

FALL 1992

Volume 1

Number 1

# FOOTPRINTS

*"Impressions from where we were to where we will be."*

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE JAPANESE-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**A**s a result of the overwhelming enthusiasm that was experienced at the Poston III Reunion, the Japanese-American Historical Society of San Diego was formed. All of us who were a part of this great event realized the interest that existed in our heritage in this community.

Our Article of Incorporation as a nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation for charitable purposes was accepted by the Secretary of State.

The mission's statement adopted by the Board of Directors defines our goals: "To establish, operate, and maintain an historical, scientific, cultural, literary and educational organization for the recognition and preservation of the contributions and influences of Japanese and Japanese-Americans in San Diego and contiguous areas."

The Board wishes to thank Attorney Linda Noda Hobbs with the firm of Jennings, Engstrand & Henrikson, and Jerry Segawa, CPA, for their legal and professional services to establish our organization.

We welcome your support in this exciting endeavor. I know the months and years to come will be very meaningful and fulfilling to all who participate. It will be your legacy for future generations.

Ben Segawa  
President

## NEXT ISSUE:

Heritage by Don Estes

Memories . . . Part II by Mitch Hamaka

Things Your Obachan Told You

- Jeanne Elyea

Silent Killer in the Japanese Community

-Jeanne Elyea

New Year's Day/Shogatsu - Jeanne Elyea



**SUN CAFE 1941.** A FORMER SHOOTING GALLERY, THE OBAYASHI FAMILY OPERATED THE RESTAURANT UNTIL THE EVACUATION. THE EXTERIOR REMAINS THE SAME TODAY.

## MEMORIES . . .

**I**'ve stood in front of the Nanking Cafe for more than 60 years now. I'm the four-mirrored pillar that has seen the Japanese-American community come and go from the 1920s and beyond to April 8, 1942, when the entire community suddenly disappeared.

A few return to the area now and then to reminisce and perhaps for a taste of maybe the best Chinese food in town. If they looked in the four mirrors, they might see a reflection of the old days.

In my time, I've seen them all. Look north on Fifth on the west side, and remember Nippon-Shokai, a General store run by a partnership made up of the Shimas, Imamuras, Kubos and Suzukis.

Next, was the stairway entrance to the Pacific Hotel, operated by the Tsumagaris. Then a six- or seven-stool meshiya first run by the Iwatas, then the Izumis and then the Ishibashis. The Kondos and the Takahashis operated a poolhall and the Kawasakis operated a grocery store up the street. The Yamadas ran another poolhall and the Kawamoto family operated the Frisco Cafe, which employed a number of Japanese, including Mr. Yanagihara, who made the best spaghetti.

(continued on page 2)

(MEMORIES... continued from page 1)

Around the corner and west from the Market Street intersection, the Obayashis ran the Sun Cafe and down the street, the Hirasakis operated a barbershop and bathhouse. On the east side of Fifth and between Island and Market, the Yamasaki family operated the Poppy Cafe. Up the street, the Kuratomi family operated a shoe repair shop and the Arakawas ran a dry goods store. The Nikko-Lo Cafe, also operated by the Obayashis, was on the same street.

The Momita family ran a drug store and the Tachibanas operated a grocery store at the corner of Fifth and Market.

South on Fifth and on the east side, the Iwata family operated another meshiya before they moved to the site up the street. Also on the east side of the street, the Himaka family operated a tofu-ya.

Farther south, the Nakata family operated a meshiya before they relocated to another site at Sixth and Island. On the west side, the Izumis operated a another meshiya before they moved to a new site up the street.

Mr. Yoshimura and his partner, Tim, operated a poolhall and the Matsui family operated another poolhall on the same block.

On Island between Fourth and Fifth, Mr. and Mrs. Fujimoto operated a sushi-ya. Across the street from them, the Hironakas operated a bookstore, barbershop and bathhouse.

Facing east on Island, the Mamiyas operated a barbershop and bathhouse (I can still remember the multi-colored bottles of hair dressing that lined the wall mirror). Down the street, the Katsumatas also operated a barbershop and bathhouse (there is another meshiya but the name of the operator escapes me).

Around the corner, on Sixth Avenue, the Kojima family operated a hotel. On Fourth Avenue around the corner from Island, the Konishi family operated another hotel. Over on Seventh and Island, the Sato family ran yet another hotel.

There were other Japanese-run businesses and residents in the area but perhaps others with better memories can write and remind us of them. Age tends to erode memories and, remember, I've been holding up the front of this cafe for many years.

— MITCH HAMAKA

*First in a series on Nikkei history*

## HERITAGE

### A PHILOSOPHICAL ALPHABET?

**A**lphabets, by their very nature and historical development, tend to be things of utility. The Japanese however, have again demonstrated their cultural uniqueness by evolving a philosophical alphabet. Not a rhyming ditty as we have in English, but an honest to gosh philosophical one.

Whenever the subject of written Japanese comes up, the



the mental picture formed is of the complex ideograms written in the Chinese style. These characters are known as kanji and are non-alphabetic glyphs.

Kanji was introduced into Japan around AD 400. By AD 900, the Japanese, to accommodate innovations and the grammatical changes implicit in all living languages, developed two phonetic alphabets to supplement kanji: katakana and hiragana. Both phonetic systems are generally lumped together and simply referred to as the Go-Ju On, or fifty sounds.

Those who ever attended a Japanese school may remember the poem attributed to the priest Kobo Daishi, who arranged the fifty sounds into a pattern that would not only facilitate learning, but would pass on a little Buddhist philosophy as well. In doing so he created, to my knowledge, the world's first philosophical alphabet.

**I - ro - ha - ni - ho - he - to**

Fragrant though the bright flowers are,

**chi - ri - nu - ru - wo**

Nevertheless they scatter;

**wa - ka - yo - ta - re - so**

Who in this world

**tsu - ne - na - ra - mu**

The deep mountains of vicissitudes

**ke - fu - ko - e - te**

ever changing, which we cross today

**a - sa - ki - yu - me - mi - shi**

Evanescant dreams will be seen

no more,

**e - hi - mo - se - su**

Nor shall we drink too deep.

— DON ESTES

## POSTON INFO

### POSTON VIDEO

**T**he much in demand VHS tape of the slide presentation by Don Estes featured at last year's Poston Camp III Reunion is now available for the low price of \$20.00. Send your tax deductible donation made out to the Japanese-American Historical Society of San Diego or JAHSSD.

Mail check to:

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## POSTON MONUMENT DEDICATION

**T**he monument dedication at Poston, AZ will be on October 6, 1992 with a San Diego/Poston Tour Package to Laughlin beginning on October 5 to October 7th. The cost will be \$85.00 which includes transportation, 2 nights at the Flamingo Hilton, buffet dinner and more. For further information contact Masato Asakawa at 453-2739 or Yukio Kawamoto at 286-8203.

## ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE . . .

**I**f you have someone or something you are looking for, something you want, or a question that needs an answer about our community, The Camp, or our heritage, please contact a member of our Board or the newsletter editor and we will do our best to find a reply for you. Suggestions are more than welcome.

Memorial Ads and/or dedications for this newsletter are available. The price varies with the size of the ad and length of time.

A business size card advertisement can be placed for only \$30.00 per year.

If you know someone who is not currently on our mailing list and who would like to be on the list, please contact the newsletter editor. Newsletter subscription is \$10.00 annually.

For further information contact the newsletter editor:

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Mail your check made out to JAHSSD and printed material to Jeanne Elyea.

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\*MEMBERSHIP IS FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR.  
MEMBERSHIP FOR 1992 WILL BE EXTENDED TO  
INCLUDE 1993 FOR THIS INITIAL MEMBERSHIP  
DRIVE.

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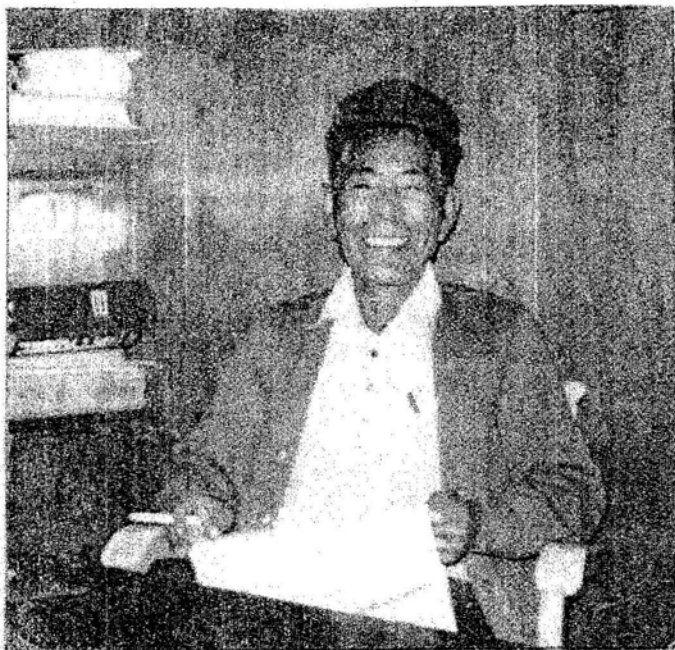
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▲  
**KIKUICHI "WINDY" MARUMOTO** HUSBAND,  
DAD, GRANDPA, GREAT-GRANDPA

## IN MEMORY

**T**his first issue of the JAHSSD newsletter has been financed by the family of Kikuichi "Windy" Marumoto and dedicated in his memory to all his family and friends. "Windy", "K", Charlie, George, Nisan, MaruSan, or whatever name he went by, not only gave us the true art of gambling, but he taught us that as Americans, we must abide by the law and he insisted that we "buy American," cars, etc., and that we speak English. He, like most of his generation, never spoke of his past nor did he ever talk about the relocation camp. Sadly, most of the history and memories died with him. But for those of you who are still able, we ask that you share not only with the JAHSSD but with your family and friends, a portion of the past and history that no one else can tell.

FROM: MARY WADA MARUMOTO; STEVEN, ANDREW, MATTHEW MARUMOTO; JEANNE, BILL, WILLIAM, JOHN, MICHAEL ELYEA; ALLYNE, LES, MELINDA, WENDE, JUSTINE TACHIKI; LINDA, HOWARD, ROGER MCLEMORE; JOYCE, TOM, AMY AND JIMMY KELLY.

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