang our socks by to warm up, we just ended up walking around with mushy feet. Stores will also be opening any day now, giving us the ability to buy materials to make new socks. It's been a great news day and I can't help but think Mary's arrival has something to do with that. Everything's better when she is here.

—Kameyo

Nov. 3, 1942

Dear Diary,

Today I found out that stoves will be installed this week and I'm very happy to hear that. I will finally be able to cook! I was also told that firewood is being collected, which will help warm up our space.

I was walking by a wall full of posters and flyers this morning and one of them caught my eye. The flier, near the current market, stated, "Other stores to open soon." As I read more, I realized the local store would be set up to provide a lot of different products and services that will allow us to live more comfortably here. The government also apparently has a policy that allows anyone here to set up a business. This makes me wonder whether Tamaichi and I should take up selling groceries again, but I don't think we would have as thriving a business here as we do in Madera since there is already a grocery store, and it

isn't really necessary if you just eat meals at the mess hall. The groceries here are just supplemental. Plus, we don't really need the hassle and we make enough to sustain ourselves here thanks to the $200 a month coming in from Mr. Hart, who is leasing our Madera store. Even though we probably won't set up shop here, I'm happy to see my neighbors have this opportunity. There is talk of a beauty parlor, shoe repair shop, and pharmacy. All will improve our quality of life here.

Another announcement I read in the little newspaper is that the school will start offering adult courses. I have always struggled with learning the English language, so when I saw this night school would be offering a class to learn English, I got very interested and planned to sign up. I'd also like to take a history class they are teaching to learn more about the United States Constitution.

—Kameyo

With stoves installed, storefronts opened, and classes at all levels from kindergarten through adult starting, Jerome Relocation Center gradually transformed into a self-contained village. The Nishimotos and others did the best they could to treat this foreign territory in Arkansas as home. Many purchased seeds and planted gardens outside their barrack doors. Creatives like Mildred, equipped with needle and thread, designed curtains to cozy up the apartment, and clothes to portray their individuality and style. Patty found joy in teaching schoolchildren their ABCs and 123s. Mary continued to grow in her medical knowledge and nursing skills. And Sunny, of course, practiced his saxophone day and night as part of the jazz band—one of many groups in the camps established to entertain those imprisoned. Just as each member of the Nishimoto family settled, opportunities to leave the center arose. One of the first such opportunities was announced in The Communique on Nov. 3. Under the headline, "Attention: Students" a brief invites college-aged Nisei to write letters to the West Coast secretary

of the National Student Relocation council if they wish to leave the camp to attend school. As all three Nishimoto sisters went on to earn higher educations, we imagine this opportunity would have appealed greatly to Mildred, Mary, and Patty.

Dear Joseph Conard
& National Student Relocation Council,

My name is Mary Nishimoto. I'm currently 20 years old. I am the middle child in a family of seven—I have an older sister, Mildred, an older brother Keith, a younger brother Sunny, and a younger sister Patty. My parents are Tamaichi and Kameyo Nishimoto. I'm writing to you because I saw an advertisement in the Jerome camp newspaper urging those interested in leaving the relocation center to attend college to express their interest to your council. Before the evacuation order, I was planning on studying to become a nurse. Though internment may have put those plans on pause, I have not let these circumstances derail me. While at the Fresno Assembly Center, I worked as a nursing aide, and now in Jerome, I am continuing to serve my community. I enjoy helping others with their health. The main reason I want to become a nurse is that I see a growing need in the community for more medical services for families and children especially. Though I'm able to help now in an assistant role, earning a higher education will allow me to better serve my community. For me, education means a lot. I have always imagined college to be a rewarding experience, where I not only learn to be a nurse but develop lifelong friendships with classmates. Even though I know it will be difficult to learn new subjects and meet new people, I know it will be worth it just to be able to see others happy and healthy under my care.

This is why I would really appreciate the opportunity to leave Jerome Relocation Center for college. Thank you for your consideration.

—Sincerely, Mary Nishimoto

Dear National Chairman of the Council,

I, Mildred Toshiye Nishimoto, am writing in response to an article titled, "WRA Classifies the Job, not the Job." It has come to my attention that the War Relocation Authority is providing opportunities for Issei, Nisei, and Sensei being held in concentration camps to seek higher education outside of relocation centers as a result of a request made to Clarence Pickett of the American Friends Service Committee to organize a non-governmental committee to assist the authority by providing opportunities for students to continue their education. This resulted in the creation of the National Japanese American Student Relocation Committee. I am among those potential students who would like to pursue higher education, not necessarily in a vocational school, as has been initially recommended and proposed, but more so in a four-year college or university, where I would be able to study home economics and teaching. The reason I would like to study these subjects is that I would be teaching myself in order to ultimately teach others. I am already a skilled seamstress but believe I can advance my abilities in order to be able to inform others. Such skills may seem arbitrary during wartime compared to the vocational industries, but I believe the arts are important during these times of hardship. Although the war has been a serious disruption to our daily lives, those in the younger generation deserve to continue their education. For Japanese Americans incarcerated specifically, not only have we left friends and family behind, but

> our living situation is not ideal, with upcoming cold winters, limited hot water, coal-burning stoves, and barbed-wire fences surrounded by guards and orders to shoot us if we try to flee. For us youth, who are mostly citizens, giving us an opportunity to leave the camps to pursue an education would be greatly appreciated. With an education, I will be able to pursue an appropriate job. If not me, then please allow me to advocate on behalf of others seeking professional education. For example, there is a great need for more medical professionals, as it is evident here within the camps. Pregnant women in the Fresno Assembly Center, for instance, have described having inexperienced doctors. There have been an estimated 504 babies born in such assembly centers over the past few months, and thousands are due to be born in the more permanent WRA camps. Such women and babies need competent doctors; what if they could have come from within our own community? I request that you allow all loyal youth interested in attending college to pursue such professions the ability to do so, rather than be trapped in camps with overcrowded schoolhouses and a lack of educational resources. I hope you will heed my request.
>
> Thank you for your time.
>
> —Yours truly, Mildred
> Toshiye Nishimoto

While neither Mildred, Mary, or Patty was granted leave from the Jerome camp to attend nearby colleges, all found their place in the makeshift city, along with their brother Sunny. Mildred spent her days sewing fashionable garments for her and her sisters, and more than likely, some friends she made in the camp, while also teaching high school-aged girls to do the same as one of the home economics teachers at Jerome's high school. Youngest Patty also found her calling in education, teaching first graders. Mary, meanwhile, continued aiding one

of Jerome's hospitals as a nurse. For Sunny, it was mostly fun and games as he earned money playing gigs as part of the jazz band. As the younger generation of Nishimotos adapted and settled into their strange surroundings, their parents, having lost their freedom and nearly all they had worked so hard for in Madera, continued to despair in confinement, though both hid behind brave faces. Outwardly, the Issei were complacent and composed, billowing phrases of shikata ga nai—it cannot be helped, it must be done—but internally, we imagine their heartache.

January 9, 1943

Dear Journal,

Tonight, the moon wanes in a crescent, less than 20 percent of its surface illuminated. Such is the percentage of the truth of our living conditions here presented to the general American public, I presume. An article entitled "Truth: The 1st Victim" published just yesterday in our Communique states that rumors of strikes, sabotage, and food waste at the Jerome Relocation Center are untrue. Twisted, morbid, and yet poignant—all describe the conditions in which we are unfortunately placed. While we may not strike, I hear rumblings of those who would like to, and while sabotage plots are certainly unfounded rumors, discussions of food waste are not entirely wrong. There are some foods we are served we cannot stomach that end up in the garbage heap. The truth that is not reported is we are treated differently, as we are seen as national threats. This article seems to suggest our conditions here are overwhelmingly positive. Incarcerees beg to differ, including myself and my family.

Here are just a few truths that have failed to make headlines. Alice Takemoto had an unpleasant five-day train ride sitting in seats that could not be reclined and were hard seats from Santa Anita Relocation

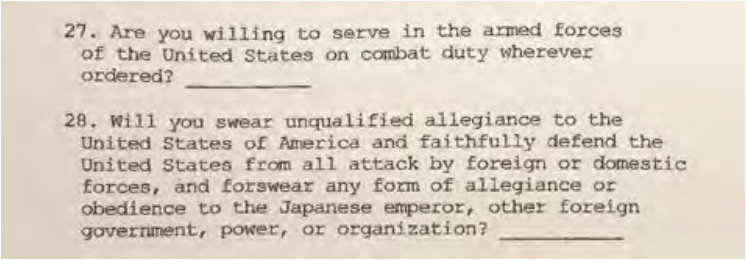
Center to Jerome. Not only this, but the food caused the people on the train to have diarrhea. Masamizu Kitajima could not tell where he was when he arrived late in the night because there was nothing there. Nevertheless, he claims that the staff was friendly and helpful in welcoming his family by lighting the stove for them. A private company had been contracted to clean up the inhabitable marshlands on the Mississippi River floodplain, but the work was not completed before the first of us arrived, so we prisoners had to complete the task. How ridiculous does it sound for a detainee or political prisoner to build his own prison because it has not been built? We had to build our own prison as we are wrongfully indicted on alleged threats of sabotage and connections to Pearl Harbor. According to those in other camps, it is not uncommon for the guards to shoot crowds of rioters, so why is the information that is spread surrounding our camp primarily untrue? Crying children are a common sight as mothers warn their children to stay away from the dangerous barbed fence, but they are confined in here, why? What threat does an American-born child pose to the United States? Is all of this a lie? No.

I hope that one day those involved in the reason I am here will recognize their wrongdoings. I hope that one day all will know what happened here to Japanese American citizens so never again will such unjust actions be repeated toward any group of people.

—Tamaichi Nishimoto

CHAPTER 6

Loyalty



27. Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty wherever ordered? _____

28. Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, other foreign government, power, or organization? _____

In February 1943, all Japanese incarcerated in the camps were asked to complete a loyalty questionnaire, which included the two controversial questions above. Most answered "yes" to both despite the confusion, but some answered "no" to one or both, leading them to be branded as "disloyal" to the United States. The division on the matter led to unrest among those incarcerated in Jerome and other camps.

While a life of confinement in Jerome was not altogether unpleasant, just as people like the Nishimotos settled into their new surroundings, in February 1943, the United States government introduced divisiveness to the camp with the requirement that all Issei and Nisei over the age of 17 would have to answer a loyalty questionnaire. One may wonder why the government questioned the loyalty of Japanese Americans after incarcerating them rather than before, which would have been more prudent perhaps in assessing which Japanese Americans may have been a threat to national security. Instead, United States officials considered the creation of the loyalty questionnaire as a means to determine whether Nisei men within the incarceration camps would be qualified to enlist in the military to fight against the Axis powers. With the war heating up on both the Pacific and European fronts, the U.S. army was in desperate need of more young men, and among the Nisei were several hundred healthy and able-bodied men in confinement who

may be willing to serve to leave imprisonment. At the same time, of course, the U.S. couldn't very well allow any who had a mind for sabotage to enter its military ranks. Thus, the War Department and War Relocation Authority joined forces to create the loyalty questionnaire. In addition to clearing young men to be drafted, the questionnaire was given to all adults to determine which loyal Japanese would be eligible to work in the inland states, as industries such as agriculture were in need of more workers to replace those who had already gone off to fight in the war.

Most of the questions on this document were straightforward, but the last two—questions 27 and 28—caused turmoil throughout the camps. Question 27 was "Are you willing to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?" For women and Issei, who were not permitted to serve in the armed forces, this question was posed instead as "If the opportunity presents itself and you are found qualified, would you be willing to volunteer for the Army Nurse Corps or the WACC?" While the most loyal among the Nisei men would have no qualms answering "yes," it was unreasonable to expect those being imprisoned without cause and in violation of their constitutional rights to jump at the chance to fight and potentially die for the country that imprisoned them. At least question 27 was direct, unlike question 28, which, posed to all men and women over the age of 17, caused much confusion in its wording. Question 28 asked, "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any and all attacks by foreign and domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance to the Japanese Emperor or any other foreign government, power or organization?" This caused frustration among Issei and Nisei alike as it is a two-fold question that creates a Catch-22: of course, any loyal Japanese or Japanese American wanted to unequivocally answer "yes" to the first half of the question, in swearing allegiance to the United States; however, in saying "yes" to part one, you also openly admitted to part two, that you had once sworn allegiance to the Japanese Emperor. This fact made several respond "no" because in order to forswear allegiance, they must have sworn allegiance in the first place, and none wanted to admit to having done such a thing.

The confusion created by the two questions, for which the government sought "yes" answers to indicate loyalty, resulted in many loyal Japanese responding "no-no." Others purposely responded "no-no" as a form of protest, not believing that they should serve or pledge allegiance to a country that had locked them up behind barbed wire. While the aim of separating the supposed loyal from the disloyal was to discover who would be qualified to leave the camps, there were greater implications for those who responded "no-no" than just being unable to leave. In most cases, those who responded "no-no"—around 10,000—were sent to the heavily guarded Tule Lake segregation center in northeastern California. Actor George Takei, known for his role as Hikaru Sulu on Star Trek, was only five years old in 1943 and imprisoned with his family at the Rohwer, Arkansas concentration camp. His parents responded "no-no" to the questionnaire and the family was transferred to Tule Lake. In an October 2022 podcast interview with Sharon McMahon, Takei expressed his feelings about his parents' "no-no" response, as follows:

"The government realized there is a wartime manpower shortage, and here are all these young people who they could have had in military service that they had categorized as "enemy alien." How could they rationally justify drafting enemy aliens out of a barbed wire prison camp to service in the military? Their solution was even more outrageous than imprisonment or incarceration itself. They came down with a loyalty questionnaire. In the chaos and confusion of wartime, many incompetents got lodged within the bureaucracy of the military and of the government. It was clearly these incompetents who were given the assignment of drafting the loyalty questionnaire. It was about 35 questions. Most of them were pretty standard ...there were two critical questions that they needed to have yes answers to, otherwise, you were disloyal ...

Question 27 asked if you would be willing to serve in combat. For my parents who had three very young children—my sister was a toddler, I was 6 years old, and Henry was 5—they were being asked to abandon their children in barbed wire imprisonment and bear arms to defend the country that was holding the children in imprisonment. It was outrageous to

demand that parents give up their children and risk their lives as soldiers, so they answered the only way they could answer, honestly and truthfully: no.

Question 28 was even more egregious. It was one sentence with two conflicting ideas ... the word forswear assumes that there is an inborn, existing, racial loyalty, which is insulting. We were Americans. We never thought of loyalty to the emperor much less officially profess to have that, but if you answered no, I don't have loyalty to the emperor, that applied to the first part of the very same sentence because they were tied together. If you wanted to answer yes meaning I do swear my loyalty to the United States that yes carried over to the second part, that you were confessing you had a nonexistent loyalty to the emperor to forswear. It was an outrageous, illiterate, stupid question ...my parents answered no and with that no they were put into another category: disloyal."

A sample of the negative headlines of the incarceration camps mostly focused on violence at Tule Lake. These headlines are from the Madera Tribune archives and would have been read by people who knew the Nishimoto family back home.

Of the 10 American concentration camps, Tule Lake, located in northern California, close to the Oregon border, was selected as the segregation camp for those of Japanese ancestry labeled "disloyal" after providing "no" answers to questions 27 or 28 on the questionnaire. This camp grew into the largest camp, holding at one point upwards of 18,000 people, compared to the other nine which held between 6,000 and 10,000. The camp also became the most notorious. While the general newspapers focused primarily on the battles overseas, when information about the happenings in the American concentration camps was released, it was overwhelmingly negative with the majority of the press reporting strife within Tule Lake. The Madera Tribune archives reveal 57 articles were published in reference to Tule Lake from August 1943 to October 1945. The total number of references to Japanese incarceration made in the same newspaper during the same time period was 95, meaning 60 percent of articles published about the concentration camps were related to Tule Lake. The preponderance of coverage about Tule Lake was even the subject of one editorial published in the Madera Tribune on Dec. 22, 1943. In the editorial, the author expresses their frustration with the excessive coverage of the recent investigation into turmoil at the camp by the Spanish minister representing Japan. The author states, "...the incident shows the evils of too wide comment on Tule Lake ..." At the same time, it's understandable that the chaos within that camp would be considered newsworthy.

Upon imprisonment in Tule Lake, Takei recalls how after these Japanese Americans were put through "the meat grinder of the loyalty questionnaire" they were "agitated, angry, fearful, highly stressed, outraged people." While other camps had armed guards and a barbed wire fence, Tule Lake had machine guns installed in century towers in addition to armed guards and three layers of barbed wire fencing to ensure escape was impossible. Most egregious, Takei said, were a half dozen tanks that patrolled the perimeter outside the third layer of barbed wire. "It was the most shameful overreaction by the United States military," Takei said. This hostile environment understandably created tension within the confines of the barbed wire prison. Among those incarcerated were once patriotic young men who had tried to enlist in the United States military after Pearl Harbor, but instead were denied and detained as

"enemy aliens." In their anger at initially being refused, they replied "no" to question 27, and once in Tule Lake made the decision that if they were to be treated like the enemy, then they would become an enemy. There were a handful of others who did claim loyalty to the Japanese emperor. Together, such incarcerees comprised a radicalized group called the Hoshidan. The Hoshidan began a campaign to get everyone within the camp to renounce their American citizenship. When some refused, the Hoshidan would intimidate and threaten them. Takei said this was a challenge for his father, who served as a block manager and whose goal was to maintain peace. Acts of aggression and violence were so frequent, Takei said, that the WRA had to force the men of the camp to construct a concrete stockade building within Tule Lake to serve as a prison in the community—a prison within a prison.

Rumors of the goings-on in Tule Lake were so widespread that those incarcerated in other American concentration camps did not want to associate with any of the so-called "no-no boys." Ruth Nishimoto, Sunny's youngest daughter, said that one of the Japanese Americans they knew from church was incarcerated at Tule Lake and wrote a book about his experience, which Sunny refused to read. "As he put it, those were the people who said no; they were seen as disloyal while our family made it a point to show their loyalty," Ruth said. So, while Sunny's attitude toward the United States government after incarceration was one of understanding and forgiveness, like so many who didn't think twice about responding "yes-yes" on the questionnaire, he still held some resentment for those who pushed back by refusing to serve in the military or fully give allegiance to a government that had unjustly incarcerated them. One might find his reluctance to accept the "no-no boys" viewpoint and version of events unreasonable, but it is clear from Sunny's 2005 interview that the worst part of the incarceration for him was witnessing the pain and suffering his mother Kameyo endured and much of her pain was caused by those in Jerome who vocally protested the incarceration and would later end up in Tule Lake.

The Nishimotos, but Kameyo especially, would have been considered Inu by the Japanese Americans within Jerome who demonstrated against the incarceration. In Japanese, Inu means "dog," but used in this context against very loyal

Japanese and Japanese Americans, it was exceptionally harsh and vulgar. In *Farewell to Manzanar* Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston describes the term in some detail. "Spoken Japanese is full of disrespectful insult words that can be much more cutting than mere vulgarity," she wrote. "They have to do with bad manners, or worse, breaches of faith and loyalty. Years later I learned that inu also meant collaborator or informer. Members of the Japanese American Citizens League were being called inu for having helped the army arrange a peaceful and orderly evacuation. Men who cooperated with camp authorities in any way could be labeled inu, as well as those genuine informers inside the camp who relayed information to the War Department and to the FBI." It was very likely the Nishimotos were dubbed inu, especially as Kameyo began taking adult classes in the camp that taught the American constitution. As Sunny discusses in the 2005 interview:

"It was very bad for my mother and my dad because a lot of people were mad. They had a right to be mad because they lost their homes and things like that, their fortune, but my mother [didn't begrudge the U.S. government] because she went to school [in camp] to learn English. When she was in the camp, she learned to write in English and, of course, the teachers taught her the constitution and she would say [the United States] is a good country because of the constitution. But, you know, right then at that period, we weren't living by the constitution. She read it, though, and figured that if the government went by the constitution, that it's a really good country ...so she was very pro-American, and was treated mean ...we ended up in a very bad block [in Jerome], with a lot who were very mad at the United States ...She had a rough time with those people. They ostracized her because she was still pro-American. We just happened to live in this very, very bad block, and most of those people went to Tule Lake."

With Sunny's words about Kameyo's immense loyalty and love for America echoing in our ears, we imagine the emotional turmoil his mother and father endured in the following diary entries.

February 19, 1943

Dear Diary,

As I stood waiting to answer the questionnaire, which basically reads as a test of loyalty, I could see others likewise grappling with their answers. Some were visibly angry, some even downtrodden with sadness, while others seemed to display a sense of relief. The majority of questions are nothing that would elicit this kind of emotional reaction, but as I got to the last two—questions 27 and 28—I finally realized what was going on. No wonder everyone has mixed emotions. These are confounding questions, but I view them as questions of loyalty so of course, I responded yes to both. Of course, I didn't know what would happen after answering these questions. There is now a clear separation between those like me who answered yes, yes, and those who answered no to either or both. The ones who said no are destined to be segregated to another camp, but for the time being, everyone now knows who is who. Our answers were not private, and this has caused division and turmoil here in Jerome. All I can hear now are my neighbors yelling "traitor" at me, while others yell back "enemy."

—Kameyo

February 19, 1943

Dear Diary,

I'm not a fearful person; I never have been, but that has recently changed. I always believed I could control the dangers that might affect my children, and I hoped they believed I could too. I wanted for them to be able to make any rational decision they wanted without fear, of course, still factoring in the aftermath and consequences of their decisions. I would have even accepted their irrational choices if it meant they

learned from their mistakes and got any rebellion out of their system. But these circumstances are the result of decisions made for us all, forced on my children. During this war, they do not have the ability to make their own decisions, good or bad. This is an unfortunate and ugly reality. My beloved country has locked us away, supposedly to protect others from danger. But the government didn't consider our fears—the potential dangers and violence within these camps, and the judgment they've lauded on my children, who are their citizens—American citizens! I appreciate so much what this country has allowed my family to accomplish in Madera, but this strips all that away. Will my children ever again be able to live in the United States as it was before this war? Will they have the opportunities to pursue education or to open and operate businesses as they see fit? Will they be allowed to purchase homes? Or will they now face further discrimination for the remainder of their lives? Sometimes I look at my children and wonder how they manage to be so optimistic. They all seem so happy in this world that has become cold and cruel. I'll be honest, my love and reverence for this country hasn't changed, I have hope that once this war ends, my children will have those opportunities and then some, but that doesn't stop my mind from constantly worrying about my children and how they will be accepted. You can call that living through war or call that being a mother. It would be easier, though, to soldier on through tough days like these if I knew my children wouldn't have to. I just don't want them to be branded with the scarlet letter of their time. I love my country and I will never stop, but the love I have for my children is first and foremost. I'm upset that a country I love so deeply would allow this to happen. The government was too quick to round us all up and

put us in these concentration camps like cattle—it is wrong and irrational. One day, I know they will see their error. They will see the pain and injustice being inflicted on innocent citizens and their immigrant parents and grandparents, who are all loyal to America. We will strive for redemption. And I will strive to continue to ensure my children don't retaliate in hate, as some among us have suggested. I want them to continue to persevere. I know in my heart they will and I am proud of them.

—Kameyo

February 25, 1943

Dear Journal,

Finally, I understand what it means to be part of a community but I feel alone at the same time. I am Japanese American. I come from Japanese ancestry. Yet, together with many others, I am placed in an uncomfortable position: a position to decide whether or not to serve my country. For those who may one day read this, you may ask yourself, why would it be a problem to serve your country in times of need? That creates a divide between us Japanese and Japanese Americans. If it is not already bad enough that we are constantly surrounded by wires with barbs, driven by a racist ideology, and the press denying allegations of abuse, we have been presented with the opportunity to leave this hell hole to move to another hole— the only difference is we would carry the weapons instead of having them pointed at us.

My neighbor always gossips about the "space" open in the area, as adults leave for basic training. Accepting this opportunity to leave means abandoning loyalty to the Japanese government and its relations, something we all had not mentioned before the attack on Pearl

Harbor—we never had loyalty to Japan. It meant that we were excluded as we wouldn't see our neighbors again. Our country is condemned, condemned to rob young adults of their parents, condemned for separating the Japanese and causing division, condemned for forcing us here, kidnapping us from our houses, stealing our valuable items, and taking away part of our lives to live in poverty. Frustration and anger are weights we all carry because we have not committed a crime. In fact, the only crime we have ever committed has existed through the creation of our parents and as some would say the creation of God. Is it a sin to say yes to serving my country? If so, I have committed a sin I am constantly critiqued for.

My wife is facing constant backlash and is questioned whether she is ashamed of her Japanese roots because she is learning about the Constitution, learning English, and participating in community events that are not part of our Japanese customs. We talk every night when other families go to sleep, so it is only our family because there is not much privacy elsewhere in the center. While our neighbors in the center are understandably upset about how we are being treated and rounded up like animals in these prison camps, the truth is discrimination in the United States against those of Japanese ancestry began long ago.

Before 1886, Japanese immigration to the United States and US territories began mainly in Hawaii and the Pacific coast. One of the first immigrants was Katsu Goto, a brilliant gentleman and the eldest son of Izaemon Kobayakawa and Sayo Izaemon Kobayakawa, who changed his name to Goto because he could not travel abroad under his full Japanese name. He was one of the first "ship" immigrants to arrive on one of the first 26 ships of government

contract immigrants between 1885 and 1894, migrating from the city of Tokyo on February 8, 1885. He went on to open and operate a successful mercantile business. An honest man and advocate for his Honokaa Japanese community colleagues who used his shop as an informal meeting place, Goto was murdered for interpreting documents for 70 fellow Japanese immigrants working at Robert M Overend's plantation and sometimes advising them to take legal matters. Additionally, his store affected the business of white merchants including Joseph R. Mills. Those involved in his murder were a young Hawaiian named Lala, John Richmond, a stableman of the Robert M. Overend Plantation, Thomas Steele, head supervisor of Robert M. Overend Plantation, and William Blabon, a teamster of Joseph R. Mills. Lala had confessed. This was an undeniable act of discrimination but even with Lala's confession, authorities pressed against making arrests of the others involved because there was "not enough evidence."

The case of Goto is just the beginning. The Gentleman's Agreement of the late 1900s was an agreement between the United States and Japan on tension relating to immigration. It meant a resumption of the Japanese American Segregation Order in San Francisco and in exchange Japan would deny passports to Japanese laborers but still allow the family of current laborers in the U.S. to enter the country. Acts like these show that there was always hatred against the Japanese community within the United States. It was only a matter of time before a problem with Japan would cause the abuse of Japanese and Japanese Americans. If the country recognizes its unlawful acts in its participation in this situation, then it could be forgiven. Only we can have this power to change the hearts and minds of our fellow Americans. All I can do

is pledge my loyalty and continue to be a productive member of society, hoping someday soon the United States government will realize how it has violated the rights of its citizens granted by its own constitution.

—Tamaichi Nishimoto

February 26, 1943

Dear Diary,

Inu, the meanings vary, but it hurts with each definition. They say that during the Civil War aside from the racism and mistreatment toward enslaved African Americans that the most devastating part was the country being split; a united country apart. People who were part of the same team were fighting against each other. That is now exactly what is happening inside these barbed wire walls: we are all being held unfairly as captives and should all band together. Instead, we are now divided. The neighbors my children have become accustomed to now glare in our direction and it feels like it is all my fault because I still profess loyalty to this country that has locked me in here. Inu, that's what they call me and those like-minded in their patriotism. It is the No-No Boys' way of calling us traitors. Where there was once relative harmony, now this word is being used to signify that we are no longer accepted by these neighbors. I have agreed to stick by my country, regardless of where I currently reside, but that paper—the loyalty questionnaire—has marked our family with the Scarlet A. I am angry this is happening and upset, though I understand why they feel as strongly as they do. I cannot understand how we have gone through the same thing, yet I can move past it along with my

> family, but others likewise affected can't do the same. These name-callers are both foolish and ridiculous, but it's just another thing I'll need to get past.
>
> —Kameyo

Time would eventually mend Kameyo's wounds decades after the trauma she endured in Jerome, inflicted by both the actions of her beloved country's government and fellow Japanese Americans within Jerome's treacherous fences. Given the strength of character of her son, Sunny so eloquently subscribes to his memories of her in his 2005 interviews for the Go For Broke foundation, we can assume Kameyo forgave all her assailants. We knew that she never lost her love for the United States and went on to become a U.S. citizen as soon as the law made it possible for Japanese immigrants to become naturalized citizens. In the journal below, we envision Kamayo reflecting years later on all the obstacles of discrimination she faced.

February 1957

Dear Diary,

If I knew what was going to occur after coming to the United States due simply to my Japanese ancestry, I think telling others about it would have doctors deeming me "stupid" or "crazy."

Looking back, I think the first major changes that affected my family began on October 14, 1940, with the passage of the U.S. Nationality Act by Congress and signed into effect by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Of course, this date might seem confusing as this was long before they settled us into Jerome, Arkansas, but the reason this date is so important is that U.S. citizens or nationals were reclassified as, "A person born outside of the United States, and its outlying possessions of parents both of whom are citizens of the United States and one of whom has resided in the United States..... or its outlying possessions before reaching the age

of twenty-one years, his American citizenship shall thereupon cease." Therefore, this meant a person could become a U.S. citizen through various ways such as the foreign-child policy, making a child born out of wedlock, or under other circumstances that once prevented the retainment of citizenship, were no longer barriers. However, this same act forced aliens to register annually at post offices and update the government on any address changes.

On the evening of December 29, 1940, our family had been informed through the paper that Hitler had ordered a massive bombing campaign against London in order to destroy British morale and force them to form an alliance. The bombing began on September 7, 1940, but finally ended in May 1941, changing the city's landscape, with landmarks such as Buckingham Palace, the Houses of Parliament, the Tower of London, and the Imperial War Museum, being bombed. A year later in the same month, on December 7th Japan attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and as a result, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Proclamation No. 525, stating those not neutralized are "liable to be apprehended, restrained, secured, and removed as alien enemies." The following day, the United States declared war against Japan.

On December 29, 1941, "enemy aliens" living in Utah, Montana, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Nevada were ordered to surrender contraband. Tension could be seen in how the government acted, as on January 5, 1942, selective service registrants were now classified as enemy aliens. Twenty-four days later, Attorney General Francis Biddle issued orders to establish "prohibited zones," removing Germans, Italians, and Japanese from these areas. The U.S. Army imposed a curfew and restricted travel,

as travel could not exceed five miles from the homes in "restricted areas." Then, of course, there was the signing of Executive Order 9066, which went on to empower the U.S. Army to force Japanese Americans to leave their homes. With all of this, some individuals challenged the removal and incarceration of loyal US citizens. For example, a woman named Mitsuye Endo who was a Nisei California State Employee forced into the Sacramento Assembly Center and the Tule Lake War Relocation Center filed a petition of habeas corpus in the now infamous case that made its way up to the Supreme Court, where it was finally decided that the detainment of loyal citizens was in fact unconstitutional—a fact those of us imprisoned in the American concentration camps already knew. Still, until her case concluded, individuals were left conflicted as they wanted Endo to prove this point that so many of us had never betrayed the country, but were afraid of doing so.

Twenty days after my family reached Jerome, we were informed of the Battle of Guadalcanal as the Japanese moved workers and troops to the Solomon Islands to build an airfield. This meant potential damage to bases in New Hebrides, New Caledonia, and New Guinea. Two weeks later, President Roosevelt ordered changes to gasoline rationing to save rubber for the war effort. Honestly, after hearing this news, I never thought the day would come when Japanese Americans could apply for military service again. However, a few short months later detainees were given a loyalty questionnaire, presumably for their removal and re-establishment into society. I was pleased when I heard the news of the closure of the Jerome Relocation Center. It was the last center opened in October 1942, and the first to be closed on June 30, 1944, but an estimated 5,000 remaining incarcerees

were transferred to other centers. On July 1, 1944, President Roosevelt signed Public Law 405 into law, allowing US citizens to renounce their citizenship. I was delighted to hear that on December 18, 1944, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Endo that the government could not arrest loyal people. Finally, the last American concentration camp closed on March 20, 1946. Regardless of nationality, I think elderly Japanese people are happy that this is over. I hope we never have to go through something like this again.

—Kameyo Kawano Nishimoto

CHAPTER 7

Go For Broke


Nisei men in the Nishimoto family proved their loyalty to the country by serving in the military. Older brother Keith [LEFT]*, served with the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) in occupied Japan, while younger brother Sunny* [RIGHT] *was drafted to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team but when the war ended in Europe before his training was completed, he also was transferred to the MIS. Their cousin, Hawaiian-born Tetsuo Kawano, served in Italy as part of the 100th Infantry and was killed in action. Sunny and Keith with their mother, Kameyo Kawano Nishimoto* [CENTER].

The Nishimotos, along with all of those incarcerated in American concentration camps, regardless of professed loyalty, were herded like cattle into prison camps, two-thirds as citizens stripped of their constitutional rights and freedoms, found guilty on the grounds of their ethnicity alone without due process of law—all in the name of military necessity. It begs the question: were any of them an actual military threat? Had a few of the "no-no boys," for instance, been found guilty of transpiring with the enemy before being detained, would that perhaps provide some justification for imprisoning all people of Japanese ancestry en masse? Would it have been for the greater good had a plot equivalent to the Pearl Harbor attack been prevented by the government's harsh retaliation for it toward an entire race? In hindsight, we can say that the violation of human rights is inexcusable in any case, but it is

especially egregious given what we now know—that none, not one, of those 125,000 Japanese Issei or Japanese American Nisei incarcerated were found guilty of espionage or any act of transpiring with Imperial Japan. In actuality, the only people found aiding the enemy were Caucasians aiding the German or Italian Axis powers.

Instead of being a hindrance to the American war effort as wrongfully assumed, Japanese Nisei actually became renowned for their distinguished military service. Those serving in combat as part of the 100th Infantry and 442nd Regimental Combat Team fought heroically in Italy, France, and Germany, and to this day the 442nd remains the most decorated unit in American history. Meanwhile, other Nisei served on the Pacific front as translators, interpreters, and interrogators, some even going undercover to obtain information from the Imperial Japanese enemy. The efforts of these Military Intelligence Service (MIS) agents are believed to have reduced the war with Japan by at least six months. General Charles Willoughby reportedly said their actions saved countless Allied lives and shortened the war by two years. As we look back, we acknowledge that the Nisei men who said "no" to serving the country that imprisoned them and their families are heroes of a different sort—they stood for justice and in many cases received long-standing alienation from their more cooperative peers as a result. We cannot forget them or discount their personal sacrifices, but as they protested the violations of their rights as citizens, many Nisei chose a different course of action—to prove the American government wrong by their actions of considerable loyalty, going above and beyond the call of duty in fighting for their country.

The young men of the Nishimoto family were loyal to the United States and were compelled to prove it with their military service. Keith Nishimoto, of course, had already been drafted into the Army prior to the Pearl Harbor attack that temporarily suspended the enlistment of Japanese Americans. In December of 1944, Sunny Nishimoto would also be drafted and serve with his brother, both as part of the MIS. Their cousin—mother Kameyo's nephew—Tetsuo Kawano of Hawaii was also in the army, enlisting before the Pearl Harbor attack, and served as part of the original 100th Infantry Battalion, later combined with the 442nd comprised of mainland Nisei.

The names 100th Infantry Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team are often used synonymously, but the important distinction is that the 100th Infantry Battalion was comprised of the servicemen from Hawaii who were in the armed services at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack. As to be expected by a government that later incarcerated civilians of Japanese ancestry, Nisei in the army were immediately separated from their ranks, removed from active duty, and had their weapons confiscated as suspicion that they could be turned against the Americans now at war with Japan rapidly increased. The United States military issued orders to all branches to refuse any Nisei trying to enlist in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor. As noted in the previous chapter, some of these rejected men would be so offended by the loyalty questionnaire and the suggestion that now they were suddenly good enough to serve in a segregated unit that they would go on to lead the "no-no boys" in Tule Lake. Having stalled enlistment of Nisei, however, left military personnel scratching their heads as to what to do with the hundreds of Nisei already enlisted. Some officers chose to discharge their Nisei troops; 600 Nisei were honorably discharged and an unknown number were dishonorably discharged.

On the mainland, Nisei who remained in the military, like Keith who was drafted in April of 1941, were either sent to Camp Robinson in Arkansas to perform menial tasks or about 60 Nisei began serving in the MIS. The MIS was established in November 1941, just a month before the Pearl Harbor attack, in anticipation of war with Japan. The goal of the MIS was to train primarily Nisei, but some Caucasians, in the Japanese language so they could intercept and decode Imperial military radio messages and eventually infiltrate parts of the Pacific to obtain critical military information. The initial MIS Language School (MISLS) held classes at the Presidio in San Francisco, ironically in the same area where Exclusion Orders following Executive Order 9066 would be prominently posted. After Pearl Harbor, as America entered the war and those of Japanese ancestry were driven inland away from their west coast homes, the MISLS needed to relocate due to the exclusion orders as well as a need for a larger campus. To meet these needs, MISLS moved to Camp Savage in Minnesota. While Keith likely did not start out in the MIS, we know that by the time the MISLS moved

in May 1942, he had been rerouted to MIS service as he spoke some Japanese. Military records indicate that Keith graduated from the MISLS at Camp Savage in June 1942 with the A-2 class, the first class of MISLS graduates out of Camp Savage.

Following graduation from MISLS, trained Nisei linguists were sent straight away to battlefields in the Aleutian Islands in preparation for the Battle of Guadalcanal, known as Operation Watchtower. Once in the Pacific, MISers would intercept and decipher Imperial radio transmissions and infiltrate Imperial ranks to obtain or steal military documents or even the diaries and personal papers of Imperial soldiers for translation. These later documents would assist the United States in getting inside the head of the enemy and the Imperial soldier. Some MIS graduates, however, stayed behind at Camp Savage to serve as officers, training the next class of students. It is unknown which group Keith belonged to, but we are inclined to believe he stayed behind as he was in Minnesota when his family moved to Minneapolis from Jerome in April of 1943.

As Keith worked as a staff sergeant and third-class technician for MIS, his Hawaiian Nisei cousin, Tetsuo Kawano, prepared for more direct combat missions. The situation in Hawaii following Pearl Harbor was unique. Military personnel in the U.S.-occupied territory, not yet a state, decided against the imprisonment of its Japanese population, as that would have been preposterous to execute and achieve without devastating economic consequences. Plus, Hawaii was far more culturally diverse and as a whole accepting of those who would be considered minorities on the mainland. The orders to remove Nisei from active duty, however, stood and this was a challenging position as a large percentage of the Hawaii National Guard was of Japanese descent. To remedy this conundrum, Hawaii military governor Delos Emmons decided to form a new segregated battalion out of the Nisei. This new unit composed of 1,432 Nisei, including Nishimoto's cousin, was called the Hawaii Provisional Infantry Battalion. Under cover of night, as the epic Battle of Midway raged in the Pacific, the battalion boarded a ship for Oakland, California, on June 5, 1942. From there, they traveled by train to Camp McCoy in Wisconsin, where they would undergo intense training over the next six months and become the original members of the distinguished 100th Infantry Battalion.

Tetsuo would become part of the first platoon in E company and go on to fight the Axis powers in Italy in the fall and winter of 1943. Prior to being sent to the European frontlines, however, Tetsuo was given an opportunity to visit his aunt, uncle, and cousins in Jerome. The family reunion was serendipitous as the circumstance that brought about the visit was actually the budding tension between the original Hawaiian Nisei of the 100th Infantry and new recruits coming out of the mainland incarceration camps following the loyalty questionnaire. Together the two groups would form the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, but before they could fight alongside each other they had to develop trust and understanding.

The tension between the Hawaiian Nisei and the mainland Nisei was caused by a difference in response to the government's plea for army recruits. As the 4C "enemy alien" classification was removed and Nisei were encouraged to volunteer for the 442nd, the response out of Hawaii was astounding. Initially, the military hoped for 3,000 volunteers from the continental United States and 1,500 from Hawaii, but the opposite occurred. Reported numbers vary, but between 1,000 and 1,500 volunteered from behind barbed wire. In Hawaii, where there was no mass incarceration, more than 10,000 Nisei came forward. While not all of the 10,000 could be accepted, for Hawaiian Nisei, the overwhelming support was a source of pride. When both groups of new recruits came together in Camp Shelby, Mississippi, where members of the 100th Infantry were still training after their stint at Camp McCoy, instead of forming a united front, there was a division between the mainlanders or "kotonks" and the Hawaii-born "buddhadheads." A wise commander of the 442nd, Charles W. Pence, sought to alleviate this internal strife by arranging for groups to take trips from Camp Shelby to the nearby incarceration camps of Jerome and Rowher in Arkansas. His reasoning was that the buddhaheads simply didn't understand the plight of the kotonks and had misconceptions about the incarceration camps. Once the Hawaiian Nisei were able to see the camps for themselves, the buddhadheads gained respect for the kotonks, and the essential bond needed to serve together in combat was formed.

It was on one such visit to Jerome that Tetsuo was able to see his aunt Kameyo and uncle Tamaichi and meet his cousins Sunny, Mildred, Mary, and Patty. During this brief time, Tetsuo was the primary subject of a dozen family photos, which are treasured to this day. Tragically, Tetsuo would die in the line of duty just a few months later, on Nov. 4, 1943, in the Italian Apennines between Salerno and Naples.

Following his visit to Jerome in March of 1943, Tetsuo would join fellow original members of the 100th for further intensive training in Claiborne, Louisiana. From there, the 100th returned briefly to Camp Shelby, from which they were deployed on August 21, 1943, by way of New Jersey base Camp Kilmer, from which they sailed for the Mediterranean. On Sept. 2, 1943, the 100th Infantry landed in Oran, Africa, where they awaited orders. At the time, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, still distrustful of Japanese Americans, rejected their service, but they were adopted by the fifth army as part of the 133rd Infantry Regiment under the 34th Division. Along with the 34th Division, the 100th Infantrymen sailed to Italy, landing on the beaches of Salerno on September 9, 1943. From there began the Naples-Foggia campaign, which would last until January 21, 1944. While units would ordinarily alternate troops fighting and resting from day to day, it is worthy to note that

the Nisei of the 100th/442nd fought daily from September 29, 1943, to November 6, 1943. It was during the last days of this grind that Tetsuo would make the ultimate sacrifice. In his 2005 Go For Broke interview, Sunny told interviewers he believed Tetsuo was killed in the Anzio campaign, but we found that that campaign took place from January to June 1944, months after Tetsuo's death. It is more likely that Nishimoto's cousin died in the heat of the Naples-Foggia campaign as his company was among those engaged in the initial "banzai charge" on the day of his death.

The Naples-Foggia campaign began September 22, 1943, in Salerno, Italy. In the first week of battle, the 34th division, with the 100th/442nd, successfully captured Benevento, a strategic location as it was the intersection of main roads and rails. With the allies now in control, the Axis powers would encounter hardship in the delivery and reception of needed supplies. It was shortly after the 100th took Benevento that troops from E and F Companies joined the battle. In October, the 100th/442nd regiment was integral in aiding the push of the enemy to the north but had to cross the Volturno River at least three times in the pursuit. On October 19, 1943, when crossing for the second time just after midnight, they encountered heavy artillery fire from the Germans. Despite setbacks and casualties, the allies pressed on and seized another advantageous point—Alife—and the 100th Infantry Battalion advanced to the crest of Castle Hill, where they took up a defensive position as another battalion attacked the Germans from behind. Though a success, the battle claimed the lives of 21 men in the 100th and wounded 67.

Come November, the Nisei soldiers continued to fight the Axis enemy on the ground. Late on Nov. 3, 1943, the 100th had to cross the Volturno River for a third time, at its juncture with the Sava River. During the brutal crossing men were drenched up to the neck and nearly drowned in frigid waters as they carried their heavy weapons above their heads. Once the crossing was complete, the ensuing battle would ultimately result in the tragedy of the "banzai charge." The charge was ordered the next day when a sergeant mistakenly heard that one of the most respected officers in the battalion was wounded and captured prisoner by the Axis forces. Never one to leave a man behind, he ordered his platoon to fix bayonets and charge. As

they did so, the men yelled "Banzai!" and swarmed the area in a move that would be used several more times throughout the war whenever 442nd troops attacked in order to rescue lost men, most famously in the October 1944 rescue of the Lost Battalion.

The "banzai charge" was indicative of the spirit of the men of the 100th Infantry and 442nd Regiment. These soldiers were close and held great respect, concern, and brotherly love for one another, so much so that they couldn't bear to leave anyone behind, dead or alive. By the time the troops involved in the charge were relieved by another company on Nov. 11, 1943, the men of the 100th had earned numerous Silver Stars, but the casualties were high. Eighteen officers and 239 enlisted men were wounded, while three officers and 75 enlisted men, including Tetsuo Kawano, died. For his ultimate sacrifice and service, Tetsuo was awarded the Purple Heart Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, Asiastic-Pacific Campaign Medal, American and European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medals, and the World War II Victory Medal. Tetsuo is interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl) in Honolulu, Hawaii.

We imagine the devastating news of Tetsuo's passing, a mere eight months after he visited them in Jerome, would have shaken the members of the Nishimoto family, who at the time were finally free of incarceration and living and working in Minneapolis, Minnesota. For Keith, being in the military himself, we envision a strong emotional reaction to the loss, though he didn't have a chance to see Tetsuo in Arkansas. And for Sunny, who would later be drafted in December of 1944, we picture this moment as a defining one that propelled him as he entered into military service. We can see Kameyo weeping for her nephew and concerned for her brother and his family in Hawaii. We can hear the wailing cries of Mildred, Mary, and Patty, who all hoped they would be able to see their beloved cousin again after the war.

January 10, 1944

Dear Journal,

It is just now hitting me—this war. In Fresno and in Jerome, we were held captive as enemies and aliens and the gravity of that never dawned on me. For me, it was just about making the best of the opportunities I was given by making friends and having some exciting adventures with the jazz band. But this is war, and it's only hitting me now. In war, in defeat, you lose, we all lose; we lose people. I knew of the casualties in Europe, that that is the price of war. I knew, but I didn't know. You don't really know the immensity of the sacrifice until you lose someone you knew personally. Today, I was informed that our family has lost our cousin Tetsuo. I only just met him a few months ago when he visited us in Jerome, but we had forged a bond during his brief visit and I looked forward to that bond growing. Now, I'm left holding on—surviving. The bond is not severed by death, but it was denied its chance to thrive. I'm left to always wonder what could have been because he's gone. Oh, the incredible carelessness of war! My mother weeps, not solely for her nephew,

but because it so easily could have been me. Nisei are being drafted every single day in droves to serve as replacements for the 100th and 442nd. I am not immune. My number may be called at any moment. It was easy to be carefree in Jerome, in a sense, not that the incarceration was easy, but for a time it meant I would not have to go fight. I wasn't free in camp, but I was free to live. Life there could have continued with me being so cocky and certain that I was going to make it through this war alive and be able to live a full life. Now, I am reminded of how slim those chances may actually be. Tetsuo had dreams of a life after this war also; those dreams died in the harshness of battle with the man himself. I will miss him, though perhaps not as much as I would have had I not been denied the opportunity to know him better. I may not mourn as much as my mother, for I did not know him well, but as long as I live I will forever remember Tetsuo. I'm proud and honored to be related to someone who had it in them to make the ultimate sacrifice with grace and honor. Should my name come up, I hope to be as brave. For now, all I can say is goodbye to my dear cousin. I'll hold on to your amiable memory always.

—Sunny Nishimoto

January 12, 1945

Dear Journal,

My cousin, Tetsuo Kawano, was born in Honolulu, Oahu, to my aunt and uncle Isomatsu and Hanayo Kawano. He was studying abroad in my mother's hometown of Hiroshima, Japan when he was inducted into the army in June of 1941. After Pearl Harbor, he was segregated with other Hawaiian Nisei that made up the 100th Infantry Battalion, established

on June 12, 1942. The men who composed this group had previously been in the 298th and 299th Infantry Regiments of the Hawaiian National Guard, all of whom were near Pearl Harbor when the Imperial Navy attacked and assisted those who were injured. The 100th's motto was "Remember Pearl Harbor " and they weren't shy about expressing their anger with Japan, the country of their parents. When the troops of the 100th were combined with new recruits from the mainland who had been incarcerated in American concentration camps to form the 442nd, there was some misunderstanding that led to tension, so, fortunately for my family, members of the 100th were sent to visit the concentration camps in Jerome and Rohwer. It was on one such visit I was able to meet Tetsuo and some of his friends. The visit was emotional for us. We were excited to meet, yet we knew he was being deployed to Europe to fight. We took many photos on tar paper of this visit. It was short and sweet and we wished him the best as he left. We did not know that we would never hear from him again. Though my family is heartbroken at this loss, we will never regret the opportunity we had to meet him.

—Sunny Nishimoto

January 10, 1944

Dear Diary,

We just found out that our cousin, Tetsuo, died in battle during the Salerno to Cassino Campaign. When he first joined the army in June 1941, we had no idea it would come to this—we weren't even at war yet. Even before I got the chance to meet Tetsuo in Jerome, mama would tell us of her brother Isomatsu and how much he adored his son, born the same year as I—1917. After Pearl Harbor, we all prayed that

Tetsuo would stay safe. I didn't know him as well as I'd have liked to, but he had an infectious smile and a grand sense of humor. I know he didn't go down without a fight. He was smart, strong, and brave. I'm still in shock. He was our cousin and now he is gone. It really brings the reality of this war home. Now, I am terrified of my little brother Sunny being drafted because I know there is a very real possibility that he may not make it back if he fights for the 442nd. Will this war and the fear it produces ever end? Will we ever feel safe and secure again? Will we all make it back to Madera someday?

—Mildred Nishimoto

January 10, 1944

Dear Diary,

Today, I was informed that my cousin Tetsuo died. He was killed in action on November 4, 1943, during the Salerno to Cassino Campaign against the Axis forces in Italy. This is the most devastating news I have received during this war. So many men have died, but none who I knew personally. And now, I'm scared my brother will be drafted into the 442nd and also be killed in battle. I didn't know Tetsuo that well;

we had just met when he visited us in Jerome, but he reminded me a lot of Sunny. They had a similar disposition. I couldn't imagine losing either of my big brothers and my heart aches for Tetsuo's sister. This news is unbelievably tragic. I just hope and pray this war ends soon so no more innocent lives are lost.

—Patty Nishimoto

January 25, 1944

Dear Diary,

The day we found out my nephew Tetsuo was killed, it broke my heart. He had barely turned 26 years old—the same age as my Mildred—not even yet 30 and he is already gone. I can't even fathom my brother and sister-in-law's grief. I still remember that day in June 1941 when my brother told me his son was inducted into the army. Back then, we all applauded his patriotism, never thinking that one day he would die fighting the Nazis in Italy. We just saw him not a year ago in Arkansas, and he'd only just been deployed overseas in August. We knew the fighting was fierce but never anticipated that Tetsuo would be killed, let alone killed so soon, after just a couple of months of service. I still can't believe I will never see his smiling face again. That is war. We are now among the many who have lost loved ones. I just hope and pray that one of my sons is not killed next. Keith is lucky to be part of a specialized intelligence unit, but Sunny could be drafted at a moment's notice, and all the Nisei being drafted right now are automatically being put in training for the 442nd, of which Tetsuo was part. I'm afraid. I've already lost my nephew to this war and I can't imagine the pain of losing a son. In his mind, my happy-go-lucky son, the epitome of his name, must be in anguish knowing he could be next. But

I know his loyalty—a loyalty I've instilled in him—to this country and I know he will fight if and when he is called. His determination only scares me even more because I know, like me, he wants to prove the point that Japanese Americans are good citizens, even though he nor we should be obligated to prove such a thing. I just hope his determination doesn't lead him toward the same fate as Tetsuo. I will forever love and remember my handsome nephew—how his cheerful smile brightened up every room, just as Sunny's does; my God, how they had so much in common. I'm just broken for my brother and his family and that they were denied the opportunity to see their young man grow up and have a family of his own. I selfishly hope and pray that I get to see both my sons grow up and I hope this war ends soon. The war is taking so many innocent lives.

—Kameyo Nishimoto

January 27, 1944

Dear Diary,

Eight months have passed since I last saw my nephew and now, the worst thing has happened and I will never see him in this life again. I received the news that my dear Tetsuo passed away in the line of duty. No amount of crying and feeling this way can bring him back or make this loss bearable. I wish he could have come back. We have such precious photos from his visit to Jerome. Looking at those photos and at his sweet smile; seeing how well he got along with all his cousins, these are all special memories. It's hard to believe that this is all I have left of him. I'll never see him again—no more visits, no more vibrant smile, no more Tetsuo. We had just connected and now he

> has left forever. All I feel is pain and grief. The tears are streaming down my face, and I can't stop them. I'm so brokenhearted. I can't describe the pain I feel.
>
> —Kameyo

After the devastating news of Tetsuo's death, all there was to do in the midst of grief was march forward. The world was at war and Tetsuo was just one casualty among many in the 100th/442nd alone—men who sacrificed their lives to defeat the evil reign of Adolf Hitler and liberate the Jews being starved or worked to death in German concentration camps. It's ironic yet fitting that members of the 442nd would eventually come upon and free 3,000 incarcerated at Dachau, the first and longest-running Nazi concentration camp on April 29, 1945, just before the German forces surrendered, ending the European war in May 1945. Prior to this victory, however, allied troops proceeded in battles that ravaged the Italian mountains and Nazi-occupied France, with the 442nd enduring the highest casualty rate.

As the original Nisei volunteers for the 442nd were wounded or killed, Nisei in the states were recruited to serve through the draft system. In late 1944, Sunny Nishimoto's name finally came up and he was to report to Fort Leavenworth in Kansas for duty. At the time, Sunny was working and going to business school for accounting in Minneapolis, where the Nishimotos were able to relocate out of Jerome to join Keith. Keith had been able to avoid major conflict in his role with the MIS and when Sunny was called, was still stationed at the MIS language school, now at Fort Snelling in Minnesota. However, the sting of losing Tetsuo was still fresh, especially for Kameyo. While Sunny would eventually join Keith in the MIS, initially his draft notice called him to be a replacement for the 442nd.

"She hated for me to go, you know, and she knew my cousin was killed and that there were large casualties in the 100th and 442nd," Sunny recalled in his 2005 Go For Broke interview. After reporting to the base camp in Kansas for his medical evaluation, Sunny was able to return home to Minneapolis for a month to get his affairs in order before reporting back

to Fort Leavenworth. From Fort Leavenworth, he was then flown to a training camp in Florida, where he received special combat training.

December 12, 1944

Dear Journal,

Merry early Christmas to me! I just received my draft notice letter. I have been instructed to report to Fort Leavenworth in Kansas to train as a replacement for the 442nd. I knew this was coming eventually. So many Nisei have been drafted and many have died in this segregated regiment, but no amount of preparation can make someone less afraid. Perhaps the training itself will make me confident and ready to fight. After losing Tetsuo, I am afraid, not only for me but especially for my parents. I can see in my mom's eyes how traumatized she was by Tetsuo's death, and I'm afraid if something happened to me, she would not be able to go on. Keith has been fortunate, but I can't guarantee I will be unless this war comes to a swift end.

—Sunny

December 20, 1944

Dear Journal,

I have thought a lot these past few days since receiving my draft notice of those who said no to serving on the loyalty questionnaire and were moved to another camp. Seeing the number of casualties from the 442nd, I can understand their hesitation. I, along with the majority of Nisei, said yes, but now that I've been drafted and must act on that commitment I am a bit concerned because, well, I know I could die. What else can I do though? The country treated my family as if we were pests that had to be removed, but personally, I enjoyed some things such

as the dances in the camp and basically the ability to be an American teenager and have the freedom to be able to enjoy extracurricular activities without having to go to work at the store. However, this was probably the only benefit of the camps and solely for my generation, a means to distract ourselves from the harsh reality. The reality is that despite everyone being asked to complete the loyalty questionnaire, it was only us young Nisei men who could serve the country that discriminated against us and allowed our families to be detained. My family is one of the lucky ones to be released early to join my brother in Minneapolis—a benefit because he had already agreed to put his life on the line in service to the country before the Pearl Harbor attack. Keith gets to stay here and work in intelligence, but I'm not sure where I am going as a recruit for the 442nd, but in the end, I will Go For Broke, and fight alongside my Nisei brothers to prove our loyalty, and our Americanism. Up to this point, there have been several tragedies, such as my family being forced into incarceration, having to leave and lease our Madera properties and praying they will still be there when we return, and then, of course, the devastating news of my cousin perishing in battle. I will be brave, but I pray I'm not another casualty—another tragedy for my family to endure. I really don't know if my mom could handle it.

—Sunny

As Sunny explained in his interview, his group of replacements were being trained as a special unit in preparation for joining the 442nd. The training, he said, was supposed to last a total of 16 weeks, but the Battle of the Bulge—the last major German offensive campaign on the Western Front, which raged from December 16, 1944, to January 28, 1945—depleted allied forces. Although the Allies won the surprise Nazi attack, resulting

in 120,000 Axis casualties, the Allies also suffered significant casualties, with 75,000 lost, and they needed more manpower. The result was recent draftees, still in training, being pulled for service in Europe. Each time a significant number of men were called out of the camp in Florida, Sunny explained, weeks would be added to their training. Since the Nisei were specifically training for the 442nd, they remained in Florida as non-Nisei soldiers were sent to Europe.

"They would call out numbers [of troops] at night," Sunny recalled. "But they didn't call us because we were replacements for the 442nd and we were just lucky that we were trained for the 442nd or we would have gone after the Battle of the Bulge ...At that point, it was very fortunate that we still had to train. They trained us for everything. We were a very exceptional troop. They trained us as riflemen, machine gunners, mortars, and cannons. We just had intensive training because we were training for this special unit of the 442nd and we knew those guys were getting killed ...All we talked about in the barracks was that we might get killed ...we were going to go in the 442nd and they were being slaughtered."

Though he knew he could be killed, Sunny told interviewers he wasn't scared. Instead, he felt well-prepared and ready to do what needed to be done. By the time he finished training in April 1945, the war was nearly over. Along with his fellow 442nd draftees, Sunny went to Maryland to await deployment overseas. A 10-day delay was announced as they prepared to leave for Europe and within that time, the Germans surrendered

and an Allied victory was declared in Europe on May 8, 1945. It was then that the military decided to send a bunch of the Nisei troops to Fort Snelling, to train more in the Japanese language as translators to help bring an end to the ongoing war with Japan.

While the missions of the MIS were kept secret until President Nixon declassified WWII intelligence records on June 1, 1972, with Executive Order 11652, among military circles the MIS grew to be known as the "eyes and ears of American and Allied Forces in the war against Japan." According to the Densho Encyclopedia, by September 1945, MISers had translated 18,000 enemy documents, printed 16,000 propaganda leaflets, and interrogated more than 10,000 Japanese prisoners of war. By the time Sunny reported to Fort Snelling in May 1945, the reputation of the MIS was already well established, with intelligence agents responsible for major victories in the war in the Pacific. For example, it was an MIS agent, Harold Fudenna, who was responsible for intercepting and translating the radio message confirming Imperial Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's whereabouts and the times of his take-off and landing that led to the surprise attack that killed the Japanese Imperial Navy leader on April 18, 1943, near Bougainville Island. Admiral Yamamoto was responsible for orchestrating the attack on Pearl Harbor. With MISers proving to be so valuable, there was a push to train more men quickly, thus Sunny ended up graduating from MISLS within a couple of short months as part of the Fort Snelling class of July 1945. "Everybody else took two or three years to become interpreters, but [I was in] a 16-week course … there were probably 200 to 300 of us going through that course," he said. While the two and three-year programs were extensive, teaching students to speak, read and even write in Japanese, Sunny reported that his class just learned how to verbally communicate in Japanese—they would not be translating sensitive documents, but merely serving as oral interpreters.

In his interview, Sunny describes himself and his peers as barely adequate in the language. "They sent us overseas and had these MIS guys come and interview us," Sunny recalled. "They asked us 'Where did you guys come from? You guys can't speak Japanese hardly, you know?' And we said, 'Well, they sent us over here.' Well, the language attachment there

needed a typist so somebody said 'Sunny has gone to business school, maybe he can type' and I said 'Yeah, I can type' so I took the job." Most of the other men Sunny was deployed with were scattered, serving in various capacities wherever needed throughout Japan. Some, he said, were stationed at electrical plants, while others were guards. Throughout the experience, he said, he learned a lot doing and hearing about odd jobs. "I learned a lot of things," Sunny said. "And if [it weren't for] the evacuation and the army, I'd probably just [have stayed] in that little grocery store."

Following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, and Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, the Japanese were forced to surrender. The war in the Pacific officially ended on September 2, 1945. For Sunny, the end of the war was just the beginning of his military service. As a member of the MIS, he would be sent to Japan as an interpreter during the United States occupation immediately following the victory. During the occupation, Nisei interpreters aided military officials as they communicated with members of the Japanese public, rebuilt portions of the cities decimated by the bombings, and prosecuted Japan's military leaders housed in Sugamo Prison during war trials from December 1945 to 1948.

As troops worked to reconstruct Japan politically and physically, two organizations staffed primarily by MIS personnel were critical. According to the Densho Encyclopedia, the first was the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD), responsible for monitoring and censoring Japan's mass media to ensure policies originating from General MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo were being properly implemented. The other organization was the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC), which Keith Nishimoto was a part of. CIC investigators were responsible for detecting and preventing subversive activities. There were CIC agents stationed in every major Japanese city. This special sect of the MIS began training at Camp Ritchie, in Maryland, in the spring of 1945 to prepare for the occupation. Coincidently, Sunny was also in Maryland during this timeframe as he awaited orders for the 442nd. It's conceivable that when the war ended Sunny was selected as one of the Nisei to be transferred to MIS because of his brother's record of commendable service in CIC. While Sunny would serve mainly as a typist during the occupation, as part of the CIC Keith would have more direct

contact with the Japanese natives, using his linguistic and cultural knowledge to detect and prevent any activity that might have been plotted against the Occupation Forces. Keith had the honor of serving as staff to Lieutenant Colonel John F. Asio, a MISLS instructor and the highest-ranking Japanese American in the U.S. Army at the time. Beginning in January 1946, Asio and his staff would serve as legal assistants directly under General Douglas MacArthur and his G-2 chief, General Charles A. Willoughby, in Tokyo.

We know from photographs that Sunny at least visited General MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo and may have been stationed there. We also know that the events of the war took their toll on Kameyo. Imprisonment, the aftermath of the loyalty questionnaire, Tetsuo's death, her sons both being drafted and the bombing of her hometown Hiroshima, all led up to a nervous breakdown for Kameyo as Sunny was serving in occupied Japan. In an article published in the student-run Fresno State newspaper, The Collegian, on October 8, 2001, Sunny said of his mother's illness, "The crazy part of it is that I didn't suffer [in incarceration], but my mom did."

August 7, 1945

Dear Diary,

A tragic event has happened. Hiroshima has been bombed. I'm very sad and worried because now I know Sunny and Keith will be sent overseas to Japan as part of the American occupation. I nearly had a heart attack when I heard the news. I'm having a complete breakdown. I have family in Hiroshima, and I'm frantic with worry that they may have perished in the blast! I'm trying to phone there, but the lines are all down of course. I just can't believe it. First I was kicked out of my home and sent to Jerome, and now my distant family may be gone, all due to this terrible war. I can't do anything except cry.

—Kameyo

August 7, 1945

Dear Diary,

I stepped outside to the front lawn of my home here in Minneapolis to retrieve today's issue of the New York Times, where I was alarmed by the headline "First Atomic Bomb Dropped on Japan; Missile Is Equal to 20,000 Tons of TNT; Trumen Warns Foe of a 'Rain of Ruin.' As I read the article, it described how two atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, by American B-29 bombers. Hiroshima was targeted because it served as an economic and political center. For me, Hiroshima was much more than that. I was born in Hiroshima on November 30, 1896, 48 years ago, in the Chinese zodiac year of the dog. As a dog, I am loyal, trustworthy, introverted, and skeptical about the world. As such, I am skeptical about the truth of such signs and often ignore them, but today is different. I feel resentment in my heart. I have no loyalty to Japan, but it is my home country

and the only one of which I could consider myself a citizen. Yet, I love and live in the United States. Even through all the turmoil of recent events—discrimination driven by years of prejudice; even as those of Japanese heritage learn English and do all they can to Americanize themselves to avoid being victims of hate crimes, none has tarnished my love for the country of my children, the United States. But this? I am devastated that the United States would spend nearly $2 billion dollars on the development of the atomic bomb. While Germany may have started experiments—and thank God they did not finish them! Just think how much greater the genocide would be!—it disturbs me that the United States had to go this far. The Japanese military leaders made it clear they would keep fighting until the end. This is their code of bushido or "way of the warrior." The United States did need to do something drastic to end the war without further Allied bloodshed, but the number of civilian casualties in Hiroshima devastates me. How many did I know?

—Kameyo

August 7, 1945

Dear Diary,

Hiroshima, my hometown, just had a bomb dropped on it, and 70 percent of the city has been destroyed. I've been crying non-stop, tears streaking down my face and I can't hear anything over the sound of my own sobs. I can't stop myself from breaking down just wondering if my family or friends or even acquaintances I knew in my youth survived. Dealing with the loss of my nephew has torn me apart and now this! I don't know how to deal with all of this pain. My own sons are currently overseas, headed for Japan. I don't know anymore if they will be okay. I feel

nothing but numbness, followed by searing pain and these wailing cries taking over my body. Nothing but my sobs can be heard throughout the house here in Minneapolis. I just wish all this would stop. I wish the war would end and the pain would go away. I wish there was something that could help me cope, but I guess only marching forward will help me in these dark times.

—Kameyo

August 27, 1945

Dear Diary,

With a victorious blast, the war is finally over! The aftermath, however, is just beginning. There will be no more painful destruction, but I fear there will be pain. I'm a loyal American, even though I cannot become a citizen, and I have absolutely no loyalty to Japan—in fact, I've renounced my Japanese citizenship by answering yes to the questions on the loyalty questionnaire given in Jerome. I have no love for any of the Axis powers for that matter, but this still hurts. That the end of the war must come this way, with the destruction of my hometown, hurts. I hurt for Hiroshima. At the same time, I'm glad the war is over. It just hurts that it had to happen this way. I love America. This is my country now, but it hurts deeply that a place I used to take such pride in is in ruins, and that innocent civilian lives were taken so disrespectfully in an instant. While I won't miss the war or the Imperial Japanese government that most recently represented my home country, I will miss the streets and fields I once roamed in childhood. I will forever

miss the Hiroshima I once knew—a Hiroshima that will never be again. All those landmarks and all those people, and all they meant to me.

—Kameyo

August 28, 1945

Dear Diary,

I can't even begin to comprehend why all of this is happening. Hiroshima as I knew it is gone! After everything we've already been through I can't believe this has happened. It doesn't seem fair. I don't know how much more agony we can all take. Tetsuo is supposed to still be here on this earth. He didn't ask for this. None of us did. We all just wanted to come to America and have a simple happy life. But all I feel right now is sorrow and agony. At least now I know my family from Hiroshima is safe and all those who aren't are in a better place, gone from this hurting world.

—Kameyo

September 20, 1945

Dear Diary,

Finding out Hiroshima was bombed breaks me in many ways. Even though my immediate family survived the blast and are alive and safe, there are still many people I knew and loved who were impacted and were in the city at the moment the bomb was dropped. I've cried a lot—and I mean a lot—it hurts. To make matters worse, I found out my son, Sunny, is being sent overseas to Japan now. I know the war is over now, but I'm so scared for him. Sunny has gone through so much since we were sent to Jerome. It may be irrational, but what if the Imperial government changes its mind and tries to avenge its people affected by the nuclear bombings—what if

Sunny or Keith are among the cannon fodder resulting from their vengeance? It may be unlikely, but I'm still worried. We've been through so much these last few years—incarceration, losing Tetsuo, and now this terrible bombing—my heart can't take it anymore. I'm heartbroken and my world is falling apart. Slowly but surely, or maybe not so slowly after all, it's falling apart. Growing up in Hiroshima, I never would have imagined anything like this happening, and being here, in the United States, I would have never imagined this country capable of such violence. My life is headed in the wrong direction. I'm still mourning my nephew Tetsuo's death and now I have so many in Hiroshima to grieve for. Every night I have nightmares; I wake up in a panic, thinking I'm back in Hiroshima, seeing the flash of fire in my childhood bedroom. I wake up thinking I'm back in Jerome, shivering on a cot of hay, hearing the neighbors outside the tar-papered slats yelling "Dirty Inu." My post-traumatic stress has gotten worse. My family, friends, and neighbors here in Minneapolis are concerned. I'm not doing good; I'm tired all the time, but can't sleep for fear of these nightmares. I'm exhausted. This world is in absolute chaos. We have been treated horribly all because we are Japanese or Japanese American. It's not fair. I just want my life back with all my kids safe and everyone safe in Madera.

—Kameyo

September 30, 1945

Dear Diary,

I'm still recovering from a complete breakdown after finding out there was a bombing in my hometown of Hiroshima. I have tons of memories from there of my culture and my family. I was worried sick. I didn't

hear a word from any of my family members there for days and weeks until they could find a way to communicate with me—all the lines of communication had been destroyed. I now know that everyone in the family is okay, but they still went through a horrific ordeal that I wouldn't want to ever experience. It was very traumatic for me to go through this anxiety and panic, but I can't even imagine how my family and other surviving citizens in Hiroshima felt seeing the city up in smoke. So many lost family and friends and their shelter. These people stay in my mind and in my prayers. I wish I could help, but this is all I can do from afar.

—Kameyo

Kameyo's breakdown was so severe, Sunny was actually given leave in an emergency furlough home. On the way back from Japan, he stopped in Hawaii, where he visited Tetsuo's family and his grave at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. The deep relationship he forged with his uncle, aunt, and Tetsuo's siblings during this trip eventually led to him meeting his wife, Dorothy, who was a close family friend of the Kawano family. To this day, Dorothy still remembers the somberness of Tetsuo's funeral, which she attended years before she met and married Sunny.

In fact, Sunny and Dorothy did not wed until he was 38 years old. Sunny recounts the story of meeting Dorothy in his mid-30s: "My mother was getting kind of worried I was getting pretty old and so she wrote to my aunt, the one I visited when I came home from the occupation in Japan, the mother of my cousin who was killed. When I went to visit her and the graveside there she said she had a family friend who had a daughter and she told me to come to meet her so I did." After they met, Sunny said they wrote letters back and forth and he went to Hawaii to visit several times before he eventually proposed. They wed in 1960.

In all, due to the ending of the war, Sunny only had to serve two years in the MIS and was mostly stationed at Camp Savage in the MISLS and in Tokyo during the occupation of Japan. In his 2005 interview, Sunny discusses how proud he was to be a part of the 1st Cavalry Division stationed in Tokyo. Prior to the occupation, the division was known for its fierce fighting during WWI and WWII in the Philippines. Upon landing in Japan, it was the first United States division to enter the capital of Tokyo, contributing to the division's motto "first in Manilla, first in Tokyo." The division has since gone on to fight in every major war including conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq. "We went all over Japan to Kamakura and the different resorts," Sunny reminisced about his time in Japan. "We had the weekends there and we would go to town every night to Shinjuku …I didn't drink, I didn't ever, I don't drink, but the boys did and they would get drunk …there were a couple of us who didn't drink but we had a good time, we laughed a lot." Aside from the off-duty fun he had with his fellow troops, Sunny said he enjoyed his job as a typist. "I had a very good job," he said in his Go For Broke interview. "I had to type one stencil a day and that was the report of our work that we did in the public opinion paper there …our men would go out and [collect] public opinions. They would go out and talk to all the Japanese and see how they felt about the troops." From time to time, Sunny would also serve as an interpreter. "Whenever [one of the troops in the 1st Cavalry] needed an interpreter, they would come in and ask and we would furnish them with an interpreter …like if the general wanted to buy boots or something, we could go out and interpret for him …it was a very good experience for me."

Altogether, Sunny recalled there being about 6,000 American soldiers occupying the 5,000 square miles in and around Tokyo, all under the 1st Cavalry Division's jurisdiction. Having the Nisei of the MIS there, Sunny said, was beneficial as the army worked on the demobilization of the Japanese armed forces and the demilitarization of Japanese war industries. "If we weren't there, I think, it would just be Caucasians, and I don't think it would have worked as smoothly as it did." When reflecting on his experiences with the citizens of Japan in a June 25, 2002, article for the Madera Tribune, Sunny said, "Japan was a country I couldn't understand. People were still carrying hay in wagons drawn by oxen while their government attacked America." Later, in his 2005 interview, when discussing the Imperial Japanese military instigating the war with the U.S., Sunny remarked, "They were so silly to fight us because [Japan] was so behind us ...they were still using donkeys and cows ...my brother [Keith], while he was in the CIC, told those Japanese how we plant rice with airplanes but they were so far behind the times. Tokyo was kind of modern, but you just saw the line there. They were still way behind ...I don't know how they ever thought that they could beat our United States."

Though Sunny's service was brief, he was forever proud of his military career, and went on to be inducted into the Madera chapter of the American Legion on August 6, 1947, and later became one of the most prominent members of the Veteran of Foreign Wars Post 1981 in Madera. His brother was likewise proud to serve and actually re-enlisted during the Korean War to continue his service with the MIS and CIC. In 1948, segregation in the armed forces was abolished, so exact numbers of how many Nisei served in the Korean War are unavailable; however, the National Japanese-American Historical Society estimates that 5,000 Japanese Americans served in the conflict. Many of them remained in Japan until the occupation ended in 1952. MIS and CIC linguists like Keith were able to aid in the Korean War as interpreters, translators, and POW interrogators because many Koreans spoke Japanese as a result of Imperial Japan's previous occupation of Korea before the end of WWII. The fact that so many Nisei continued to serve after the events of WWII is a testament to the depth of true American patriotism and loyalty that exists in the Japanese American community.

CHAPTER 8

Returning Home to Madera

The Bridge Store after Kameyo, Sunny, and Keith expanded it.

By December 1944, the president had declared that the Issei and Nisei, who were forcefully removed from their homes nearly three years prior, would be able to return to the west coast. But, with Sunny's draft notice arriving the same month, Keith still stationed at Fort Snelling, and two years left on the Bridge Store's lease back home, the Nishimotos decided to stay in Minneapolis until they knew they could reopen their store in Madera in 1946. Considering the hardships faced by many Japanese American families as they returned to California, it may have been fortunate that the Nishimotos waited until the war had ended and racial tensions had somewhat eased.

Even though no incidents of racial discrimination were reported in Madera, if the Nishimotos had read articles published in their hometown newspaper in 1945, they would have been alarmed to read of acts of violence and aggression against those of Japanese ancestry. In May 1945, articles in the Tribune reported on union protests and threats to strike in Stockton if a Japanese man were to return to his job as an automobile machinist. Even more disturbing were articles about a

Parlier Japanese American family who had their home shot up one evening by a neighbor. Having a history of farming in the Parlier community, Tamaichi and Kameyo may have known the victim—Charles Iwasaki—and his family, or even the perpetrator, 33-year-old farmer Levi Multanen. Either way, had the Nishimotos heard of this crime, they would have been disturbed. Perhaps, they may have even asked themselves if they could have been victimized in such a way as well, had they still had the farm in Parlier. Luckily, no one in Iwasaki's family was injured in the shooting, but not all returning incarcerees were as lucky. In September, the Tribune reported that the home of a Japanese American in Berkeley was looted and the victim lost $500 worth of valuables. In that same month, a demonstration in Alameda county led to two men firing four shots into the residences of two Nisei families in Centerville. And, in Puente, another Japanese American's home was destroyed by an arsonist. Had he, his mother, sister, and two brothers not been at the home of another Nisei family next door, they may have died in the blaze. In Placer, another Japanese American home was destroyed by fire before the family returned from the incarceration camp.

If such reports alone didn't make the Nishimotos leery of returning to Madera, anti-Japanese commentary by the Tribune's editor at the time, Howard A. Clark, would have certainly made them nervous about coming home to the otherwise relatively friendly community. From one editorial, published May 28, 1945, readers can infer that Clark felt the man arrested for the Parlier shooting should not be charged for his hostility toward the Japanese Americans from his statement that the "arresting officers probably were no more sympathetic towards the return of the Japanese than the man ..." In the same editorial, Clark concludes by advising against Japanese returning to the west coast and even implies that if they fall victim to aggression from their neighbors that it is their fault for not listening to the racist objections of said neighbors. He writes:

> Whether right or wrong, depending on whether the individual comes to the west coast from sections where the Jap is little known except from the storybook angle or whether he is a Westerner,

> it is a situation that makes it advisable for those of Japanese blood to remain in eastern centers. The Japanese who are here are here because they 'crashed the gate' over the objections of the west coast state residents, not because they were ever wanted. Their numbers would have been far less but for the meddling of President Theodore Roosevelt. As "gate crashers," they must now pay the penalty for whatever the future may demand.

As if the "penalty" of being unconstitutionally imprisoned without trial for three years was not enough of a punishment for simply being the wrong race in the wrong place in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, the injustices continued after the conflict ended. Clark continued to disseminate anti-Japanese editorials in his newspaper. In another editorial by Clark, dated September 19, 1945, he defends the protests of Pajaro Valley residents and belittles Harold Ickes, the United States secretary of the interior who was so moved by the heroics of the 442nd he encouraged Japanese Americans to return to their west coast homes and urged their neighbors to accept them. Despite government and military recommendations, Clark was unwavering in his prejudice, stating in his editorial the following:

> With four out of every five persons opposed to their return, the Japanese can hope for little consideration if they insist on returning [to Pajaro]. Added to this, the valley is informing the war relocation administration and Congress of its views. The announcement of the Pajaro straw vote or poll is something for little Harold Ickes, champion of the Japanese desiring to return to California despite the fact they are not wanted, to ponder over. Warnings from those military leaders in Japan and others, who have come through unfortunate circumstances to best know the Japanese character, indicate that Japan already is mapping her return to great power.

> The people are urged not to be misled by the present passive attitude of the Japanese, their apparent readiness to accept the fate of a defeated power, and to abandon their former aggressive attitude. They declare the Japanese deceitful and cunning, but marking time and awaiting opportunity.

Clark's absurd suggestion, that all Japanese people, including American-born citizens, are aggressive even as they seem passive and compliant, is reminiscent of the logic used by General John L. DeWitt, who ordered the incarceration based on "military necessity," justified by "the very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken." This, along with his argument that ethnicity ultimately determines loyalty, were the only two pieces of "evidence" DeWitt provided for his recommendation. In hindsight, we know just how preposterous such assertions were, but the widespread racism of the 1940s clouded the judgment of otherwise intelligent men.

Though no aggression was reported against the Nishimotos upon their eventual return to Madera, we assume the decision to come home was not without difficulty given the apparent animosity of a few individuals in the area. In the following journal entries, we consider how members of the Nishimoto family would feel about going home to Madera.

> May 1946
>
> Dear Diary,
>
> I'm grateful that I may finally return home and that I get to do so with my entire family. Perhaps it is just my tendency to worry as a mother, but I do have my concerns about returning. I believe the United States is a great country, but times are difficult and I know that many Caucasian people still have a low perception of Japanese Americans. All we've been through has made me sick. I broke down when I never thought I could break. But I've raised good American children, and I'm with a man strong

enough to soldier on regardless of the circumstance. I too must be strong and continue to endure these challenging times. I truly believe there is a happier future ahead. To my adult children, I want to be an example of perseverance. With my faith in God, there is no obstacle insurmountable. Though I've converted to Christianity, in Hiroshima I was brought up as a Zen Buddhist and one of the principles of Buddhism is Gaman. I will exercise Gaman as I return to Madera to face old neighbors and friends.

—Kameyo Nishimoto

May 1946

Dear Journal,

Returning to Madera is exciting but scary at the same time. I want more than anything to go back to how it was before—before the War, before incarceration, before we lost everything: our store, our home, our entire way of life. We just want our life back and though we have had some semblance of normal life in Minneapolis, our hearts long for California. I'm trying to maintain a positive outlook, but I realize as I read the news all the racism, discrimination, and hatred toward Japanese people as they return to California. Some don't want Japanese Americans back in their communities. Some who have returned have lost their homes, cars, belongings, and businesses. One Nisei man's home was shot up in "revenge" on behalf of the perpetrator's nephew, whom he believed died in a battle against Japan. Another Nisei had to resign from his job to keep the peace when several coworkers refused to work with him and protested his return. Many others have had their homes looted, vandalized, or set ablaze by arsonists. All this concerns me as we head back, but if we do not return we let the racists

win. Madera is our home and we did not deserve to be driven out and must return to reopen our store and move forward.

—Tamaichi Nishimoto

May 1946

Dear Diary,

It's a sunny day as we get ready to head back to Madera! I'm happy to return but maybe I shouldn't be so eager. In truth, I'm a bit scared. I don't know what is ahead of me anymore. Everywhere I go, I know potentially because of what happened in the concentration camps, I may be seen as a problem for just being Japanese. Mentally, I don't feel the same as I once did. I'm no longer naive to the discrimination and the challenges I face as a Japanese American. In Madera, I hope the people are the same as I remember and I will be at peace in mind and body.

—Mildred Nishimoto

May 1946

Dear Journal,

It's time to finally go home, but I can't help but wonder what will happen to me and my family once we are back in Madera. Will we be mistreated as other Japanese who have returned to California have been or will we be met with the kindness of Maderans that we were used to? We've all been homesick, but going back after all we've been through is nerve-wracking. Try as we might to return to normal, we can't ignore the events of the past few years. We were discriminated against, forced to move inland because people were afraid of our Japanese faces, and then so many Nisei sacrificed their lives to prove our loyalty as a people. I am fortunate not to have seen combat, but

my military experience has changed me nonetheless. I've been deployed to Japan; I've lived in the Midwest; I was imprisoned in the South. These life experiences have undoubtedly molded me into someone new. I may still be Sunny on the outside, but inside I'm changed. That isn't necessarily a bad thing. I've learned a good deal about running a business from the school in Minneapolis, for instance. My life took an unexpected turn. I'm choosing to be optimistic and focus on the opportunities I've been given through these unfortunate times, but then I see my parents and I can sense the pain they hide behind stoic faces. They will never admit they have some reservations about going home; reading some of the news that has come out of California, how could they not? I read that in San Francisco and Stockton, more than 50 union members threatened to strike if a Nisei returned to work there—they would rather leave their jobs than work beside a Japanese person! It's unfair and cruel, but nothing compared to the violence that has been inflicted on some other Japanese and Japanese Americans going home. A case in Parlier, where a Japanese American family was shot at, hits closest to home. My parents had once lived and worked in that tiny community. I honestly don't see this happening in Madera, but then again, I never anticipated the repercussions of Executive Order 9066 either.

—Sunny Nishimoto

June 1946

Dear Diary,

I've been back in Madera for a week. I spent the first week resting in bed and didn't leave the house. When I finally went out to get groceries from Hart's Store—we are still transitioning back to Bridge

> Store—I noticed every aisle I went down, people would stare at me suspiciously. Maybe it's just my anxiety or maybe they are afraid of me now, I don't know. It just made me feel ugly, like a monster. Some seem to look at me with fear, others, perhaps, some degree of respect for how strong I appear after my ordeal in Jerome. I'm not even sure how much they know. Others looked at me the opposite way like I was small and weak. This hurts even more. I don't want to be pitied. What happened happened, it was war, and now everyone just needs to move forward.
>
> —Kameyo Nishimoto

Though we assume returning to normal wasn't easy for Tamaichi and Kameyo, they remained strong and dedicated their time to resuming operations of the Bridge Store. The exact date that the store reopened is unknown, but we can surmise it was sometime in late 1946 or 1947, as Lloyd Hart, who had been leasing their property, advertised in the Madera Tribune a grand opening of a new store the first week of November 1947. From what we can ascertain from records, the reopened Bridge Store thrived. Common to retail businesses, the store, and in turn, the Nishimotos, fell victim to the occasional robbery or burglary. In one highly publicized incident in April of 1953, Tamaichi was followed on his drive from the bank to the store. He had just withdrawn a large sum to service customers over the weekend, who often went to the Bridge Store to cash their paychecks. Upon arrival at the store, around noon on April 17, 1953, Tamaichi was held at gunpoint and forced to relinquish his money sack containing $2,200. In an interview with the Madera Tribune about the robbery, Sunny told reporters he was glad his dad handed over the money. "I told him if anything like this ever happened not to kick up a fuss," Sunny said. "He's worth more than all the money in the world."

Sadly, Tamaichi would pass away in the comfort of his own home less than a year later, in March of 1954. Not one to lose heart, Kameyo partnered with her two sons and eldest daughter, Mildred, who helped keep afloat the store. The same year, Kameyo also earned her United States citizenship. Kameyo was

among the first wave of Japanese immigrants to be granted citizenship after the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 gave first-generation Japanese the right to become naturalized citizens. For a time, a photograph of Kameyo receiving her citizenship was on display at the Japanese American National Museum.

Through the years, Tamaichi and Kameyo's adult children flourished. The second eldest daughter Mary married Ginks Nishioki and worked as a public health nurse in Madera and Fresno. She was a beloved supporter of Japanese exchange students attending Fresno State and other Fresno schools and a dedicated member of the United Japanese American Church that preserved Japanese culture among the younger generations in the congregation. Youngest daughter Patty married Keith Okamoto and moved to Texas where she was a teacher and raised three children, Robert, Carole, and Andrew. Kameyo and Tamaichi's oldest daughter Mildred never married, but was a huge advocate for education in the Madera community.

After being honorably discharged from the Army, Sunny and Keith opted to take advantage of the G.I. Bill and completed business courses. Sunny specifically studied accounting and butchering, both subjects which would aid him in operations at the Bridge Store. In addition to studying business, Keith reenlisted in the Army to serve in the Korean War. After their father's passing, the Nishimoto brothers would carry on the family business as partners, with help from their mother, wives, and later, children. Keith Nishimoto married Mickey Masako Fujiki and had two daughters, Judy and Joyce. Sunny, of course, married Dorothy Yashima. Together, they had three children: Mary, Wallace, and Ruth.

In 1965, the Nishimotos reinvested in their growing business and built the Bridge Store Shopping Center to serve the same neighborhood by expanding the grocery store and adding new business space on their property. The family opened N-M Department Store and a coin-operated laundromat. In the late 1970s, they divided the department store and opened a health food store. It was the first local place for Maderans to find whole-grain bread, fresh tofu, vegetarian goods, and specialty vitamins and supplements. In 1978, Sunny opened a take-out chicken restaurant named Fastway Chicken across the street from the Bridge Store. In 1982, Sunny brought early morning and late night services to the neighborhood when he

opened Fastway Market, a quick-stop convenience store with gasoline, on the corner across from both the Bridge Store and Fastway Chicken.

Kameyo was the beloved matriarch of the family business until she passed away in 1974. For the many years that followed, Sunny shared the responsibilities of the Bridge Store operations with sister Mildred, brother Keith, and Keith's wife Mickey, who passed away in 1994, 2000, and 2011 respectively. In later years, Sunny began to hand over the reins to his son Wally. Sunny's youngest daughter Ruth, her husband Gaylen Thelander, and Wally's wife Kathy worked together with Wally to operate the store until it closed in December 2016. The Bridge Store had served the Madera community for 89 years.

Kameyo was confident that one day the U.S. would admit to the illegal and wrongful incarceration of Japanese Americans, but sadly she passed away March 8, 1974, over a decade before the government issued a formal apology and awarded reparations to surviving Japanese incarcerees.

Part of the reason for the government's delayed attempt to right a great wrong was that Japanese Issei and many Nisei wanted to move past the unfortunate events of WWII, but without acknowledging what occurred, their children in the third and fourth generations of Japanese Americans knew nothing of Japanese incarceration. History textbooks their children would have encountered in school made little or no mention of the mass incarceration of mainland Japanese following Pearl Harbor. Even Karen Korematsu, the daughter of Fred Korematsu, one of three men who fought exclusion orders and Executive Order 9066 up to the supreme court, did not know her father's case and criminal conviction until she was 16 years old.

It wasn't until the early 1970s that representatives of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) started passing resolutions in support of redress. Even then, the JACL did not demand monetary reparations at first, simply wanting wartime incarceration to be deemed unconstitutional. In 1979, Japanese Americans at least got this acknowledgment when President Gerald Ford signed Proclamation 4417, terminating Executive Order 9066, exactly 34 years after it was put into effect by Roosevelt. "We now know what we should have known then—not only was the evacuation wrong, but Japanese Americans

were and are loyal Americans ...this kind of error shall never again be repeated," Ford proclaimed when signing 4417. This was satisfactory to some Japanese Americans, but for others, this was just the first step toward reparations. To some, no amount of money would suffice. To others, it was a matter of principle—they knew many Japanese had suffered years of lost wages, plus loss of material possessions, homes, vehicles, and businesses, and that loss could never be reconciled, however, they felt it appropriate for survivors to receive something beyond lip service from the government that wrongfully imprisoned them.

As debate within the Japanese American community continued, the JACL representatives and lobbyists decided it best to call for an investigation into the wartime relocation so the government could make its unbiased deductions before any monetary requests were made. In 1980, Congress established the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC). The commission had three aims: 1) To review the facts and circumstances surrounding Executive Order 9066 and the impact of the order on American citizens and resident aliens, 2) To review directives of United States military forces requiring the relocation and, in some cases, detention in internment camps of American citizens, and finally, 3) To recommend appropriate remedies. In the summary of the commission's report, the commission concludes:

> The exclusion, removal, and detention inflicted tremendous human cost. There was the obvious cost of homes and businesses sold or abandoned under circumstances of great distress, as well as injury to careers and professional advancement. But, most important, there was the loss of liberty and the personal stigma of suspected disloyalty for thousands of people who knew themselves to be devoted to their country's cause and to its ideals but whose repeated protestations of loyalty were discounted—only to be demonstrated beyond any doubt by the record of Nisei soldiers, who returned from the battlefields of Europe as the most decorated and

> distinguished combat unit of World War II, and by the thousands of other Nisei who served against the enemy in the Pacific, mostly in military intelligence. The wounds of the exclusion and detention have healed in some respects, but the scars of that experience remain, painfully real in the minds of those who lived through the suffering and deprivation of the camps.

After the commission's recommendations, Congressmen Mineta and Matsui and Senator Dan Inouye proposed a bill called the Civil Liberties Act that would provide a one-time payment of $20,000 to each surviving incarceree. When President Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980, the redress bill was stalled in the Republican Senate, operating under a policy of fiscal restraint. It wasn't until 1986 that the Civil Liberties Act would move forward. During this time, redress proponents tackled the issue of the supreme court precedents of the Hirabayashi, Yasui, and Korematsu cases. Though discredited, the cases still presented major legal and political obstacles to redress efforts. Los Angeles attorney Frank Chuman proposed to Yasui he file a legal petition called the writ of coram nobis. Seldom used, the writ of coram nobis is a legal proceeding in which a person convicted of a crime who has already served their sentence can petition to have the case reopened and the conviction set aside if "manifest injustice" can be proven. The thought was that the documentation uncovered by the CWRIC could serve as evidence of "manifest injustice." It took some convincing, but Korematsu and Hirabayashi agreed to file petitions of coram nobis as well. The three men sought more than presidential pardons, which the CWRIC had recommended. Rather, their reopened cases sought acknowledgment of a cover-up and admission that they were never criminals to begin with. The Korematsu case was the first one brought to court on November 10, 1983. On this day Judge Marilyn Hall Patel granted his petition for a writ of coram nobis. Before her final judgment, Judge Patel said:

> As a historical precedent [Korematsu] stands as a constant caution that in times of war or declared military necessity our institutions must be vigilant in protecting constitutional guarantees. It stands as a caution that in times of international hostility our institutions, legislative, executive, and judicial, must be prepared to exercise the authority to protect all citizens from the petty fears and prejudices that are so easily aroused.

Though the process took much longer, Hirabayashi's petition was also granted. On February 10, 1986, Judge Donald Voorhees vacated Hirabayashi's conviction for violating the exclusion order, but he did not vacate the curfew conviction saying it rested upon a different legal foundation. Hirabayashi's legal team appealed and eventually, Voorhees vacated the curfew conviction as well on January 12, 1988. Meanwhile, Yasui's case continued to be delayed and while waiting for his day in court, he died on November 12, 1986, effectively ending the appeal for the lawyer who had deliberately violated the curfew to bring about a legal challenge. Decades later, in 2015, President Barack Obama presented Yasui's family with a Presidential Medal of Freedom on his behalf to remedy this injustice.

With all the cases of coram nobis settled, in May 1988, the JACL wrote a letter to the White House urging President Reagan to sign the house's bill, aptly named H.R. 442 after the heroic 442nd Regimental Combat Team. In a ceremony on August 10, 1988, Reagan officially signed the Civil Liberties Act, which promised reparations of $20,000 to each surviving victim of incarceration. A total of 82,219 former incarcerees received this sum. Tamaichi and Kameyo, having passed, were not among them, but their three daughters and son Sunny, who endured incarceration with them at the Fresno Assembly Center and Jerome Relocation Camp, each received $20,000. When discussing the redress payments in a Fresno Bee article dated October 8, 2001, Sunny said. "Some people say it sounds like a lot of money, but you can't pay back something like that

... Everything has worked out perfectly for me. I saw the world. None of that would've happened without camp or the army. I've had a good life."

Sunny, along with his sisters, ended up donating most if not all of the money they received from the government. Eldest sister Mildred used her $20,000 to found the Nishimoto Family Scholarship Fund, which operates today under the direction of Sunny's eldest, Mary Nishimoto and Keith's two daughters, Judy Nishimoto and Joyce Nishimoto. The three review scholarship applications from high school seniors in the Madera Unified School District and award a $2,000 scholarship each year. The generosity of friends in the community in remembrance of the Nishimotos has helped to sustain the fund. Sunny's sister Mary gave much of her portion to Public Health causes. In his 2005 Go For Broke interview, Sunny said he gave part of his $20,000 to Madera Unified, part to the historical society, and part to the police department.

To this day, the Nishimotos hold a deep appreciation for the community of Madera and are known for giving back. All of Sunny's children are ardent supporters of education and the Madera community. Wally has served on the Board of Trustees of Madera Community Hospital for many years. Wally, his wife Kathy, Ruth, and her husband Gaylen have been active volunteers in the Madera Evening Lions Club, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire, and their children's schools. Ruth has been lead advisor for the Madera Leo Club for high school students in the MUSD for many years. Mary, who is a marine ecology researcher at the University of California Santa Barbara, volunteered to develop the science program at her daughter's school, was a Girl Scout leader for many years in her community, and had the privilege to be an online lecturer for the California Academic Decathlon lecture series for high school students sponsored by the Madera County Superintendent of Schools.

The list of donations provided and accolades received by the Nishimotos is extensive, but their biggest recognition has come from Madera Unified. A mile away from the original Bridge Store, the Madera Unified School District built an elementary school that was dedicated to and named after the family in 2005.

While the Nishimotos had donated extensively to school fundraisers over the years, Sunny recounted the biggest contribution to education he and his wife Dorothy made was in the on-the-job training of so many MUSD students. "We had a bunch of kids that worked at the store. In this one group, one became the Superintendent of Schools or Vice Superintendent of Schools in Merced, one became a dentist, one became a chiropractor, one became a doctor, one became a pharmacist, and one became a policeman. This was just out of one group and they are the ones who pushed for the new school to be named Nishimoto School. That is how the school was named after us because these kids were thankful," Sunny said in his 2005 interview. According to Sunny's daughters, Mary and Ruth, this group of community members initially wanted to name the school Sunny Nishimoto, but Sunny refused, suggesting the school be named after his mother instead. As a compromise to appease the humble Sunny, the school was instead simply named Nishimoto after the entire family. To this day, Nishimoto Elementary remains the only school in Madera Unified without a first name. Those that knew him well said

Sunny was often heard saying "You can lose everything, but you will always have your knowledge. Learn whatever you can, because that can never be taken away."

In the final minutes of his Go For Broke interview, Sunny is asked what advice he would give to his grandchildren and the value he emphasized was education. "They should [go to school]...Education is very important. We have stressed that. My wife is in education so she stresses it." Love, Sunny said, is the other value he tried to instill in his young grandchildren before he passed away in 2006. "The oldest is only 10," Sunny said in 2005. "So, we try to teach them love, you know, that's the main thing." Today, Sunny's seven grandchildren, Carly, Jared, Thomas, Lauren, Brandon, Ryan, and Zoe, are doing their best to live up to the expectations set by their parents and grandparents.

THE SUNNY NISHIMOTO TAPES

The following pages include transcripts of an interview conducted by Richard Hawkins with the Go For Broke National Education Center and published with the Japanese American History Collective with Sunny Nishimoto. The transcripts are labeled by video segment. Some parts of the recording were barely audible, and we have made the best approximations based on context clues. These transcripts are not word-for-word. For readability, they have been edited for grammar, and pauses such as "uh" and "um" as well as phrases repeated have been removed. In some areas, for context and clarity, information has been added in brackets.

VIDEO SEGMENT 1

INTERVIEWER Okay. It is April, around April 17, 2005. We are in Fresno, California. Row is on camera. Steve is doing sound. Stuart is doing cataloging and Richard's asking questions. We are here with Sunny Nishimoto. Sunny, thank you so much for coming. As I was saying, I come from a large family and we're interested in your parents. So we'll talk about them a little bit. I realize Issei didn't talk a whole lot. But let's start with your dad. Where was he born?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO In Hilo, Hawaii.

INTERVIEWER What kind of a man was your father? What was his character?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, I guess just ordinary. Of course he was a citizen.

INTERVIEWER Much of a disciplinarian?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Pretty much.

INTERVIEWER Quiet?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No, not quiet. I mean he was always kind.

INTERVIEWER How did he show you his kindness?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well. I don't know how I could say that, just by being dad I guess.

INTERVIEWER What kind of a man did your father want you to become?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, my mother was [more involved in that].

INTERVIEWER Let's talk about her then. Where did your mom come from?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Japan

INTERVIEWER Where in Japan?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Hiroshima.

INTERVIEWER How did she get to Hawaii or to the United States?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO She came by boat, I guess. And she was a picture bride.

INTERVIEWER Describe your mother's character. What kind of lady was she?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Very strong. Very domineering.

INTERVIEWER What kind of values did she try to teach you? What was she interested in you learning?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, she tried to educate all of us. My three sisters were all college graduates. But the boys didn't go to college. We went to business school. I took accounting. My brother took salesmanship at Minneapolis Business Journal during the evacuation.

INTERVIEWER So she stressed education.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right, very much.

INTERVIEWER What about honesty?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Very strong. That was the "it's very important in the business you know this or that." You had to be honest.

INTERVIEWER What religion did you grow up with?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Christian.

INTERVIEWER Your mother was Christian back in Hiroshima?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No, she was a Buddhist.

INTERVIEWER She converted?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER How much did religion play in your development?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, the neighborhood people that we all like, they took us to church and things like that and were trying to make Christians out of us. But then later in life, my mother became a Christian and then became a Seventh Day Adventist. We had a hard time with her. She wanted to close [the business] on Saturdays. We convinced her that we couldn't close because Saturday was a very large day in those days.

INTERVIEWER You mentioned business. You mentioned about your brother going to business school. You going to business school. And now you've mentioned about your mom wanting to close, but what business are we talking about?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO We have a supermarket. We have a fried chicken place, we have a mini mart, and then we have a laundromat.

INTERVIEWER The supermarket, I'm guessing, was the first business?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, it was a small store about the size of or a little smaller than 7-Eleven.

INTERVIEWER When you were born, your parents already had the store?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No. We had a ranch when I was born and we lost the ranch. It was a kind of a thing that my dad had a partnership and he had it with the Japanese [immigrants]. They weren't Americans. My dad had [citizenship]. But during that period, [first generation immigrants] couldn't be partners and my dad had them as partners which was against the law at that time.

INTERVIEWER That was back in the 20's or 30's?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO 1917, 1918.

INTERVIEWER And you were born when?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO 1922.

INTERVIEWER How many siblings do you have?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Four.

INTERVIEWER Boys? Girls?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Three sisters and one brother.

INTERVIEWER The store that they had back in 1917 after the partnership on the ranch was dissolved, how did your dad open a store then?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO During the Depression, that was in 1928, they couldn't grow grapes so they couldn't make the payments so we had to walk off the ranch. We thought we were in trouble because of the combination of having these partners who were not citizens so we met a lawyer [in Madera]. He adopted us.

INTERVIEWER A lawyer adopted you?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Yeah.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO So this attorney adopted the family. He moved us to town. We built the store. We borrowed, I think, $500 from my aunt [Ms. Inami] and because of my dad having these partnerships, they put it in her name because we didn't want to get in trouble with the law. You know, so then we became very good friends. They took care of us when we left and everything.

INTERVIEWER What was this attorney's name?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Mr. Barcroft

INTERVIEWER Tell me a little bit about Mr. Barcroft, what motivated him to do something like this?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO He understood my mother very well. He was half Mexican, half English. And I guess he felt sorry for her. We didn't want to [move in with] relatives, so we started the store.

INTERVIEWER Wow. When did you fully recognize what Mr. Barcroft had done for you and your family? How old were you when it hit you?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Maybe 10.

INTERVIEWER So what I'm hearing is at a young age, you were very aware.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER Tell me a little bit as long as we're on this subject about being hurt and being put down and then someone reaching out to give you a lift up. Talk to me a little bit about discrimination.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Alright.

INTERVIEWER Any kind of racism? Give me an idea of what it was like to grow up as this little boy of 10.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, we didn't know discrimination at that period, but we knew that we couldn't go swimming because it was off limits to the Mexicans, Blacks and Asians that period. We knew something was happening but the neighbors were very kind to us.

INTERVIEWER When you're a little kid like that and limitations are put on you, how much understanding did you have why these limitations were there?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO You knew that you couldn't get a job. We knew that we had to start our own business. We had to stay in business because at that period, the Orientals couldn't get a job. We lived in a Mexican neighborhood, so they were in the same position that we were in. They couldn't get a job either.

INTERVIEWER When an event like this happens early in life, it tends to mold and shape people, affect the rest of their days. How did living through this kind of experience ultimately affect you? I know there's highs and lows along the way, but how would you define that?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Now what was that?

INTERVIEWER Sorry, I got too complicated about my question. What I was trying to get at is in this series of questions I'm asking you, I'm looking for influences, people, places, things that molded and shaped you.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO People were nice. The teachers were all nice. We knew that things were limited to us at that period.

INTERVIEWER When you grow up, you're a little kid and an experience like this happens where Mr. Barcroft reaches out, what I'm hearing you say is you had limitations and you had to do it yourselves.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right. You had to stay in your own business and things like that.

INTERVIEWER And now, because that experience happened to you early on when you were just a little boy, ultimately, how did that affect the rest of your life?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, I don't think it affected my life too much. People were always nice to me, you know? We knew that we had to behave but people were always nice to our family.

INTERVIEWER Let's talk about school a little bit. How did you like school? Was it okay?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Yeah. School was okay. But I was like my friends. I was an American. I didn't study too hard. I knew I was going to work in the grocery store all my life. As I say, the period of evacuation really straightened me up, woke me up.

INTERVIEWER The evacuation woke you up, how?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO It taught me that you had to have an education to get ahead. Then I went in Army after I went to camp and the kids that had the college education, they got the better [Army] jobs so I learned that we had to have an education and my mother stressed education. But before I thought I was just going to be in the grocery business and you didn't have to have much sense to run a grocery store.

INTERVIEWER Well you have to to be successful.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well now you do. But in that period, you [could get by] with some school.

INTERVIEWER What do you think of knowing that the rest of your life you would be working in a grocery store versus becoming a fireman or policeman or whatever else you wanted to be?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, we knew that you couldn't get a job [outside the family business] but I was satisfied. I was only 19 when the evacuation came. I was 19, so it kind of woke me up.

INTERVIEWER We'll get to evacuation in a minute. I still want to talk a little bit about you growing up, if that's okay. So in school, you didn't take it that seriously?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No, I didn't.

INTERVIEWER What did you take seriously when you were a kid?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Playing .

INTERVIEWER What did you like to play?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, I liked to play football and baseball, things like that. My mother made it hard. She would call me, "Get out, get out of the field. Come home and work."

INTERVIEWER But how good was your hearing back then?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Good. It wasn't like it is today.

INTERVIEWER So you paid attention to your mom?

INTERVIEWER I'd like to understand your home life a little bit. Did you have your own room or did you share it?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO When we were growing up, when we first started the store, we all slept in one room. My dad and the whole family slept in one room, probably about this hotel room [size].

INTERVIEWER How was that?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, we had one bedroom and a kitchen in the back of the store that's what we lived in.

INTERVIEWER Did you like living that way?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I guess so. I mean, everybody was poor at that period and everybody lived that way so I wasn't different from anybody else.

INTERVIEWER Did you have a radio?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I can remember when we got a radio.

INTERVIEWER And you were still a kid?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I was small at that period. I remember the first time that they had a radio. A neighbor bought one battery radio and we would go over to their house to listen to the radio.

INTERVIEWER What did you listen to?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I don't remember. But it was just earphones. You had to have earphones to listen to the radio. It was battery-operated.

INTERVIEWER Growing up through elementary school, junior high and high school. How did you see yourself? As American, as Japanese, as the neighborhood kid, you know, part of this group that lived in a specific place, the neighborhood? Define yourself. Who were you back then?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, we were just ordinary kids that there were. We had a lot of Mexicans living in our area and some Caucasians lived in our area. We didn't know what discrimination really was. When you're small you just know you're in your place.

INTERVIEWER And your place was?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Just being Japanese.

INTERVIEWER Did that make you different from everybody or not?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No, it didn't.

INTERVIEWER Growing up, prior to evacuation, did anyone ever question your loyalty?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No.

INTERVIEWER Did anyone ever question your parents' loyalty?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No, they didn't do that.

INTERVIEWER So, you were 19 years old when Executive Order 9066 is signed, it goes into effect. Prior to that did you know about or hear of the United States having tension with Japan?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right. Real tension.

INTERVIEWER What did you know about that tension?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I guess on the radio you're hearing about it but that's all you know.

INTERVIEWER Do you remember any specific things that you heard?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No.

INTERVIEWER Where were you on December 7th, 1941?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO In the store.

INTERVIEWER How did you hear that Pearl Harbor had been bombed?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, we were all working. We couldn't believe it. You know, it's weird. We knew that something was going to happen to us, too. Even we figured that my dad was a citizen, so they weren't going to pick on us but they took everyone. We thought we were pretty safe at that period. Of course we knew that during World War I that the Germans were treated mean. In Madera one of our best families was treated [poorly] during World War I. My mother knew.

INTERVIEWER What did she know?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO That they treated the Germans mean at that period. It was a family, the Ramer family. They were outstanding citizens in Madera, but they were treated very mean. One of the sons I heard even committed suicide because he was treated so mean. When we left Madera, the family came over to talk to us.

INTERVIEWER They talked to you? What did they say?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO They said that everything would be alright because they were leading citizens in Madera and they knew that things would change later. They just told us that everything would be okay.

INTERVIEWER Did you believe them?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, yes. We believed them.

INTERVIEWER Do you know where Pearl Harbor was before it was bombed?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No, I didn't know [exactly]. Of course, we had family, cousins, an aunt and uncle living in Hawaii so we knew where Pearl Harbor was.

INTERVIEWER How did you hear that you would have to leave Madera because of evacuation?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO We read the papers and we knew that they were going to [evacuate us]. Most of the Japanese were aliens because they couldn't become citizens that period because they passed the Exclusion Act. My dad was a citizen and I thought that may automatically mean my mother's a citizen but it didn't. She could not become a citizen.

INTERVIEWER So far when we've been talking, you've used the word citizenship quite a bit. The German family, outstanding citizens, and yet they were treated very poorly. You talked about your dad being a citizen,as you've mentioned a number of times, and you talk about thinking your mom would be a citizen. What is citizenship?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, you think you have more rights than anybody. You learn in school [about] the Constitution, the legal rights.

INTERVIEWER How strongly did you feel yourself an American?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO We just grew up that way. We were American. We didn't speak hardly any Japanese in our home because we were in business and we

didn't want the customers to think that we're talking about them. We never spoke Japanese in the store. I was never fluent in Japanese.

INTERVIEWER How did you get the name Sunny?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well my aunt heard the name in the park and thought that sounds pretty good. She didn't know that it was kind of a nickname so they named me Sunny.

INTERVIEWER It's just the way you smile. Basically, it's like the perfect name for you. That's why I ask how you got it. Wow. How neat. Besides Mom and dad, particularly mom, any other person influence you a lot when you were growing up?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I think Mr. Barcroft did.

INTERVIEWER Anybody besides this Mr. Barcroft.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, there was another Japanese family [the Inami family] in Madera and they influenced me too. We had to go to Japanese school on Saturdays. My mother made me go and they would take us to Saturday school one week and my dad would take us to school one week. It was kind of far off, about 12 miles from our home, so we'd take turns. One thing I learned out there was how to play ping pong.

VIDEO SEGMENT 2

INTERVIEWER Okay. We're going to pick up with evacuations. You read the papers, you heard it coming. You said some neighbors came and talked to you?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER What were their names again?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO They were Barcroft and Ramer.

INTERVIEWER You had encouragement. You had people reaching out to you.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER That's wonderful. Nonetheless, you got to go.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER I'm forever curious. I put myself in your place. You've got to leave. You had built a life, you had things. How do you decide what to take with you and what to leave behind?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO We packed our suitcases and threw in clothes we had. At that period, we had a two story house. We had four bedrooms. We took one bedroom and we stored all the things in there and we and they locked it. Mrs. Conn, [the Barcroft's] daughter, took care of it. He [Joseph] must have died before the evacuation. Then his son [David] was also an attorney. They took care of everything. They never charged us anything.

INTERVIEWER When you say take care of it, what do you mean?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Take care of the lease. We had to lease for the store. He made all the papers. I think they took us to the memorial hall where we had to gather to go to Fresno.

INTERVIEWER When you came back from camp, did your parents get the store back? Did they get the house back?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO We had a five year lease. We had this place in Minneapolis where my brother was stationed for one year. After the war was over, we were allowed to come back.

INTERVIEWER When did you come back?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO When we came back [Hart's Store] had a butcher and we asked him to stay and work for us but he decided we wouldn't have any business because how the feeling went.

INTERVIEWER So you lost the store? You lost the house when you got back?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No, we still have the property. We have a lot of property. We've always had a lot of property. [My mom] was a smart business person.

INTERVIEWER So you're getting ready to go to camp. You take the stuff, you put it in the room, lock it up.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right. We just took clothing with us. Suitcases with clothing.

INTERVIEWER Was there anything anything that you personally really liked or had that you wanted to take with you but could not?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No. We sold the trucks. We had delivery trucks and had to sell all those trucks. We just got ready to leave. We went to the Memorial Hall.

INTERVIEWER Now you're in the memorial hall and you're getting ready to leave. What did you think would happen to you ultimately?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, when you're 19, it's adventurous. We went just to Fresno assembly center, right there.

INTERVIEWER What was the assembly center like, what were the living quarters like?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO We had asphalt floor and black tar buildings that we stayed in. They had crude toilets outside. They had a trough that had one side and the other side. They had cut toilets. You would sit there and they had a system that was a big tub that would fill up with water and it was counterbalanced so that when it got full it would spill and all that stuff would wash down down to the bottom. I felt sorry for my mother because she had to go in a room with 35 other ladies. She was very strong lady. The boys were just adventurous. I met all these people. I didn't mind it too much. I had fun. Believe it or not.

INTERVIEWER How do you have fun?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I was raised very strict. [In the camps] we had dances and we played baseball, which I wanted to play when I was small, but when [my siblings and

I] were in high school, we had to go home to work. [In camp] I got to play baseball which I'd wanted to play my whole life because I watched TV and knew about baseball. I knew all the different players. Then when we went to Arkansas, I learned how to play basketball. I didn't know all those things. Now, I enjoy my life by watching. I know what they're doing. I know how they play offense and defense. It was kind of interesting. Then I was a pantry carpenter. This was also a period where out in the universe, you were a "no no" [to girls] when you're going to school because you could only go with Caucasian girls, but then [in camp] here are all these [Japanese] and they just, wow. You're happy.

INTERVIEWER I just want to warn you. Your wife is sitting five feet from you.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I know.

INTERVIEWER Don't go somewhere you don't want to.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I was only 19 then.

INTERVIEWER You tell her that. You're going home with her, not me. But what I'm hearing is that this internment camp experience opened up a world for you that you previously didn't have access to.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Yes. See, I played in a dance band.

INTERVIEWER What instrument?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Sax.

INTERVIEWER Wow. That's a chick magnet.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO We played when we were in relocation camp. We played Saturday nights at dances. And we got paid for playing and for being in an orchestra to entertain the kids. We got $16 a month. Some of the Japanese that were the higher echelons would say "you guys shouldn't get paid," but we said, "now, what are you guys doing?" I had fun in the relocation. I shouldn't say that I had fun.

INTERVIEWER You're being honest with us. We understand why you had fun, it makes perfect sense. Before that, all you're doing is working?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right. Every day, school and work.

INTERVIEWER This is a whole new life for you. That's wonderful. What about for other people? What was camp like for your mom and dad?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, it was very bad for my mother and my dad because a lot of people were mad. They had a right to be mad because they lost their homes and things like that–their fortune My mother went to school to learn English when she was in camp and she learned to write English. Then of course the teachers taught her the Constitution and she said "it's a good country because of the Constitution." But right then at that period [the U.S. government] wasn'tliving by the Constitution. But she read that and she figured that if they went by the Constitution, it's a really good country so she was very pro-American, even if she was treated mean.

INTERVIEWER That kind of surprises me. And not nothing about your mother, but just human nature. If you hit me, my instinct is protect myself or hit you back to stop. When a bad thing is done to you, you strike. Your mom didn't, why?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Because she was treated well [in Madera]. In the neighborhood, everybody loved her.

INTERVIEWER So it was the Americans themselves that reinforced her faith in America?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER Wow. Okay. I'm sorry. I got distracted. That was amazing. While you are in camp this whole new life is kind of opening up for you. [Meanwhile] a war is going on. People are getting killed and they are dying.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER How much of war, the battles and how they were going did you know? Did you hear? Did you read?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO We read. My my cousin came to visit us in the relocation center, and he was killed in Anzio.(1)

INTERVIEWER When you say he came to visit you, was he in the Army?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO He was in the 100 infantry sector. Training. I think it was [Camp Shelby] at the time.

INTERVIEWER How close were you to your cousin?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO We didn't know him before. Then when I went to the occupation in Japan, my mother had a nervous breakdown. I had an emergency furlough home and I stopped in in Hawaii and met them. We went to his grave and I got to know his family really well. That's how I met my wife.

INTERVIEWER We'll get to that in a minute. So your cousin's in the 100th and he's trained. He's going to go off to war. What have you heard about the 100th infantry battalion and what you know about these Japanese soldiers?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, they started to recruit [in the camps]. We had to sign this thing so we could be drafted. We all knew that we were going to be drafted. Except some [who answered no on the loyalty questionnaire]. We ended up in a very bad block of people who were very mad at United States for putting us in [conentration camps], which they had a perfect right to be mad about. But my mother was pro-American. She had a rough time with those people.

INTERVIEWER So there were clashes then?

(1) Upon investigating research, it was determined Sunny's cousin, Tetsuo Kawano, did not die in Anzio, as that campaign occurred after his death. We discovered Tetsuo Kawano was killed during the Salerno to Cassino campaign.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right. They kind of ostracized her because she's still Pro-American. We just happened to live in a very bad block and most of those people went to Tule Lake. But don't get me wrong, they have the right to be mad.

INTERVIEWER I hear you.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Yeah.

INTERVIEWER My respect for your mother is growing and growing and growing. You talk about this amazing lady. What drove her, what kept her going? I mean, there was opposition. You guys had a life and you had money, you had a store things were going strong. She was buying property and boom 9066, camp, BOOM you lose everything, or it stopped everything. Then in camp, she discovers the Constitution and she falls in love with America again.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER But she has opposition from the folks living to the left and to the right. How do you keep going? What keeps you driving? What keeps you moving?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, she had a nice life. There were people who really treated us nice and we were very successful in that period.

INTERVIEWER When did you get drafted?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO 1944.

INTERVIEWER What did your mom and dad say about you being drafted and going off to war?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, my brother was in the service already and he was stationed at Snelling at that time. It was just everybody was going to war. They just thought it was our duty to go.

INTERVIEWER My brother is a Marine and was a part of the invasion of Iraq. And at 3:00 in the morning, I dropped him off near Miramar Force Base, and actually stayed there until he left. I'm looking at my brother. I grew up

with him. He is my brother and I love him and he may die. I know this is a moment where what do you say, what do you do? What did your mom and dad say?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO They just figured that it was our duty to go at that period.

INTERVIEWER Any words of wisdom, any advice?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No. I mean, I knew [mom] hated me to go and she knew that my cousin was killed. Then there were large casualties in the 100th and I was a replacement for the 442nd.

INTERVIEWER Did she cry? Was she afraid you were going to die.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No. We just didn't talk about that.

INTERVIEWER What was your first impression of the United States Army?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I was drafted. I went to Fort Leavenworth in Kansas City and we were all Japanese. We didn't know that they were gathering us together. We went there and they checked us over and then sent us home for about a month. A few weeks later, we had to report back to Fort Leavenworth to go to the Florida training camp.

INTERVIEWER What was training like? How do you learn to be a soldier? What did they teach you?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO We had special training as a special unit to replace the 442nd. At that period when we first went in training it was about ten weeks in and we were supposed to have 16 weeks but then the Battle of the Bulge came and they started clearing the base out, shipping everybody out at night would and that would add ten weeks of training or five weeks. They would call out numbers all night. They didn't call us [Nisei] though because we were replacements for the 442nd. We were just lucky that we were trained for 442nd or we would go to the Battle of the Bulge. That was very fortunate. They trained us for everything. We were a very exceptional troop. They trained us as

riflemen, machine gunners, and to do mortars and cannons. We had intensive training because we were going to be that special unit for the 442nd and we knew that those guys were getting killed.

INTERVIEWER Did you worry about yourself at all?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO It was all we talked about in their barracks, that we might get killed.

INTERVIEWER What was the general consensus?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO We knew that we were going to go for the 442nd and they were being slaughtered so we knew how it was going to go. We just talked about it.

INTERVIEWER Scared?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No, we weren't scared. It's just one of those things.

INTERVIEWER Meeting you here today, there's a great energy to you, very positive. You've got a great smile, your face lights up. It's hard for me to imagine you being a soldier. "Kill, kill, kill." It doesn't quite fit.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, they show you films all the time. They show you to get you mad. They show you films about the Germans and they show you films about the Japanese propaganda so you get all fired up to go.

INTERVIEWER And did you think the training prepared you well enough to go do what they were asking you to do?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Oh, yes, very much so. We were really well trained.

INTERVIEWER Being of Japanese ancestry, was there anything that drove you a little harder or made you think you had to do a little better or not?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No, I don't believe so. [The commanders] just drove you. When the captain says do it, you do. When you're in the army, you don't talk to the captain. We just talked to the NCOs and they just

make you run. If you don't or if you're slow, you go back to the barracks and do it again. You get tuned from the army.

INTERVIEWER Listening to you, I'm seeing that your life took a couple of interesting turns. In the beginning you're growing up and you're working at the store, going to school, working at the store, going to school. Then internment happens and you're incarcerated in this camp. But within that horrible situation, the world kind of opens up for you. You learn baseball and you learn basketball, you get to play in a band, you get to play a great instrument and you get paid for it. Then you go into the army?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO My brother called us out [of Jerome] so we went to Minneapolis. There my mom said we should go to school so I went to business school and took accounting.

INTERVIEWER So you left camp to go to business school, and then from there, you went into the army?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER Okay. But again, your life in the beginning was pretty disciplined. Pretty tough work. Work, work, work.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Yes.

INTERVIEWER And then it loosens up in the camp and all these interesting things happen. Then you're gone to school and that's part of discipline. And then work, work, work in the army, which is just discipline work. What did you think about all that? Your life is changing pretty quickly and drastically.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO It really helped me. I learned that you had to have an education. When I knew that we were going to go back to the store at that period still [Japanese] couldn't get a job, so when I came back from the army I went back to business school and took senior accounting. Then we knew we're going back to Madera again. The GI paid for my accounting

school. Then I wanted to go to butcher school to learn and they paid for that. I went back [to Madera] as a trained butcher. I knew how to run a butcher shop, how to make cutting tests, and how we scientifically run a butcher store and a grocery store. By knowing accounting, I knew how to keep track of things. I had everything I needed to run a store. I was much better prepared to come back and run a store after that.

INTERVIEWER Wow. That's great.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I told that to my friend the other day. He said, "you know, the evacuation did you good." It's really funny. My mother made me take advantage of the situation. We bought a house in Minneapolis. She bought our house. I was just very fortunate. If I didn't go through the evacuation, I probably could have run a store because I was working and someone had to do it, but [back then] we had to do the books by hand. Now my son runs everything by computer. Everything is on the computer. It's very interesting. It was very fortunate that the evacuation came in a way.

INTERVIEWER I think it's unfortunate. I think the evacuation itself wasn't so fortunate. And there's a real irony there because this was a horrible thing–internment, 9066–yet out of that came so much good for you personally.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right. It really helped me.

INTERVIEWER And I hear your mom kicking your butt all the way through it.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER How much did your mom push you? Encourage you, and I don't mean negatively, but push you to keep going?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO When we came out of camp my dad was a gardener for a real rich person, for a victory garden. That was his duty. But we had to live in the basement for a while. She said we can't be living in a basement

so we left that place. We went to YMCA and stayed there and then we bought a house in Minneapolis. She paid $4,000 for a House.

INTERVIEWER That was back when?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO 1944. It was a three bedroom house. It was a nice house.

INTERVIEWER Let's talk a little bit more about the Army. You're supposed to be a replacement for the 442nd. You're trained up. When were you deployed? When were you moved out?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I got through it, I think in April [1945]. Then on my delay en route–we had a 10-day delay–the war in Europe ended. We went through Maryland to be shipped overseas but then they decided they would send a bunch of us to Fort Snelling to go learn Japanese in very short course. I guess they knew that they were going to make a landing [in Japan]. They just trained us very fast to get ready.

VIDEO SEGMENT 3

INTERVIEWER Okay. Fort Snelling. Tell me about Fort Snelling. What was that experience like?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well we were a [special] class. Everybody else took two or three years to become interpreters. We had a sixteen week course to learn oral Japanese and we were supposed to be interpreters. There were quite a few of us. We had probably 200 or 300 of us going through that course. Then they sent us overseas and they had these MIS guys coming to interview us. They asked us "Where did you guys come from? You guys can't speak Japanese hardly." We said, "Well, they sent us over here." The language attachment there needed a typist. So somebody says, "Sunny had just gone to business school. Maybe he can type." So I said, "Yeah, I can type," and I took the job. It was nice. But it was quite interesting that the

army is all hurry up and rush to get us there and be sure they have enough people. Then they sent us out to all the different small outfits my friends were at. They got stationed at electrical plants where they made electricity. Some were the guards and they just stayed there. Heck I thought I was a commercial student in high school. I didn't take geometry or physics or anything like that. I thought they made electricity out of gas or out of waterfalls and here they were using diesel. It was quite [eye-opening]. I learned a lot. When you work at a grocery store and you work all your life you don't see those things. Then we used to go dancing to a dance hall and we used to have to hide our jeep because we weren't allowed to go to a dance hall with [an Army] jeep. We hid it at this family's house and they owned the foundry. The family kind of adopted me and they showed me how they make different things in a foundry. I learned a lot of things. If I didn't have the evacuation and the army, I'd probably just be in a little grocery store. I'd probably still be at that little grocery store. I was very fortunate.

INTERVIEWER This is a little sidetrack, but you've mentioned several times about how fortunate you've been to learn beyond what seemed to be your place in life, that small place working at the grocery store in this small community. For kids listening, how important is it to learn as much as you can about whatever?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO In that experience I learned an awful lot about life. You had to have an education and take advantage of different things. Even if [your situation] is bad, you can turn it around and better yourself. I was very fortunate that things turned out as they did.

INTERVIEWER And you've got a very sunny disposition. You know, you smile great. You've got a great energy. When times are tough, you're going to take advantage of it, make the best out of it. Tell me a little bit about the hard work or the effort that it takes to better yourself.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO When we got back, we just worked all the time. We really worked, like twelve hours a day or more than that probably, seven days a week.

INTERVIEWER How easy is it to better yourself to get ahead?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, you just have to have that work ethic. Now the reason they named the school after us is that we have high school kids working for us. Some of these kids would work 40 hours a week and still go to college because we have insurance for 40 hour workers and they want insurance because they're poor Mexican kids. This last year we had three that graduated from Fresno State. Two became special ed teachers and another one became a regular teacher. It makes us kind of want to keep it alive to help the kids. But as I say, we're very fortunate.

INTERVIEWER So you've essentially provided opportunities for others.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER But it's an opportunity. It's not a gift.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right. You're correct.

INTERVIEWER So we'll get back to the war again. I'm sorry. You're very interesting, your life experience, and I want to make sure that people understand how you did this because you smile so much. You've got a great laugh, but there's a lot of work behind that to make yourself get ahead. Right?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right. In fact, I didn't get married until I was 38 years old [because of] working so many hours.

INTERVIEWER How did you meet your wife?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, my mother was getting kind of worried I was getting pretty old so she wrote to my aunt, the one that had I visited in Hawaii when I came home from the Japanese occupation, the mother of my cousin who was killed. I went to visit her again

and went to the graveside there, and she said that she had a family friend who had a daughter. She said I should come and meet her so I did.

INTERVIEWER What's the first thing you remember about your wife?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO First thing? She's pretty.

INTERVIEWER What's the first thing you said to her?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I can't remember.

INTERVIEWER What's the first thing she said to you?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO She just kind of looked at me for a while. I was 38, getting pretty bald. I was very fortunate. Here she was a vice principal of a school. I said [to myself] "I've got to make this a success. I can't lose her." I was getting old too. I made quite a few trips to Hawaii after that.

INTERVIEWER How did you court your wife?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I used to write to her and I went over there [to Hawaii] quite a few times.

INTERVIEWER If I'm not being too personal, and tell me if I am, but it's a very interesting thing to me that you court your wife mainly by writing. What did you write about?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I can't remember, but I tried to please her. I mean, I tried to write the right things and by not going to college, regular college, I wasn't too good at writing and spelling. All I knew was math and bookkeeping. When you go to business college, you just learn bookkeeping. I used psychology. I was just lucky that I had the right psychology to convince her to come. She hated my trying to convince her to come to Madera. I remember still her crying when she looked down. Everything was dry. We got married in August. Everything is dry here. Hawaii is beautiful. I was very fortunate. She's very, very, very

smart and she understands me. She understands that I work a lot. She even went to school again to learn bookkeeping.

INTERVIEWER So you influenced her?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right, to be an office worker, a cashier.

INTERVIEWER What do you like best about your wife?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO She's very understanding about me. She cares about me. She watches out for me and she protects me.

INTERVIEWER What do you think she likes best about you?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, I really don't know. I try to please her.

INTERVIEWER Again, I see this theme in your life where you get focused and locked in and you're working like a mad man, making things happen, but inevitably something happens to pull you out of that and open your eyes a bit. Marrying a girl from Hawaii brings a whole other culture, a whole other way of looking at life to your doorstep right inside your home. Tell me a little bit about what you learned about life in Hawaiian culture.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO She's got a Masters in Art. She understands me. She knows that I spent a lot of time at the store and forgave me for that. She raised the kids herself.

INTERVIEWER How many kids did you have?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I had three.

INTERVIEWER What are their names?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Wally, the name is Wallace, he works in the store. He graduated from Fresno State. I have two daughters. My oldest daughter, she's working for a doctor and she got a degree in ecology. Then my other daughter is a speech therapist. [My wife is] the one that took care of the kids. She raised the kids.

INTERVIEWER Grandchildren?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I have seven. The oldest one is ten.

INTERVIEWER How much do you like your grandchildren?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Oh, I just love them.

INTERVIEWER Do you tell them that?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Oh, yes. Yes, I tell them that. They come over quite a bit. My wife babysits them.

INTERVIEWER Now, do they come over to the store to visit you or do they come to your home?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO They come to the store or they come to the house.

INTERVIEWER What I'm understanding, too, about you is that Madera, this town Madera, has treated your family incredibly well. And you. Even through tough times, right? What have you done for Madera? How do you pay something like that back?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well [there was a point when] the neighborhood was getting very bad with dope. Kids were smoking dope, so I became friends with the principal at the neighborhood school. He helped me learn how I could help the school to make the neighborhood better. He made the neighborhood better. We knew quite a few people who were dopies before he came. But now we don't have hardly any of those dopies in our neighborhood. It is just by having discipline. I try to help the school and they really appreciate that. They didn't have to [name a school after us]. They wanted to say thank you and to reward me with something so they named the library at that school after me. Then we had a bunch of kids that worked out of the store and in just this one group that came out of that store, one became the Superintendent of Schools or vice superintendent of schools in Merced, one became a dentist, one became a chiropractor, one became a regular doctor, one became a pharmacist, and one a policeman. That was just out of one group. They're the ones who pushed the name to be Nishimoto school. That's how the school was named after us because of these kids who were thankful.

They were mostly Mexican descent kids and they didn't get help like this. This was quite a few years ago, and they didn't get help like they do now. They worked and they are just thankful that they became successful in life.

INTERVIEWER And you played a part in that?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I hope I did. I hope I treated them good. But they love me for helping them. Our family, not me, but my family. When they were working there, my brother was still living and my sister was still living. We all worked together to help those kids.

INTERVIEWER If you can do this without getting so emotional, another theme in your life is this town Madera and I want you to describe the town to me and describe how you feel about it. What does Madera mean to you, Sunny Nishimoto?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO The town has been so good to our family. People living in town all treated me fair. Of course, now our business has changed. There are a lot of Hispanics. Our business is mostly with Hispanics now. [Madera changed] and we changed with it, with the trend. My son is running the store and he changed the store to be a Hispanic store. We still hire a lot of Hispanics and they're all going to school. The kids are all going to school. All our supervisors and the permanent workers are Hispanic. The funny part of it is the office crew is mainly Caucasian, but we have one office crew [member] who is hispanic. My son went to school with the chief accountant there. He kind of runs everything for my son.

INTERVIEWER I'm not trying to embarrass you, but you've received quite a few awards for recognition. Tell me a little bit about some of the organizations that have recognized you.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, they recognized me. The historical society recognized me because I gave them reparation money. I gave $10,000 to the school and to the museum.

Then I gave $5000 of that $20,000 to Mr. Barcroft's family. Then $5000 to the police department. They were having a hard time. Things were bad with drugs at that period so I gave $5000 to them. My sister [Mildred] gave her complete $20,000 to a scholarship [fund], and my other sister [Mary] gave all her money to the church. They're all older than I am so they made an example for me.

INTERVIEWER So by their example, they taught you, what did they teach you by doing what they did?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO My sister who was a nurse [Mary] was the assistant director of nurses of public health in Fresno. She's the one who when the museum first started made us give $6,000 to the museum. She said, "You've got to do it." So I did it.

INTERVIEWER What I'm hearing is you're in a position where you're able to donate money. But what I'm hearing is that you're giving back. Is that correct?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER Whether it's money or time. It's the whole idea in life that you give back.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right. And we're so fortunate.

INTERVIEWER Why are you so fortunate? You went through this horrible situation of internment. I know it worked out okay for you, but I mean, it didn't work out well for others. You know that.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER And you know that on the whole the Japanese American community was devastated economically.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER And yet you still give back. You know this hurt a lot of people, but it does not stop you from giving. Where does that come from?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I guess my mother, she's the one that... many years ago they opened a new hospital in Madera and we were just starting back and she

gave $20,000 and I almost fell off of the chair. Now my son says that they asked him to be one of the directors. He says he's got to do it because of my mother. I think I learned from her to give. That really shocked me–the $20,000. At that time $20,000, was a lot of money.

INTERVIEWER And you being an accountant and all, I'm sure whatever hair you had left was gone. Your grandchildren, you have seven of them?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER What is it that you want for them? What do you want to try to instill in them and give them? They're your family. What do you want to do for them?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, the main thing is that we've always set up an education fund so they should [go to school]. Education is very important. We have stressed that. My wife is in education so she stresses it. She's the one that thinks up all these things. I just do what she tells me to do.

INTERVIEWER So you're teaching them those values is what I'm getting at. Not so much the money or how you go ahead and do that but the principles and the values you're teaching your grandchildren. One is education. What else do you teach?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, they're so small. The oldest is only ten so we try to teach them love. That's the main thing.

INTERVIEWER When you see these grandchildren you have, knowing where you came from, your father from Hawaii, your mother from Hiroshima, and all the ups and downs you lived through, what do you wish their lives to be like? What are you hoping that your grandchildren will experience?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Whatever they like. Their grandmother set up a fund for them and I think that whatever they want they can have.

INTERVIEWER Do you worry about them at all because they are of Japanese ancestry?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No, I don't.

INTERVIEWER Why?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Because they're hapas.(2) [Laughter]

INTERVIEWER Do you think they're going to be treated fairly?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Yes, I do.

INTERVIEWER Don't say they're hapas again. Why do you think?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO They just look American. You know? Because most everybody are hapas now.

INTERVIEWER What does an American look like? It's kind of interesting. Let's play with that idea. What do they look like?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I look at Tiger [Woods] and I say how come he doesn't admit he's Asian? Here they say he's black, but he's more Asian than anything else. They consider him black, but his father was has a different mixture of blood and he's half Asian. In other words, he's got more Asian than anything else. But most people in America are becoming hapas.

INTERVIEWER A mixture of something.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER So to you being an American, it sounds like, is less about your mix of blood and more about something else. Is that a fair statement?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO What do you mean?

INTERVIEWER That it's less about what you look like and more about something else.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER Right. What would the something else be? What do you think that might be?

(2) Hapa is Hawaiian for someone of multiracial ancestry. The word refers to any person of mixed ethnic heritage.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, you have to be able to be nice. That's the main thing.

INTERVIEWER Okay.

VIDEO SEGMENT 4

INTERVIEWER Just a couple little questions about your wartime experience. Occupied Japan. You were a typist? What documents did you type?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, I had a very good job. I had to type one stencil a day. That was the report of our work that we do for the public opinion paper there. Then we have our boys and our men go out to get public opinions. They go out and talk to all the Japanese and see how they feel about the troops. That was also our job. Then when they needed an interpreter they would come in and ask for the interpreter and we would furnish them with an interpreter. Like if the general wants to buy boots or something we could go out and interpret for him. It was a very good experience for me.

INTERVIEWER Are you proud of being part of First Cav?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I am really proud. I belong to the first camphood–the club. They've been fighting every war. Korea, Vietnam and now Iraq. They're about the only ones that fight so much. I wear this pin to show I was part of the first Cav.

INTERVIEWER Now because you only had that one stencil to type, what would you do with the rest of your time?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Sit there and read magazines.

INTERVIEWER How much of an opportunity did you have to travel at all around Japan?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, we went all over Japan and we went to Kamakura and went to all the different resorts. We had the weekends there. We would go to town every night to Shinjuku. I didn't drink. I didn't I ever. I don't

drink. But a lot of the boys did and they all got drunk. Then there were a couple of us who didn't drink but we had a good time and laughed a lot.

INTERVIEWER I think you laugh a lot no matter what. You always seem to find joy.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Thank you.

INTERVIEWER You said your mom was from Hiroshima. Did you get a chance to get down to Hiroshima?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO No, I didn't. My buddy that I went overseas with, he went down to visit them. It was a good thing that I didn't visit because he died of lung cancer and he never smoked, never drank. He died very young of lung cancer. His name was Nishimura. We were going to the school there in alphabetical order. The fact is that I had three buddies. The four of us were Nakamura, Nakamura. Nishimoto, and Nishimoto. We ran around together. None of us drank. Never smoked. We sold our cigarettes, which one of my buddies says was not right. I just say it's okay but it wasn't right in a way.

INTERVIEWER It's a little thing.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Right.

INTERVIEWER And tell me a little bit about the Japanese people that you met while in occupation. What was your impression?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO We used to hide our Jeep when we would go dancing. This one family I became very good friends with them. They were nice and they were happy we were there. I think there were about 6,000 [U.S. troops] over there and if we [Nisei] weren't there there would be just Caucasians and I think [the occupation] wouldn't have worked as smoothly as it did.

INTERVIEWER Did you learn anything new about Japanese culture that you hadn't known growing up in Madera?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, no, I didn't. They were so silly to fight us because [Japan] was so behind us. They were still using donkeys and cows to raise different things. My brother while he was in the CIC, he told those Japanese how we plant rice with airplanes but they were so far behind times. Tokyo was kind of modern but you just saw the line there. They were way behind times. I don't know how they ever thought that they could beat our United States.

INTERVIEWER You ever run into General MacArthur or any high ranking U.S. Army?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO The only thing you'd see is his limousine coming through. Of course, we had to salute him and things like that. But when you're in the army, you don't get any higher than the sergeant. I was a T4 and you don't talk to anyone higher than your captain and mostly when you're training. It's interesting that most people in the Army never get to see anybody. Now in the VFW, we have a commander, that's a lieutenant commander, and he's a lieutenant colonel in the Marines, and now we're going to have a captain in the Navy that is a colonel. He's going to be the next commander. It's very interesting how there is such a difference between army and civilian life.

INTERVIEWER Which do you prefer? [laughing] How do you want people to remember you?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Remember me? I've had a nice life and I've had a nice wife. I don't want anyone to remember me.

INTERVIEWER How do you want us to remember you?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Just as a person. I've had a nice life. Nice family. Nice wife.

INTERVIEWER Now this program we run, these tapes are preserved. They're put in a vault and they're kept so nothing happens to them. God willing the United States keeps going four, five, six hundred years. Now, people who have an interest to find out what the

Nisei experience was can look back at these tapes and they can hear firsthand. You know what happened and what you thought about it and how you experienced it individually because everybody experiences it differently.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO Definitely. Some people were very angry.

INTERVIEWER Oh, sure, sure.

SUNNY NISHIMOTO And they had a right to be angry.

INTERVIEWER Keeping that in mind it's possible that a couple hundred years from now, people can look back and hear your story. Do you have any advice for anybody or do you have any words of wisdom or anything that you'd like to throw out for the future?

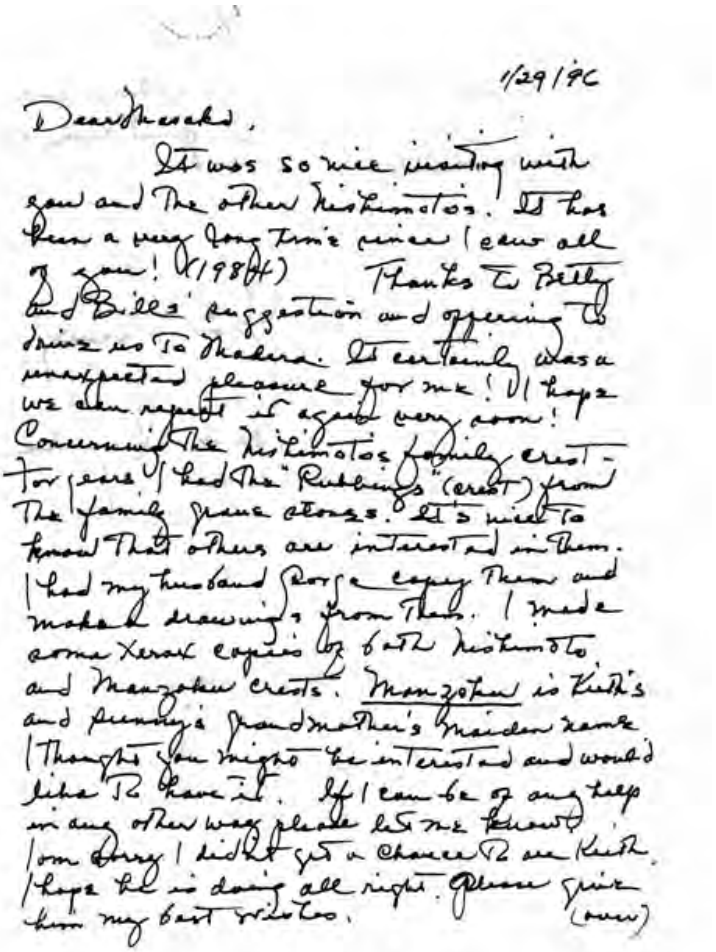
SUNNY NISHIMOTO Well, I really don't know.

INTERVIEWER I kind of hit you with the heavy. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to put you on the spot like that. Let's see. Is there anything you wanted to talk about other than what we have talked about?

SUNNY NISHIMOTO I've just been very fortunate. The town's been good to me. The people have been really good to me. They're good to my family and good to my wife. California is going to change. It's going to be Hispanic. They have to educate Hispanics. Educators know that. If not, we're going to have some dumb guy running California. Its very important that they are educating the educators so they know how to educate Hispanics. In time, I say, everyone is mixed. America is going to be mixed. You're going to be half something and half something else. Most people are very nice in my mind, maybe one or two no, but everybody is nice. It will be alright.

INTERVIEWER Good. Does anyone have any questions? Well, Sunny, I thank you very much. It's a wonderful time. You've made us laugh and cry. This was a wonderful meeting. Thank you once again for coming and sharing your story with us.

FAMILY CRESTS



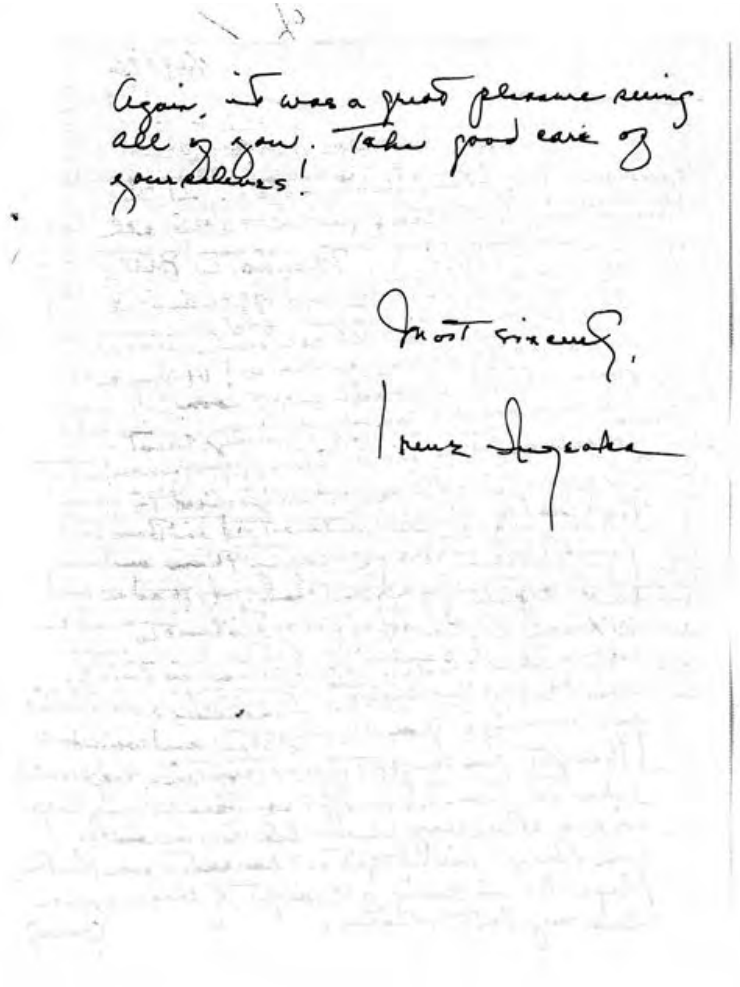
1/29/90

Dear Masaki,

It was so nice meeting with you and the other Nishimotos. It has been a very long time since I saw all of you! (1984) Thanks to Betty and Bill's suggestion and offering to drive us to Madera. It certainly was a unexpected pleasure for me! I hope we can repeat it again very soon!

Concerning the Nishimotos family crest - for years I had the "Rubbings" (crest) from the family grave stones. It's nice to know that others are interested in them. I had my husband Jorge copy them and make drawings from them. I made some Xerox copies of both Nishimoto and Manzoku crests. Manzoku is Kuki's and Jimmy's grandmother's maiden name. I thought you might be interested and would like to have it. If I can be of any help in any other way please let me know.

Tom Berry I didn't get a chance to see Kuki. I hope he is doing all right. Please give him my best wishes too. (over)


Again, it was a great pleasure seeing all of you. Take good care of yourselves!

Most sincerely,

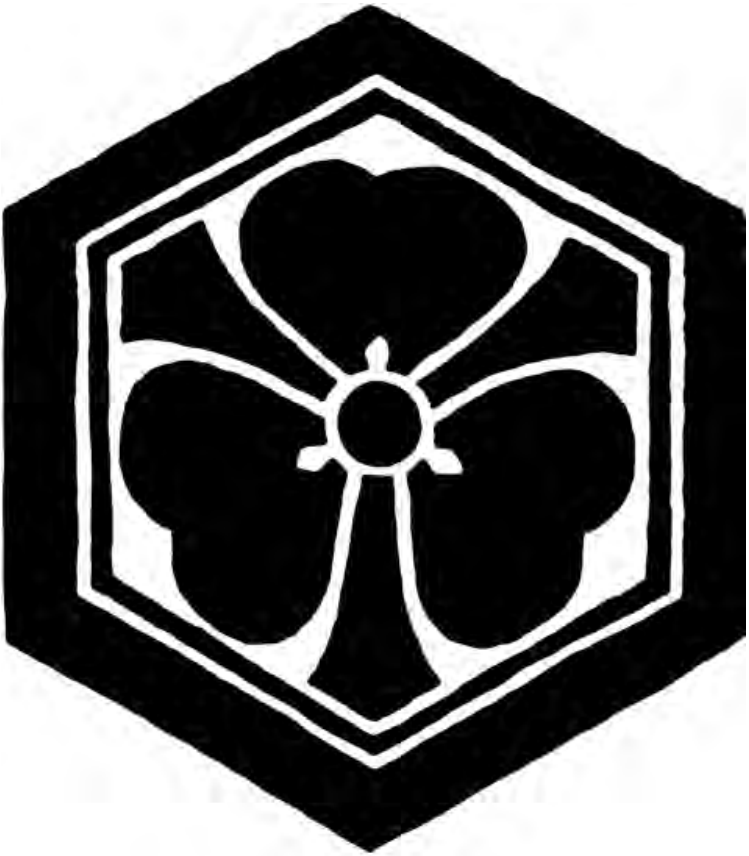
Irene Hayakawa

まるにしほうもっこう

丸に西方木瓜

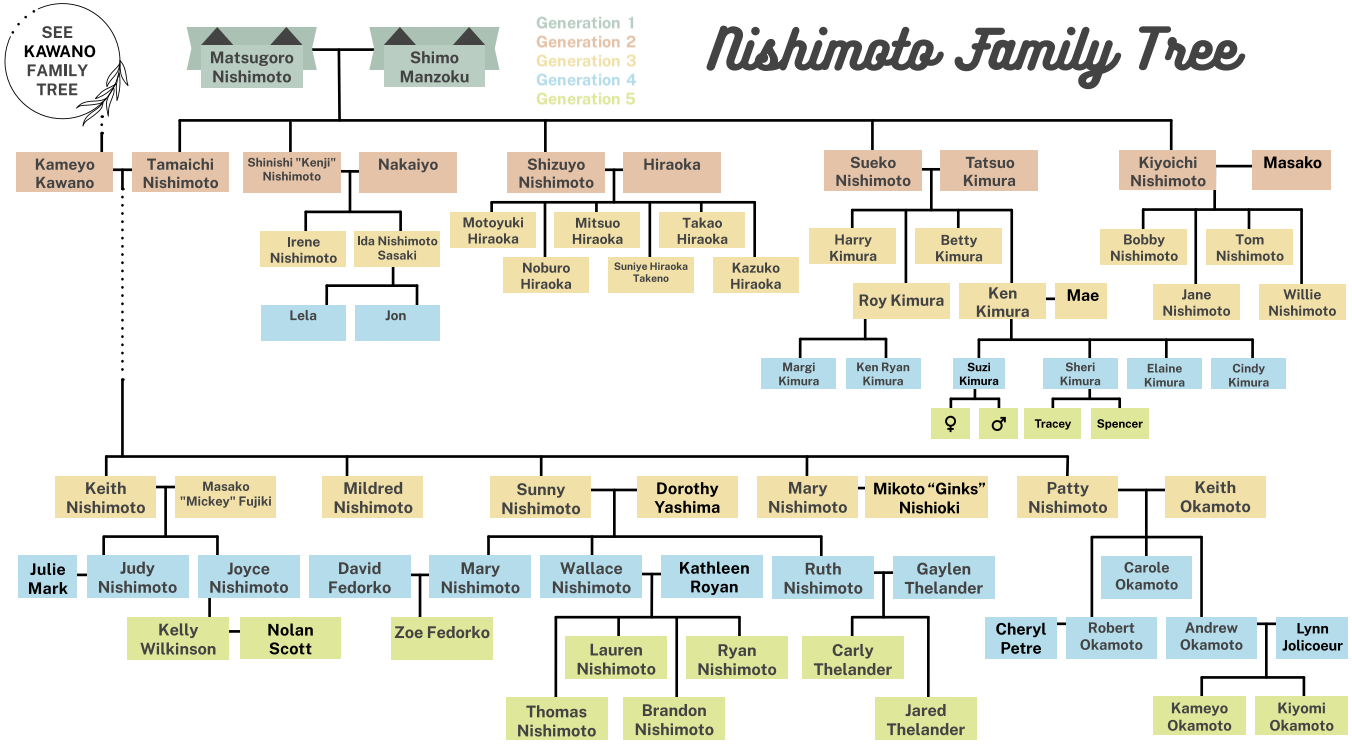
MARUNISHIHŌ MOKKŌ

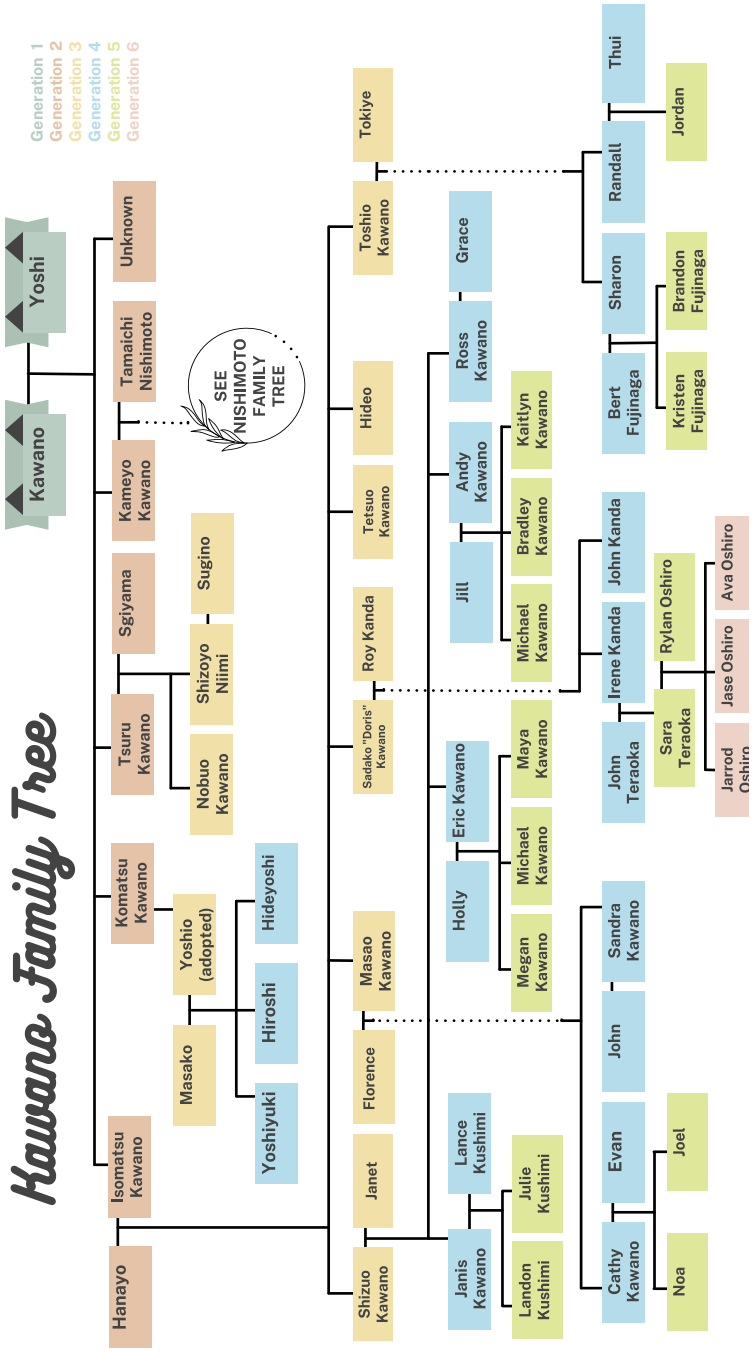
NISHIMOTO



NIJU KIKKŌ NI KEN KATA BAMI

MANZOKU


SEE KAWANO FAMILY TREE
Nishimoto Family Tree
Generation 1
Generation 2
Generation 3
Generation 4
Generation 5
Matsugoro Nishimoto
Shimo Manzoku
Kameyo Kawano
Tamaichi Nishimoto
Shinishi "Kenji" Nishimoto
Nakaiyo
Irene Nishimoto
Ida Nishimoto Sasaki
Lela
Jon
Shizuyo Nishimoto
Hiraoka
Motoyuki Hiraoka
Mitsuo Hiraoka
Takao Hiraoka
Noboru Hiraoka
Suniye Hiraoka Takeno
Kazuko Hiraoka
Sueko Nishimoto
Tatsuo Kimura
Harry Kimura
Betty Kimura
Roy Kimura
Ken Kimura
Mae
Margi Kimura
Ken Ryan Kimura
Suzi Kimura
Sheri Kimura
Elaine Kimura
Cindy Kimura
♀
♂
Tracey
Spencer
Kiyoichi Nishimoto
Masako
Bobby Nishimoto
Tom Nishimoto
Jane Nishimoto
Willie Nishimoto
Keith Nishimoto
Masako "Mickey" Fujiki
Julie Mark
Judy Nishimoto
Joyce Nishimoto
Kelly Wilkinson
Nolan Scott
Mildred Nishimoto
David Fedorko
Zoe Fedorko
Sunny Nishimoto
Dorothy Yashima
Mary Nishimoto
Wallace Nishimoto
Kathleen Royan
Lauren Nishimoto
Ryan Nishimoto
Thomas Nishimoto
Brandon Nishimoto
Mary Nishimoto
Mikoto "Ginks" Nishioki
Ruth Nishimoto
Gaylen Thelander
Carly Thelander
Jared Thelander
Patty Nishimoto
Keith Okamoto
Carole Okamoto
Cheryl Petre
Robert Okamoto
Andrew Okamoto
Lynn Jolicoeur
Kameyo Okamoto
Kiyomi Okamoto


Kawano Family Tree
Kawano
Yoshi
Generation 1
Generation 2
Generation 3
Generation 4
Generation 5
Generation 6
SEE NISHIMOTO FAMILY TREE
Hanayo
Isomatsu Kawano
Komatsu Kawano
Masako
Yoshio (adopted)
Hideyoshi
Yoshiyuki
Hiroshi
Tsuru Kawano
Nobuo Kawano
Shizoyo Niimi
Sugino
Sgiyama
Kameyo Kawano
Tamaichi Nishimoto
Unknown
Shizuo Kawano
Janet
Florence
Masao Kawano
Sadako "Doris" Kawano
Roy Kanda
Tetsuo Kawano
Hideo
Toshio Kawano
Tokiye
Janis Kawano
Lance Kushimi
Julie Kushimi
Landon Kushimi
Holly
Eric Kawano
Megan Kawano
Michael Kawano
Maya Kawano
Jill
Andy Kawano
Ross Kawano
Grace
Michael Kawano
Bradley Kawano
Kaitlyn Kawano
Cathy Kawano
Evan
John
Sandra Kawano
Noa
Joel
John Teraoka
Irene Kanda
John Kanda
Sara Teraoka
Rylan Oshiro
Jarrod Oshiro
Jase Oshiro
Ava Oshiro
Bert Fujinaga
Kristen Fujinaga
Sharon
Brandon Fujinaga
Randall
Thui
Jordan

NISHIMOTO FAMILY

WWII TIMELINE '41–'43

December 7, 1941

Pearl Harbor

Imperial Japanese forces attacked the U.S. Naval Base in Pearl Harbor, killing 2,403 U.S. personnel, including 68 civilians. The attack prompted President Roosevelt to declare war against Japan and enter WWII.

February 19, 1942

Executive Order 9066

War hysteria and fear of potential sabotage by Japanese Americans led to President Roosevelt signing Executive Order 9066, forcing Japanese Issei and Nisei from their West Coast homes and into assembly centers and concentration camps.

March 1942

Civilian Exclusion Order No. 63

Following Executive Order 9066, Japanese Americans residing in territories in California, Oregon, and Washington state, were notified by posted exclusion orders of when they would need to vacate their homes and businesses. For Madera and Fresno counties, Order No. 63 was first posted March 2, 1942, and the deadline for all Japanese to report to the Fresno Assembly Center was May 17. This is more notice than most territories received

May 17, 1942

Fresno Assembly Center

The Nishimotos, along with other Central Valley Japanese American families arrive at the Fresno Assembly Center at the fairgrounds.

June 4, 1942

Hawaiian Nisei soldiers

As Japanese and Japanese Americans on the mainland had to report to internment camps, those in Hawaii did not as detaining 37% of the Hawaiian population would have been to great a disruption to the economy. However, Nisei men in the Hawaiian National Guard and military were barred from carrying weapons. After negotiations, it was agreed to transfer these servicemen to the mainland interior training at Camp McCoy in Wisconsin. On June 4, 1942, as the Battle of Midway was underway, 1,432 Hawaiian Nisei sailed under cover of night to Oakland before transfer to Camp McCoy. Among these men were Kameyo Nishimoto's nephew, Tetsuo Kawano.

October 24, 1942

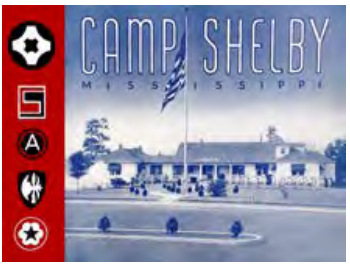
Jerome, Arkansas

Tom, Kameyo, Sunny, Mildred, and Patty arrive at the permanent concentration camp in Jerome, Arkansas. Mary, for unknown reasons, arrives days later on Nov. 3.

January 6, 1943

Camp Shelby

The Hawaiian Nisei troops, dubbed the 100th Infantry Battalion, arrived for more intensive training at Camp Shelby in Mississippi.



NISHIMOTO FAMILY

WWII TIMELINE '41–'43

April 1943

Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Nishimoto's were secured work permits in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Keith, Sunny's older brother, was stationed, having been drafted in the Army before Pearl Harbor. Upon arrival, Sunny soon enlisted in the army to join his brother and was assigned to serve as part of the MIS, Military Intelligence Service. This mostly Nisei unit would play a huge role in the war by translating Japanese Imperial force military documents.

August 21, 1943

100th deployed

After intensive combat training in Claiborne, Louisiana, the Hawaiian Nisei of the original 100th Infantry Battalion were deployed from Camp Shelby and sailed to the Mediterranean from New Jersey base Camp Kilmer. They landed in Oran, Africa on Sept. 2, but General Eisenhower refused their service. However, the fifth army adopted the troops as part of the 133rd Infantry Regiment, under the 34th Division, and they set sail for the battlegrounds of Italy.

November 4, 1943

Tetsuo Kawano dies in combat

On November 4, the Nishimoto's nephew/cousin, who had visited them in Jerome just 8 months prior, was killed in battle. His immediate cause of death is unknown, but on that day his company, E company, was engaged in intense combat. After crossing the Volturno River for the third time on the night of Nov. 3, troops were met with Axis artillery fire and minefields. A tough, but respected, young officer, Oak Kim, was shot at, causing Staff Sergeant Robert Ozaki to cry "Fix Bayonets" and lead the first "Banzai" charge to go back and rescue him. Kim was unharmed, but many enlisted men were killed in the charge. It is possible Tetsuo was one of them.

March 1943

100th Infantry Battalion visits Jerome

With the Hawaiian Nisei proving themselves and their loyalty in training, the U.S. government and military agreed to establishing another all Nisei unit, starting in February, called the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Already, however, division was occurring in the ranks between enlisted Nisei from Hawaii versus those from the mainland. In anticipation of the tension, Col. Charles W. Pence, commander of the 442nd, arranged for groups of Hawaiian Nisei stationed at Camp Shelby to visit Jerome and Rohwer camps in Arkansas to gain an understanding for the plight of mainland Nisei. Tetsuo Kawano was among those to visit Jerome, where he met his cousins Sunny, Mildred, Mary and Patty for the first time.

September 9, 1943

Salerno

Nisei troops of the 100th landed in Salerno, Italy, where they would soon enter into combat in the Naples-Foggia campaign which would last until January 21, 1944. Troops moved north from Salerno toward Naples, crossing the Volturno River several times, and fighting Axis forces in the rugged terrain of the Apennine Mountain range in the harsh Italian winter. The Nisei troops fought daily from Sept. 29 to Nov. 6 before finally being relieved.

Altogether, in the Naples-Foggia campaign, the 100th Infantry suffered the loss of 3 officers and 75 enlisted men who were killed in action. An additional 239 were wounded. This is just the start of how the 100th/442nd became known as the "Purple Heart Battalion"

NISHIMOTO FAMILY

WWII TIMELINE '44-'45

December 1944

Sunny drafted to 442nd

Sunny Nishimoto receives his draft notice and must report to Fort Leavenworth in Kansas for duty to be trained as a replacement for the 442nd.

December 16, 1944 to January 28, 1945

Battle of the Bulge

The last major German offensive campaign on the Western European front was successfully won by the Allied Forces, as the Axis suffered a loss of 120,000 troops, who were killed or injured. The Allies were not without large casualties, however, losing 75,000 troops. As Sunny was being trained in Florida, dozens of non-Nisei soldiers were called up to fight in the ongoing battle, causing delays in training.

May 8, 1945

V-E Day

The war in Europe ends and victory for the Allied troops is declared. Meanwhile, the war with Japan in the Pacific continues.

A view of Hiroshima after the bombing.

July 1945

Sunny graduates from MISLS

With the war in Europe over, Sunny is transferred to serve with his brother Keith as a member of the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) and he graduates from MIS language school (MISLS) in Fort Snelling, Minnesota, in July. As an MISLS graduate, he will aid in the translation of Japanese documents and serve as an interpreter and translator

August 6, 1945 & August 9, 1945

U.S. Bombs Hiroshima & Nagasaki

The United States, in an effort to bring a quick end to the war, dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In Hiroshima, Kameyo Kawano Nishimoto's hometown, 70,000 people were killed instantly by the bombing, along with 70 percent of the city's buildings. While none of Nishimoto's relatives were killed in the blast, the news of the bombing was the straw that broke the camel's back for Kameyo, already having difficulty coping with her mistreatment in incarceration and the loss of her nephew, who died in combat with the 100th/442nd.

NISHIMOTO FAMILY

WWII TIMELINE '44-'45

September 2, 1945

Japan surrenders

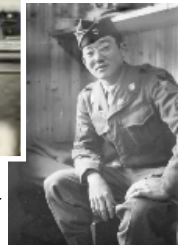
After two atomic bombs are dropped and the United States threatens to drop a third, the Imperial Japanese government finally surrenders in defeat, putting an end to the events of WWII.

September 1945 – April 18, 1952

Occupation of Japan

Following the bombings, both Sunny and Keith are sent to Japan. Sunny had the distinction of being part of the first cavalry division, which were the first United States troops to enter Tokyo in September 1945. The occupation would last until April 1952, but Sunny and Keith would not serve the duration. Keith would later re-enlist and serve as a linguist in the Korean War, while Sunny stayed in occupied Japan for six months. At one point, early in the occupation, Sunny was granted leave to visit his ailing mother who was suffering from a nervous breakdown due to the trauma of the events of WWII. Sunny and Keith were both stationed at General MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo.

Keith Nishimoto



Sunny Nishimoto

NISHIMOTO FAMILY ALBUM


231


BETSY ROSS

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

FROM

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

LANGUAGE SCHOOL

FORT SNELLING, MINN.

T/3 Keith Nishimoto

Pfc Sonnie Nishimoto


VFW
1981


HARTS


BRIDGE CASH GROCERY
AND
SERVICE STATION


CLOSING
OUT
SALE
QUITTING
BUSINESS


DAIRY PRODUCTS
SERVE YOURSELF
MILK-CREAM

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Madera South High School
Historical Literacy Course 2022-2023

Jessica Giron

is a class of 2023 Madera South High School graduate. She is an indecisive person so she is not sure if at some point she will change her interest but she currently plans to study law. She would like to be a wrongful termination lawyer or a civil rights lawyer. Additionally, she is interested in studying sign language. She has enjoyed learning about Japanese incarceration as this is a subject often overlooked in traditional history courses. She recommends fellow students take historical literacy and academic decathlon if they love learning about history. She would like to thank her teachers Ms. Shelton and Mr. Hume as well as her other teachers, family, and friends who have helped her throughout her high school career.

Mia Reyes

is a student at Madera South High School, class of 2026. She is currently considering two career pathways—law and medicine. She would like to one day work as an attorney or a pediatrician. Her favorite part of participating in the Madera Method project was the opportunity to interview incarceration camp survivors Marion Masada and Carlene Tanigoshi Tinker. She wants to thank these guests for sharing their stories, as well as Ms. Shelton for her patience and help.

Emily Herrera

is a class of 2023 Madera South High School graduate. Herrera plans to pursue a medical career and become a licensed physical therapist. She enjoys learning about the history of her hometown, Madera and is glad she had the opportunity to participate in a Madera Method project her senior year. She credits Ms. Shelton with pushing her and her classmates in their writing. "She never gave up on making sure we got every single piece of information we needed and understood every assignment. She was there willing to help us no matter what," Herrera said.

Ailin Leon-Torres

is a student at Madera South High School, class of 2024. She enjoys creative writing and wants to become a bestselling author. She has appreciated serving as the class reporter and the opportunity to have some of her articles published in the Madera Tribune. She wants to extend sincere thanks to Mr. Coate for believing in her and encouraging her to continue pursuing her dream of being a writer. She also wants to thank the Nishimoto family for their support.

Ana Miguel-Leon

is a student at Madera South High School, class of 2026. She is unsure of her future career goals but currently plans to enroll in Madera South's agricultural career pathway and pursue a career in environmental science. Ana has enjoyed learning about the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII and specifically about the history of the Nishimoto family. She also values the life-long relationships she has built with her historical literacy classmates. Ana wants to thank Ms. Shelton for her support and encouragement throughout the project.

Javier Ornelas

is a student at Madera South High School, class of 2026. He currently plans to pursue a career in criminal justice and become a police officer. He found the story of the Nishimotos interesting and was happy to write about their journey. He would like to thank Ms. Shelton for her help and encouragement.

Brianna Tudon-Mendez

is a student at Madera South High School, class of 2026. She one day envisions a career as either a veterinarian or a psychiatrist. She will most likely attend a local community college after graduation before transferring to a four-year university. She says participating in the Madera Method project was fascinating and she most enjoyed hearing from guest speaker Marion Masada. She wants to thank Ms. Shelton for her genuine help when she was struggling with writing throughout the project.

Josiah Zamudio

is a student at Madera South High School, class of 2026. He is currently undecided about his future studies but aspires to one day be a professional boxer. He says participating in this Madera Method project was fun and credits Ms. Shelton with helping him improve his writing skills.

Joshua Perez

is a student at Madera South High School, class of 2026. He is currently undecided about his future career path but appreciates the writing assistance he received from Ms. Shelton and Mr. Mattox while participating in this Madera Method project.

Esequiel Padilla Gurrola

is a student at Madera South High School, class of 2026. He is currently undecided about his future career path but enjoyed participating in this Madera Method project, specifically learning the history of the 442nd Battalion and the Military Intelligence Service.

Alyssa Cerda

is a student at Madera South High School, class of 2026. She plans to attend California State University, Fresno, and study either marine biology or mortuary science. She joined Shelton's historical literacy class mid-year but was grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this project. She thanks Ms. Shelton for her patience with her as she struggled to catch up and understand the history behind the Nishimoto family.

Valerie Shelton, M.A.

is an English and Historical Literacy teacher at Madera South High School. Prior to teaching, Mrs. Shelton worked in the journalism industry for 10 years as a reporter and editor for various weekly newspapers in the Fresno area including The Business Journal, The Clovis Roundup, and the Sanger Herald. In 2017, an article she wrote for The Clovis Roundup was recognized by the California News Publishers Association and awarded first place in CNPA's feature writing category. Shelton's passion for journalism and creative non-fiction stems from her love of history and desire to be part of preserving today's history in the making. As a teacher, she is passionate about infusing real-world experience in the classroom and advocates the PBL model of education. By using the Madera Method in her Historical Literacy class, Mrs. Shelton hopes to inspire a love of history, research, and writing in her students.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aiello, J. (Director). (2018). Silent Sacrifice [Film; Documentary]. PBS. https://www.pbs.org/video/silent-sacrifice-0marqy/

Aiello, J. (Director). (2023). Unbroken Honor [Film; Documentary]. PBS. https://www.pbs.org/video/unbroken-honor-8vfswb/

Anderson, J. C. (1949, September 26). Jap-Americans Find World Now Harder Economically. Madera Tribune, 2.

A Map of What Happened in 1923 — BatchGeo Blog. (n.d.). BatchGeo Blog. Retrieved March 16, 2023, from https://blog.batchgeo.com/1923-events/

Baldwin, R. N. (1945, December 22). Racial Discrimination- Our Last Big Problem. Pacific Citizen, 25,31.

Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, C. o. (1997). Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. University of Washington Press.

Clark, H. C. (1942, February 5). Editorial: Innocent to Suffer with Guilty. Madera Tribune, 4.

Clark, H. C. (1942, December 10). Editorial: Japs Not Sob Sister Material. Madera Tribune, 4.

Clark, H. C. (1942, December 22). Editorial: Japs More Fortunate Than Yank Troops. Madera Tribune, 4.

Clark, H. C. (1945, March 9). For Public Thought. Madera Tribune, 1.

Clark, H. C. (1945, May 28). For Public Thought. Madera Tribune, 1.

Clark, H. C. (1945, September 19). For Public Thought. Madera Tribune, 1.

Clark, H. C. (1945, November 14). For Public Thought. Madera Tribune, 1.

Clark, H. C. (Ed.). (1942, February 5). Model Planes Found on Jap [Photo]. Madera Tribune.

Clark, H. C. (Ed.). (1942, March 2). Japanese Gets Moving Orders [Photo]. Madera Tribune.

Clark, H. C. (Ed.). (1942, March 25). Japanese Evacuation Center Built on Coast. [Photo]. Madera Tribune.

Clark, H. C. (Ed.). (1942, March 27). New Life for Evacuees [Photo]. Madera Tribune.

Clark, H. C. (Ed.). (1942, April 30). U.S. No Bar to Romance for Evacuees. [Photo]. Madera Tribune.

Clark, H. C. (Ed.). (1943, March 18). Nisei May Serve in U.S. Army. [Photo]. Madera Tribune.

Clark, H. C. (Ed.). (1944, January 12). Photo of a Japanese Soldier (Untitled). [Photo]. Madera Tribune.

Clark, H. C. (Ed.). (1945, March 25). Loyal Nisei. [Photo]. Madera Tribune.

Clark, H. C. (Ed.). (1945, March 28). Preserving California. [Photo]. Madera Tribune.

Clark, H. C. (Ed.). (1945, September 25). Job Trouble. [Photo]. Madera Tribune.

Clark, H. C. (Ed.). (1945, September 28). Readin', Writin' Is Tough Course. [Photo]. Madera Tribune.

Crost, L. (1994). Honor by fire: Japanese Americans at war in Europe and the Pacific. Presidio

Densho Encyclopedia: Home. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from https://encyclopedia.densho.org/

Dunn, A. (2017, December 8). Barbed Wire Christmas: Holidays and Incarcerated Japanese Americans. The Activist History Review. Retrieved March 16, 2023, from https://activisthistory.com/2017/12/08/barbed-wire-christmas-holidays-and-incarcerated-japanese-americans/

Facts and Case Summary — Korematsu v. U.S. | United States Courts. (n.d.). U.S. Courts. Retrieved March 16, 2023, from https://www.uscourts.gov/educationaL–Resources/educational-activities/facts-and-case-summary-korematsu-v-us

Fong, A. (2021, October 4). Remembering Jerome: The Forced Relocation of Japanese Americans in WWII | Museum. Museum |. Retrieved March 16, 2023, from https://uamuseum.uark.edu/remembering-jerome-the-forced-relocation-of-japanese-americans-in-wwii/

Houston, J. D., & Houston, J. W. (2017). Farewell to Manzanar: A True Story of Japanese American Experience During and After the World War II Internment. Houghton Mifflin.

Index to Japanese Passenger Manifests: Hawaii State Archives Digital Collections. (n.d.). Hawai' i State Archives. Retrieved April 13, 2023, from https://digitalcollections.hawaii.gov/greenstone3/library/collection/indextoj/page/about

Ishizuka, K. L. (2006). Lost and Found: Reclaiming the Japanese American Incarceration. University of Illinois Press.

Japanese American Citizen League. (1945, December 22). Eyes and Ears of the Allied Pacific Forces: The Story of Fort Snelling, Training Ground for our Japanese American Linguists. Pacific Citizen, 26-27,36.

Japanese American Citizens League. (2011). The Japanese American Experience: Curriculum and Resource Guide (5th ed.). JACL.

Japanese | Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History | Classroom Materials at the Library of Congress. (n.d.). Library of Congress. Retrieved March 16, 2023, from https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/japanese/

Kamei, S. H. (2021). When Can We Go Back to America? Voices of Japanese American Incarceration During WWII (S. H. Kamei, Ed.). Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

Kazue de Cristoforo, V. (1987, June 30). A victim of the Japanese Evacuation and Resettlement Study (JERS) [Affidavit]. California State University Gerth Archives and Special Collections. https://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16855coll4/id/12552/rec/3

Kubota, G. C. (n.d.). The Lynching of Katsu Goto. University of Hawaii System. Retrieved March 16, 2023, from https://www.hawaii.edu/uhwo/clear/home/KatsuGoto.html

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, January 31). Madera County in Ban Order Repetition of Pearl Harbor will not be Experienced is Plan. Madera Tribune, 1, 3.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, January 31). Ban on Enemy Aliens Growing: State is Preparing to back U.S. Order. Madera Tribune, 3.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, February 5). Prepared for Alien Ousters: Northwest Pacific Aliens Face Ouster Following California. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, March 2). To Ignore States Wished on Japs: Military Necessity Will Take Precedent. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, March 9). Army Begins Work on Jap Camp Site. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, March 19). Plan to Evacuate Japanese People. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, March 19). Government to Protect Lands of Ousted Japs. Madera Tribune, 5.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, March 19). Sabotage of Food Crops is Punishable. Madera Tribune, 6.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, March 21). First Japanese to be Evacuated. Madera Tribune, 3.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, March 23). Japanese Evacuation Starts: Automobile Caravan of Enemy Aliens and Children Moves East. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, March 24). Japanese Rush New Homes in Owens Valley. Madera Tribune, 6.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, March 28). Tempo of Federal Preparations to Remove Japanese Increasing. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, March 31). Protect Harbor of Los Angeles. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, April 4). 2000 Japs Making Themselves at Home at Santa Anita Track. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, April 1). Families Jap Aliens Leave. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, April 6). Moving Day For Many Japanese. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, April 18). Three Areas to be Jap Cleared. Madera Tribune, 3.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, May 23). Japs to Have Own Governing. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, May 26). Jap Evacuees to Aid Farm Labor. Madera Tribune, 5.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, June 2). Sugar Companies Get Jap Labor Supply. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, June 30). Speed and Relocation of Jap Evacuees. Madera Tribune, 2.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, July 11). Japanese Girl Delays Wedding to Chinese. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, September 1). Plan to Use Jap Evacuee for Harvest. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, September 15). Japs to Harvest Cotton. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, September 30). Jap Evacuees to be Moved East. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, November 21). Relocated Jap Poston Strike. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, December 7). Japs Riot at Nanzanar. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, December 8). Calm Enforced at Manzanar Camp. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1942, December 12). Jap Evacuees Harvest Crops. Madera Tribune, 3.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, January 20). Japanese is Held for Hammer Attacks. Madera Tribune, 6.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, February 12). Mobilize Jap Evacuees for Oregon Farm Work. Madera Tribune, 4.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, April 7). Jap Internment Camps Are in Need Overhaul. Madera Tribune, 6.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, April 9). Senator Chandler to Seek Jap Concentration Camp Changes. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, April 15). Ickes Employing Japanese Labor. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, April 16). DeWitt Blocks Plans for Japs. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, June 16). Scandal Jap Evacuees is Told Prober. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, July 16). To Segregate Jap Evacuees. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, August 3). Prepare to send Japs to Tule Lake. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, August 30). Tule Lake now ready for Japs. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, October 22). Nips are moved to Tule Lake. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, October 29). Japs sullen at Tule Lake Camp. Madera Tribune, 3.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 4). Complete Investigation of Tule Lake conduct demand. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 4). Troops with Machine Guns and Tanks will enforce military rule over Japs. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 6). Japs quieted at Tule Lake. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 8). Tule Lake Trouble. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 8). Open Quiz of Tule Lake Riots. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 10). Finish Quiz at Tule Lake. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 13). Probe Trouble at Tule Lake. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 15). Early probe of Tule Lake. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 16). Tule Lake Rule awaits results. Madera Tribune, 6.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 17). Legion hears of Tule Lake. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 22). Tule Lake Japanese have all luxuries. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 24). Acts at Tule Lake inhuman. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 26). Tule Lake has bigger guard. Madera Tribune, 6.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, November 30). Removal of WRA head sought. Madera Tribune, 3.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, December 7). Inquiry of Tule Lake Revealing. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, December 9.) Used Tractors to Play Polo. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, December 9). Jap Treatment Prisoners Fair. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, December 14). Army control of Tule Lake urged. Madera Tribune, 4.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, December 21). WRA had no hold on Tule lake Japs. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, December 22). OPINION: Tule Lake has had too much publicity. Madera Tribune, 2.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1943, December 29). Interned Japanese Treatment is Good. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, January 11). Tule Hunger Strike is Denied. Madera Tribune, 3.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, January 12). Army is Moving to quit Tule Lake. Madera Tribune, 2.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, January 13). Tule Lake Authority will be divided is rumor heard. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, January 15). Firm control Japs sought. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, January 29). Tule Lake Anger Aroused. Madera Tribune, 2.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, January 31). Demand WRA be put in discard. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, February 3). New Tule Lake rioting denied. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, February 3). Japs are told to keep off coast. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, February 8). Firm Control at Tule Lake. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, February 11). Tule Lake indictment. Madera Tribune, 2.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, February 23). Arraign Japs for Posession Still. Madera Tribune, 4.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, February 28). More Japs at Tule Lake. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, February 29). Removal of Dillon Meyer as Head of WRA Demanded. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, March 16). Tule Lake Japs Taken to Jail. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, April 3). Tule Lake blaze due to faulty chimney. Madera Tribune, 4.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, April 4). Tule Japs Face Federal Trials. Madera Tribune, 6.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, May 25). Tule Lake Japanese Sentenced for Radio. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, May 25). Jap is Victim Tule Lake shot. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, May 27). Public funeral for Tule Lake Japanese. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, May 29). Jap internees unwanted people. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, June 1). Funeral Services for Slain Jap. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, July 7.) Soldier is Cleared for Tule Lake slaying. Madera Tribune, 3.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, July 21). Tule Lake Center Police Unit Quits. Madera Tribune, 6.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, July 28). Ask Right Return Loyal Japanese. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, July 28). Tule Lake Hunger Strike Progresses. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, September 16). Japs Given Probation. Madera Tribune, 2.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, October 13). Myers Sneers at Jap Stand. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, November 20). Jap Returning Report of WRA. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, November 21). Roosevelt for Return of Japs. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, December 18). Ban Against Jap on West Coast Lifted. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, December 19). Fear Trouble with Return Valley Japs. Madera Tribune, 3.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1944, December 21). Ickes Should Delay his joy. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, January 4). Few Japs Return West. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, January 5). Japs fearful places to live. Madera Tribune, 6.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, January 10). Jap Evacuees Problem Talked. Madera Tribune, 4.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, January 15). More Japanese to Return West. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, January 23). Ranch Placer Jap is Guarded. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, January 23). Placer No Place for Returning Japs. Madera Tribune, 6.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, February 1). Two are Held for Jap Clash. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, March 1). Attacks on Japs Tulare Probed. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, May 18). Bridges to Aid Returned Japs. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, May 28). Jail Penalty Suspended in Shots at Jap. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, July 25). Nisei Attacks in High Court. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, July 31). South California Japs Returning. Madera Tribune, 6.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, August 6). Colonel Goes Defense Japs. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, August 25). Restores Right of S.F. Nisei. Madera Tribune, 4.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, August 28). Nisei Opposed in Muni Shops. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, September 5). Nisei Home is Looted. Madera Tribune, 2.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, September 27). Shots Fired Into Home of Jap Veteran. Madera Tribune, 3.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, September 27). Japs Moving Westward in Trend Upset. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, October 20). Tule Lake Jap View of Peace. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, October 30). Tule Lake Japs Go Back Japan. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, November 14). 1000 Japs Appeal for Citizenship. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, November 24). Japanese Home at Puente Burns. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1945, December 12). Placer Citizens Were Not Happy. Madera Tribune, 1.

Madera Daily Tribune and Madera Mercury. (1949, August 29). Court Ruling on wartime Nisei Upheld. Madera Tribune, 7.

McBirney, J. (n.d.). The Bombing of Hiroshima by Jessica McBirney. CommonLit. Retrieved March 15, 2023, from https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/the-bombing-of-hiroshima

McMahon, S. (2022, October). Resilience: An Interview with George Takei Pt. 1 [Podcast]. Here's where it gets interesting. https://open.spotify.com/episode/2toSVQ1K7QDdpvuVS5GTrP

McMahon, S. (2022, October). Resilience: An Interview with George Takei Pt. 2 [Podcast]. Here's where it gets interesting.https://open.spotify.com/episode/30b0T9bDbHB4BNcHxURY7K

National Japanese American Citizens League Power of Words II Committee. (2013, April 27). Power of Words Handbook: A Guide to Language about Japanese Americans in World War II (Revised August 2020) [Pamphlet]. JACL.

Nishimoto, S. (2005, April 17). Sunny Nishimoto Oral History Interview Pt. 1. Japanese American Military History Collective. https://ndajams.omeka.net/items/show/1049539. https://ndajams.omeka.net/items/show/1049539

Nishimoto, S. (2005, April 17). Sunny Nishimoto Oral History Interview Pt. 2. Japanese American Military History Collective. https://ndajams.omeka.net/items/show/1049540.

Nishimoto, S. (2005, April 17). Sunny Nishimoto Oral History Interview Pt. 3. Japanese American Military History Collective. https://ndajams.omeka.net/items/show/1049541.

Nishimoto, S. (2005, April 17). Sunny Nishimoto Oral History Interview Pt. 4. Japanese American Military History Collective. https://ndajams.omeka.net/items/show/1049542.

Noguchi, A., Renge, H., & Itanaga, R. (Eds.). (1942, October). Vignette: A pictorial record of life in the Fresno Assembly Center [Booklet]. Fresno, CA.

Oshita, S. (1997, April 8). The Counter Intelligence Corps in Japan [Essay]. California State University Gerth Archives and Special Collections. https://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16855coll4/id/11978/rec/31

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1942, October 27). Dance: Get Acquainted. The Denson Communique, 1.

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1942, October 30). Meal Tickets to Control Diners. The Denson Communique, 1.

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1942, October 30). Cut Rugs to Local Jive Band. The Denson Communique, 1.

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1942, October 30). First Rain in Center Taxes Ingenuity. The Denson Communique, 2.

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1942, November 3). Other Stores to Open Soon. The Denson Communique, 1.

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1942, November 3). Stoves to be Installed this Week. The Denson Communique, 1.

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1942, November 3). Night School For Adults. The Denson Communique, 1.

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1942, November 3). Attention: Students. The Denson Communique, 2.

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1942, November 13). Many Local Nisei Enlist. The Denson Communique, 1-2.

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1942, November 17). Eleven Nisei Leave for Army. The Denson Communique, 1.

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1942, December 4). Permanent Resettling Sought. The Denson Communique, 1-2.

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1942, December 29). Loyal Nisei Released to Free Life. The Denson Communique, 1,4.

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1942, December 31). Center Education Personnel. The Denson Communique, 5.

Oyama, A., Oyama, J., Shimano, E., Shiramizu, H., & Yokota, P. (1943, January 8). Truth: Wars 1st Victim. The Denson Communique, 1.

Russell, J. J. (2015). The Train to Crystal City: FDR's Secret Prisoner Exchange Program and America's Only Family Internment Camp During World War II. Scribner.

Setterfield, R. (2016, October 24). 'Hitler Will Have to Break Us or Lose the War'. On This Day. Retrieved March 16, 2023, from https://www.onthisday.com/articles/hitler-will-have-to-break-us-or-lose-the-war

Shimano, E. (1942, December 1). A Letter to Mr. Lynn Hall, Hazen, Ark. The Denson Communique, 5.

Spann, P. (2014) Japanese American Internment and the Jerome Relocation Center. History Class Publications, 1. https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/history/1

Sterner, D. C. (2018). Go For Broke: A Tribute to the Nisei Warriors of WWII. Legal Help for Veterans. https://homeofheroes.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Go-for-Broke-final.pdf

Tagawa, N. (1980, July 9). Success Through Perseverance: Naomi Tagawa [Oral History Interview] [Text]. California State University Gerth Archives and Special Collections. https://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16855coll4/id/11400/rec/8

Taylor, P. (1942, October 23). Smoke from every flue. The Denson Communique, 1.

Timeline: Japanese Americans during World War II (U.S. (2021, July 31). National Park Service. Retrieved March 16, 2023, from https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/timeline-japanese-americans-during-world-war-ii.htm

Tinker, C. T. (2021, October 5). Opinion | I survived a Japanese American internment camp. We cannot forget that history. The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/10/05/amache-internment-camp-japanese-americans-history/

Uyemaruku, K. (1980, April 15). Success Through Perseverance: Kou Uyemaruku [Oral History Interview] [Text]. California State University Gerth Archives and Special Collections. https://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16855coll4/id/11405/rec/9

Yamada, M. (1993). Japanese Emigration History As Seen Through Ships: From the Kasato Maru to Passenger Cruisers. http://cruise-ferry.main.jp/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ch-3-First-to-N-America.pdf

Yamashita, K. T. (2022, November 8). Questions 27 & 28: Loyalty and Japanese American incarceration [Lecture; Streamed Webinar]. UCSC Emeriti Association. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55vzx4O3F-Ro&list=PLPazKVXQjmUU1px2EFJ4_oYnDabijW5eG&index=34

Unified School District

December 7, 1941, is a date that will live in infamy not only because of the notorious surprise attack on United States naval base Pearl Harbor that thrust the country into WWII but due to its unexpected impact on 125,000 Japanese immigrants and their American-born children living on the west coast.

Dubbed "enemy aliens," these law-abiding immigrants and citizens were forcefully removed from their homes and sent to concentration camps as a result of racially driven war hysteria and unsubstantiated fears of Japanese sabotage and fifth-column activity. It made no difference that two-thirds were citizens or that most who weren't had resided in the country for years and were prevented from naturalization by discriminatory exclusion laws.

For the Nishimotos, a prominent Madera family, even owning and operating a reputable business was not enough to shield them from the aftermath of Executive Order 9066. In this fictional account based on historical events, Madera South High School students step into the shoes of Nishimoto family members as they endure incarceration, first at the Fresno Assembly Center, and then in Jerome, Arkansas, and as they go on to serve in the United States military and gradually return to Madera post-WWII.

Photos Courtesy of the Nishimoto Family

Madera Method
LIVING HISTORY

This Madera Method book was produced by Madera South High School students and their instructor for the 2022–2023 historical literacy course. For more information on the Madera Method, visit MaderaMethod.com