

Fall 2001

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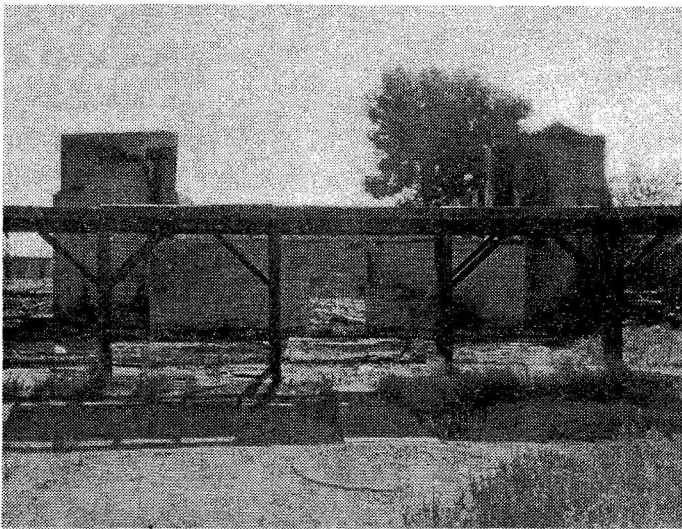


Impressions from where we were to where we will be

The Newsletter For The Japanese American Historical Society Of San Diego

Fall Issue 2001

Volume 10 Number 3



Poston I High School Auditorium lies in ruins after Aug. 5 blaze. Fire officials believe it was deliberately set.

Fire Destroys Poston I Auditorium

(Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from an article that ran in The Rafu Shimpo.)

The plan to restore and preserve the Poston, Ariz., relocation center site suffered a major setback Aug. 5 when fire destroyed the 58-year-old Poston I Auditorium, which was to be a cornerstone of the project.

According to Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) Council officials, the fire appeared to have been deliberately set. The blaze destroyed the hardwood floor, the stage area and the wooden ceiling leaving only the adobe walls standing.

Fire officials said the walls would have to come down as they posed a danger.

The Arizona Preservation Foundation recently had placed the auditorium on its "endangered building" list.

Fire destroys Poston I auditorium see page 13

10th Annual Luncheon Meeting to Honor Four Past Community Leaders

The JAHSSD will pay tribute to four past Nikkei community leaders at its 10th annual luncheon meeting Oct. 20 at the San Diego Buddhist Temple's Annex Hall.

The program also will feature a display of artwork by the late Akira Shima, whose widow, Masako Shima and their children, Hisae Batchelder and Ken Shima, have graciously permitted us to put the artwork on exhibit.

The exhibit opens at 10 a.m. Bento lunches can be pre-purchased for \$15 each through notices that were mailed to members and friends. Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m. after a brief membership business meeting.

An order form is included in this newsletter. Invite a friend or relative to join you. Oct. 14 is the deadline to order bentos.

Darcie Iki of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles will be the keynote speaker. Her subject matter is "REgenerating Community: Exploration of the Resettlement Years."

The four recipients of the Kansha Award this year include Agnes Benson; K. J. (Jimmy) Takashima; Fred Katsumata and a posthumously award to the late Ben Honda, all of whom made significant contributions to our community in the past.

Also on the program is a presentation of two paintings of Fish Camp scenes by Mrs. Rose Schneider. Mrs. Betty Slater is to make the presentation to society president, Jeanne Elyea.

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K. J. (Jimmy) Takashima

Kansha Awardee

By Ben Segawa

Like many of you, I first met Jimmy in Poston in 1942. I was an 11-year-old kid and Jimmy was a recent graduate of the University of California at Berkeley. He had earned his business administration degree.

Jimmy became block manager of Block 322 in camp and was named to the Camp Council. He advanced to become council chairperson and was referred to as the "unofficial Mayor of Poston."

As block manager, Jimmy was the person responsible for looking after the health and welfare of his block residents, like ordering supplies, seeing that their all their needs were met. It was a big responsibility.

As council chairperson, Jimmy was called on to represent Poston internees in a meeting at the Amache relocation center with War Relocation Authority officials to determine how internees should be relocated when they were to be released.

Following our release from camp, Jimmy settled in Los Angeles working in the real estate business. Eventually, he returned to the San Diego area where he resumed working the family farm in Otay Valley.

He farmed until his retirement in 1985. It was during his farming years that I worked closely with Jimmy providing him with supplies like seeds, fertilizer and irrigation equipment. He mainly farmed tomatoe crops.

During his farming years, Jimmy served the farming community as president of the South Bay Farmers Cooperative, the largest such organization in that area. He also served as vice president of the Chula Vista Growers Association for many years. He was instrumental in helping expand the farming industry in South Bay. Many of his farming colleagues looked to him for leadership and advice.

in addition to his leadership in the farming community, Jimmy also was very active in the San Diego Buddhist Temple, having served several terms as president of the temple board. He continues to serve on the temple board of directors, is treasurer of the temple Scholarship Fund and the *Eitaikyo*, the temple perpetual memorial fund. He has contributed many hours to numerous temple activities.

Jimmy also has served on the board of the Japanese Friendship Garden Board and the San Diego Chapter of the JACL.

The Nikkei community of San Diego has been greatly enriched by Jimmy's endless efforts, donations and support for more than 60 years.

Ben Honda

Kansha Awardee

by Joyce Teague

Ben Honda was born in Lemon Grove March 20, 1925, and passed away Christmas Eve 1995.

During the 70 years in between, he led a remarkable life of service dedicated to his family, his church, his community and his country.

Ben was the fifth of six children born to Hachiro and Fumino Honda. From his early youth, Ben showed athletic prowess excellling in all sports. He made himself an excellent baseball, softball, football and basketball player. his interest in sports carried over into his years in Poston III internment camp and again in San Diego where he organized youth sports teams which competed with teams from other counties for many years.

During WWII, the Honda family was interned in Block 330 in Poston III where Ben participated in Buddhist Temple activities and ran the high school P. E. department.

He enlisted in the Army from camp and joined the 442nd Regimental Combat Team attaining the rank of sergeant while serving in the European Theater.

Before he returned home from the service, Ben's mother died of injuries suffered in an automobile accident.

Following the war, he helped his father in his growing gardening business and himself was a gardener for 40 years.

Ben became heavily involved in the Buddhist Temple where his good humor and personality served him well as he became a foundation for temple.

He was a member of the Young Buddhist Association (YBA), which became the Adult Buddhist Association (ABA) and later helped found, and became advisor of, the Jr. YBA where he counseled countless youths, whether they were temple members or not, through their high school years. His nonjudgmental and encouraging nature helped guide a couple of generations for more than 30 years. The Jr. YBA this year marks its 50th anniversary.

Ben began the YBA Scholarship Fund in the late 1950s relying strictly on donations and was open to all high school graduates in the Nikkei community.

Yuki Kawamoto recalls that the first award of \$100 was presented to Elaine Hibi Bowers, former JAHSSD president. With the establishment of the San Diego JACL Scholarship for the community, the YBA Scholarship became known as the Buddhist Temple Scholarship Fund open to temple members' families. The program thrives today awarding scholarships to high school graduates and continuing education scholarships to college students.

See Kansha Awardee page 6



Kameo "Flash" Sugioka and Jeanne Marumoto Elyea pre-war 1939 in front of Marumoto packing shed in Tijuana Valley

"Flash" or "Chop-Chop:" Still A Hero

(Editor's Note: This article, which appeared in a Honolulu newspaper, is about a former San Diegan we all knew as Kameo "Flash" Sugioka, brother of Tamotsu Sugioka. Flash lived with the Iguchi family before the war.)

by Carol Chang

World War II veteran **Kameo "Chop-Chop" Sugioka** finally got his Army medical card, medals and ribbons in a simple ceremony (recently), surrounded by his fishing friends and family at Heeia Kea Pier as the winds blew in from Kaneohe Bay.

The presentation didn't have the crowds and official pomp of the recent Medal of Honor tributes to some of his fellow veterans, but the rifleman from L Co. 442nd Regimental Combat Team was tickled to death anyway.

"My friends helped me out a lot," says the diminutive 80-year-old man, who was touched by their effort.

"I was really surprised. When I saw all of them there at the pier, I thought they were waiting to get bait from the aku boat."

Sugioka never got his veterans' benefits after the war because he never asked for them. It was that simple.

"I did my job, that's it," he says.

A hard worker all his life and still an energetic handyman, Chop-Chop retired last year from his latest volunteer work - helping distribute goods at KEY Project's community Food Bank in Kahaluu. KEY's busy crew at the 1999 kalua pig fund-raiser gratefully slurped up his fresh fish soup, too.

But it took years for his friends to figure out that

DATES TO REMEMBER

Oct. 20, 2001 JAHSSD - Annual Meeting
Luncheon Buddhist Temple @ 11:30 a.m.
Akira Shima Art display opens @ 10 a.m.

Dec. 16, 2001 - Mochitsuki
Buddhist Temple

Sugioka could use a little help himself.

"He still can't keep still. He'll help you do anything," says **Sharon Pisciotto** of the pier's Deli. "He'll give you the shirt off his back. But if you want to do something for him, it's 'No, no, no.'"

Sugioka may have shot down a few German soldiers and helped rescue the famed Lost Battalion, says **Godwin Young**, one of Chop-Chop's talk story pals at the pier, but he never took advantage of the benefits, including the all-important medical card that can lower an old soldier's health-care bills.

So Young, a retired police officer, and others went to bat for their friend a few months ago. They filled out forms, scoured the internet, wrote letters and hounded D. C. bureaucrats until everything finally came through -- the **Bronze Star**, the **Good Conduct Medal**, the **Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal**, the **European-African-Middle-Eastern Campaign Medal**, the **World War II Victory Medal**, the **Presidential Unit Citation** and the **Combat Infantryman Badge 1st Award** -- all custom-framed and mounted for him and presented in the surprise ceremony.

"We thought he had maybe two ribbons coming, not seven," says his niece, **Bernie Roxburgh**, still in awe.

"In fact, we didn't know much about his war record. He's a shy man; he didn't tell people."

Sugioka did bring his nickname home with him from the war, however.

"When I was drafted, the sergeant at Fort Douglas couldn't pronounce my name, so he called me over and says, since I'm a small man, he's going to call me 'Chop-Chop.'"

Sugioka admits he may be a little shorter now than his towering 5-foot-1 stature back then.

"As you grow old, you lose a little," he said.
But you gain a few good friends.



Windows In Time

Photographs From the Archives of the JAHSSD
by Don Estes

They are eight San Diegans who look back at us over a span over eighty years. We wonder why the photograph was taken and what each of them might have been thinking. Did they have any idea that their picture was going to be seen by you in the 21st Century?

Perhaps the most seductive appeal of old photographs is not so much what we can see, but the mysteries and unanswered questions they present.

Because of Amy Kaneyuki's generosity to our organization, we have now gained a tiny window on the past. Amy's photo is special in a number of ways, not the least of which is an inscription on the back. It's a bold inscription in black Japanese ink and written in that distinctive cursive English script the Issei used.

Eighty-two years later, through this thoughtful inscription, we know that this is a photograph of the "Yokohama Randoi" (read that "laundry") and that the inscription is dated March 13, 1920. To insure we get the date right, it is also written in Japanese: *Taisho Kyunen Sangatsu Jusan Hi*.

We have some idea of who the people pictured are for also written on the back are names. "Teru," "Masa," "Ms. Fujimoto," "Watanabe," "Fuji" with the name "Hashiguchi" entered later in ball-point pen. "Mexshikan Obasan" written in katakana, and finally "Hazuto," and "Shizu." Down in the lower right hand corner is imprinted, "M. Shimotsusa Studio 538 5th Street, San Diego, Cal." Now, we also know the name of the photographer.

By using copies of the San Diego City Directory and Japanese nenkan that have been donated to our society, we know that in 1920, the Yokohama Laundry was located at 631 7th Avenue. We dig a little deeper and we learn that Chozo Watanabe is listed as a "laundryman" and lives at 631 7th Avenue. Deeper still. Fujimoto Oto is listed as running a laundry at 631 - 635 7th Avenue and in a separate entry that Fujimoto Shizue resides at 635 7th Avenue. Also listed in separate entries are Fujimoto, Grace and Fujimoto, Kazuki who also reside at 635 7th Avenue.

The large clock on the back wall tells us it's three o'clock in the afternoon. The building has electricity because we can see three light bulbs hanging from the ceiling. The two ladies with irons are married -- we can see the wedding bands on their left hands.

Everyone looks a little tired, but business looks good judging from how everyone is dressed and the laundry packages around the shop.

A few of the mysteries. We don't know exactly who is who. "Mexshikan Obasan" is clearly front left, but beyond that we've more work to do. The purpose for the photograph? Why is it 8 by 10, which is a large sized photo, and well mounted? Was it to be sent to friends or even to Japan as a testimony of commercial success?

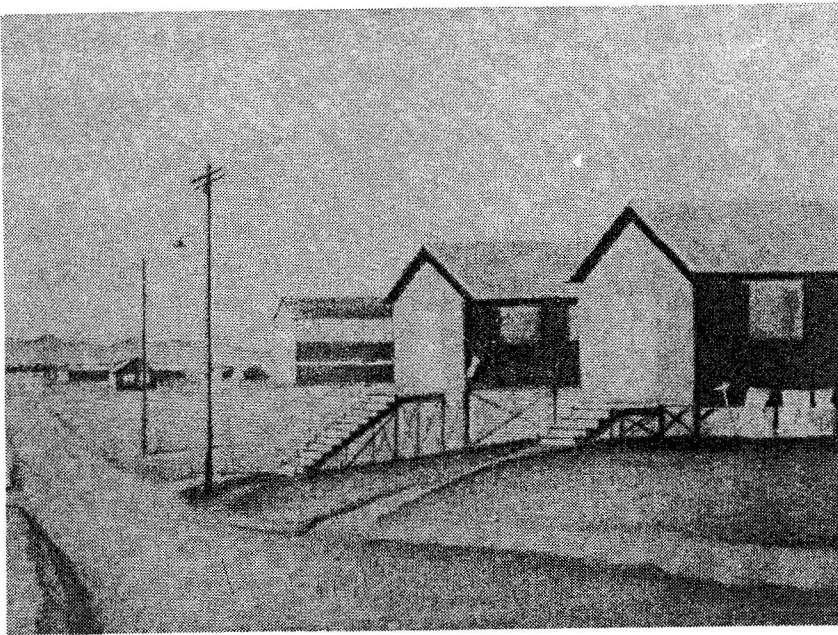
Although they may not see us, through mediums like Amy's photograph, we see them and, for a moment, our generations touch. The history of our Nikkei forbearers becomes more real as we look through these tiny window in time.



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A Poston II (scene as drawn by anoted riist Shinkichi Tajiri.

Shinkichi Tajiri:
Truly A Man For All Seasons
-Part III -

With permission we here continue excerpts from the autobiography of distinguished artist, Prof. Shinkichi George Tajiri, a former San Diegan, now a resident of Baarlo, The Netherlands.)

From San Diego, we were sent to the Santa Anita Racetrack near Los Angeles. There, barbed wire had been added to the fence that bordered the track. High, wooden guard towers, with machine guns and searchlights, were erected at intervals. We were told that the guns were there to protect us from the hostile population outside, but we always found it strange that the guns were pointed at us.

Next to the racetrack were rows and rows of horse stables, which were to house a maximum of six persons per stable. Our family of five made a 'home' in a stable designed for one horse. The stables had been thinly white-washed but the remnants of horse manure showed its particular texture through the paint. Iron cots, army blankets and cotton sacks, which would serve as our mattresses once they were filled with straw, were our only furnishings. An extra room, which extended forward from the stable and enclosed a covered walkway for the horses, gave us a total space of approximately twenty feet by ten feet.

After almost five months, we were moved at night in darkened trains; shades drawn, with armed guards looking on. Our destination was the Poston Relocation Center, on the Colorado River Indian Reservation in the middle of the desert. The government called these specially built settlements

'relocation' or 'internment' centers but, in truth, they were simply concentration camps encircled with barbed wire and watch towers with machine guns, search lights and soldiers. We were imprisoned, our freedoms denied.

Poston was divided into three camps with a population that would ultimately number around 18,000. The camp at Poston cost the United States \$470 per inmate. Most of this cost went into piping water and electricity, new roads and more luxurious quarters for the administrators. We were housed in prefabricated barracks constructed of cheap, rough wood covered by black tar paper. Most of them housed four families. A 'block' for about 270 persons was made up of two rows of seven barracks. Toilets, shower, laundry and ironing barracks were

situated in the middle of each block. The barrack with the toilets was one open space with a double row of toilets, back to back, without any partitions. The showers also lacked privacy. On one corner of the 'block' was a mess hall where we were fed. Three times a day a bell sounded and we would line up outside with our eating utensils. First come, first served. The family unit quickly dissolved. Work groups organized a hospital, schools and a post office. For a forty-seven hour week, a professional was paid ten cents an hour, a skilled laborer eight and a half cents an hour, and an unskilled laborer six cents an hour. No one was forced to work.

Life was dusty. The sand, which had blown back and forth for centuries, was ground into fine talcum-like powder. It blew through cracks in the floor and got into everything, including the food. The days were very hot, but when the sun set, the desert cooled rapidly, and the nights were very cold. Life was boring. In the beginning, we had nothing, no radios or materials to work with, only the few books we brought with us.

In camp, I wasn't especially interested in the war. At the time, I was mostly concerned with being confined. I started a series of Conte crayon drawings of camp life with art materials that Donal Hord sent me.

Since I was the oldest boy of our family in camp, I decided to make a patriotic gesture and volunteer for the Army. I was 110 pounds, with a heart flutter, myopic and had had double pneumonia five times. I was a walking psychosomatic disaster area and sure the Army would reject me. Unexpectedly, I found my self in uniform.

- To be continued -

Ben was a natural leader obtaining results by setting a quiet example. His self-effacing yet self-assured personality, organizational skills and commitment made him a highly respected leader in the community. He was a life member of the Japanese American VFW Post 4851, a member of the JACL, taught Sunday School for many years, guided many Boy Scouts toward the Eagle badges through service and study and served the Buddhist Temple in many capacities, including temple board president, youth advisor and education committee chairman.

An example of his organizational and leadership skills occurred in the early 1980s when he organized a trip to Japan. It began as a trip for five couples and grew by word of mouth to 84 travelers! This was the start of Ben Honda tours, a business he dearly loved as it allowed him not only to see new places but create memorable experiences for tour members through his meticulous planning.

Ben married Mikiye Amano April 15, 1956. They met at a YBA function after Miki's family had come to San Diego. Their two children, Ralph and Terri, now have families of their own. His brother Masami and Tom still live in San Diego. Miki now runs Ben Honda Tours.

A brief history of Ben's life does not do him justice as he touched the lives of so many people in San Diego through his friendship, leadership and selfless generosity.

His modesty prevented him from accepting honors during his lifetime but the posthumous Kansha Award is a way of acknowledging the influence he spread throughout the community and a way for all of us to say, "Thank you, Ben. You were one of a kind and you are not forgotten for all you did for us."

Agnes Sachiko Benson Kansha Awardee

Agnes Sachiko Benson was born in Hawaii. After a career in business, she joined Sumitomo Bank of California's San Diego office in 1979. A woman of great personal ability and skill, Agnes rose through the ranks to become the trusted advisor of many of the managers that were rotated through the San Diego office.

During that period, she gained a well-deserved reputation in the local Nikkei community for trust and hard work. She was always willing to advise any community organization and help guide them through questions on monetary policy or the intricacies of the banking system.

A measure of her talent and ability may be seen in the fact that she was one of the first women

promoted to the position of vice president and branch manager by Sumitomo Bank of California.

Throughout her career, Agnes has made it a point to remain in the background whenever possible, but she has steadfastly advised and supported organizations and activities of the local Nikkei community to the fullest. "If you want to get it done, ask Agnes," have become bywords in our community.

Now in active retirement, she continues to support a number of causes in both the Nikkei and greater communities. A woman who is never standing still, Agnes continues to lend her talents freely in the service of others.

Agnes Benson is being recognized as a Kansha Awardee this year for her years of support to the Nikkei community.

Fred Noboru Katsumata Kansha Awardee

Born at Mercy Hospital in San Diego, **Fred Katsumata** grew up first on Maple Street in San Diego and then later on Island Avenue where his mother, **Koma**, opened a barber shop about 1926. His father, **Kikuzo**, later opened a pool hall next to the barbershop.

Fred has been active in the community all of his adult life. He has been a long time member of the San Diego Chapter of the **Japanese American Citizens League**, an organization he helped found locally in the late 1930s. Fred served as the president of the San Diego Chapter of the then fledgling JACL in 1941 and helped guide the community through the traumatic period during the community's evacuation and relocation to the internment camps.

Throughout his life, Fred has supported the local Nikkei community by being active not only in JACL activities but with his long-time affiliation with his church, the **Ocean View United Church of Christ**. Fred has always been a willing volunteer for any community event or activity. He has, for years, served as an officer in his church, and while working at his own job, regularly cared for the church grounds and buildings. Fred has the well-deserved reputation of being a man who can always be counted on.

Fred Katsumata is being recognized this year by his community with the Kansha Award for a lifetime of steady, quiet service and support he has given to the Nikkei community.

IN MEMORIAM

The JAHSSD notes with great sadness the passing of San Diegans and former residents of our community. We extend our heartfelt condolences to their families and friends.

Cromwell MUKAI - February 1, 2001
Rev. Kyoshiro TOKUNAGA - June 27, 2001
Tomiko TAVARES - July 2, 2001
Alice Aiko GILBERT - July 18, 2001
Raymond Akira TAKEYAMA - July 22, 2001
Chiyo "Chico" FOSTER - July 28, 2001
Hisatoshi UEJI - August 1, 2001
Tetsu YAMASAKI - August 4, 2001
Haruko IKI - August 26, 2001
Miyuki NIJIMA - September 6, 2001
Kimiyo TAKAHASHI - September 2001
Misao May KUWANO - September 20, 2001
Haruko THRASHER - September 21, 2001

9-11-01

We've seen the videotaped image of the jetliner piercing concrete and steel shell of a World Trade Center tower in New York City like a hot knife through butter.

It pierced my heart in the same manner.

Fifteen years ago, Naomi, our two boys, Keith and Daniel, and my sister-in-law, Kathy, stood just below the tall antenna that topped that building and looked out over the New York skyline.

Daniel called us four or five times that day. It bothered him like nothing else had before, except for when Grandpa Carl Kada and Auntie Mizue Copple passed away within eight months of each other three years before.

"I can't believe it," he said repeatedly. "We were on top of that building!"

I sensed he was terribly distressed so I admonished him: "Don't do anything stupid...like enlisting." "I was thinking about that," he said.

We went to church the following Sunday and my friend, Motoo Tsuneyoshi, read the following statement to open the service:

"We surround all men and all forms of life with infinite love and compassion. Particularly do we send forth loving thoughts to those in suffering and sorrow, to all those in doubt and ignorance, to all who are striving to attain truth, and to those whose feet are standing close to the great change men call death, we send forth oceans of wisdom, mercy and love."

Those were calming words. The anger and tears might go away some day but I won't forget the poor innocent souls we lost that morning. -- Mich Himaka

2 Nikkeis Honored by Friendship Garden

Two longtime San Diegans, Moto Asakawa and Haruko Muraoka, were honored by the Japanese Friendship Garden for their part in founding the garden project.

At the garden's *Festival of the August Moon* Aug. 3, President Tom Yanagihara made the presentation to Asakawa and Mrs. Muraoka.

Asakawa and his parents established the Japanese Tea Pavilion in Balboa Park, which was the predecessor to the Friendship Garden. He was an original member of the garden board of directors and helped move the project through the city approval process, fundraising plans and formation of the Japanese Friendship Garden Society.

Mrs. Muraoka and her late husband, Saburo, were both active in the Nikkei community when the Sister City Society was proposed. The Muraokas helped establish the Sister City Project, which flourishes today. They were instrumental in having the Sister City program involved in the Friendship Garden project and were founding members of the garden society.

An estimated 300 persons attended the festivities held at the garden site.

Last Chance to Buy Cypress View Niches In Nikkei Section

Dec. 31, 2001, is the last day to purchase niche sites at the original prices in the exclusive Nikkei section at the Cypress View Columbarium.

After that date, the prices will rise and the section will be opened to the public, according to Min Sakamoto, who played a major part in establishing the section for the community.

Under terms of the original agreement with the community, a niche for two persons goes for \$1,200; a three-person niche goes for \$1,800 and a four-person niche goes for \$2,400.

Those prices will remain in effect until Dec. 31, he said.

Any family interested in purchasing such sites can call Min at (619) 262-2969. He has a layout of the section so you can see which spaces are still available. After checking the available spaces, you can go to Cypress View to see where the sites are located.

A prepaid site can make it a lot easier on family members on whose shoulders will fall the final responsibility.



Visiting cemetery of my grandparents with Masumi Taka, Sachi Seko, Kinya Taka and wife Yuka.

Tracing My Family Roots (Part II)

By Mich Himaka

(Editor's Note: This is a continuation of a trip to Japan taken by the author.)

8: 35 a.m. Friday April 20, 2001: Five of us boarded the "Ocean Arrow" train in Kyoto. Our group includes wife Naomi; her mother, **Sakiko Kada**; **Patsy Yanagihara** (our interpreter); her sister-in-law and my "little sister," **Mari Tanizaki** and myself.

Round trip from Kyoto to Shingu and from Katsuura back to Kyoto costs us about 15,500 yen each, or about \$125.

Brother Tets and Cousin Kimi told me there would be a lot of tunnels enroute. Being somewhat of a stickler for accuracy, I thought I'd count them. I guessed maybe 40 or 50 at the most. It was a four-hour ride and I lost a lot of sleep time counting **110 tunnels** -- big ones, small ones, long ones and short ones.

At 9 a.m., we reached the Osaka Station. At 10 a.m., we were in Wakayama City. How green the hills! Boys Day must be close. Carps are flying. Five at one house. I noted a lot of farms along the way. Most of them small ones, unlike the multi-acre farms of America. (13 tunnels so far.)

The coast line is beautiful! I remember Mama telling me how beautiful the beaches in Wakayama were in her youth. She was right. There are fishing boats tied up along small docks. *Sentaku* (laundry to the uninitiated) hanging on clotheslines.

Next stop: Gobo. Terraced farmlands along the railroad tracks, possibly rice fields and other crops.

11:15 a.m.: Shirahama.

12:03 p.m.: Kushimoto. We had an aunt who lived here. Mama's sister, I think.

12:32 p.m.: Kii-Katsuura.

12:34 p.m.: Nachi.

12:44 p.m. Right on time. *Shingu!*

All during the ride, I was quite apprehensive. I looked forward to meeting my second cousins, **Akira Taka**, who is the oldest son of Mama's nephew, **Masao**, aka **Keitaro**, and second cousin, **Sachi Seko**, daughter of our cousin, **Tokiro Seko**, who had passed away 11 months ago due to cancer. Eager but apprehensive.

Masao was Mama's nephew but they were only a year apart in age and they were raised like brother and sister. Mama used to tell me how they often argued like siblings.

It would be a short visit as we had only a few hours to spend with them. I mainly wanted to do *haka maeri* to visit the gravesites of our grandparents, if we could find them, and our uncle and aunt, **Unosuke and Sueno Seko**, the only uncle and aunt we would ever know in our lifetimes.

I wondered if I would be able to communicate with them.

Not many people getting off here at Shingu, I thought. I believe there was only one other stop after this one.

We got off the train carrying *miyage* and I wondered if we had brought enough. (Of course, not!)

I see a young couple standing at the gate. The young lady smiles and I ask: "Sachi?" She nods her head.

I put my bags down, she runs up and we hug. She is in tears as I would be, too, soon enough.

She says her father would have wanted to be there to greet us.

She introduces me to third cousin, **Kinya Taka**, son of **Akira Taka**, who remained home to help set up our greeting.

Naomi and I get into Sachi's little Suzuki and we travel down tiny streets, in and out of traffic to Miwasaki, which is where both Mama and Papa grew up as I recall. Both of them often talked about their hometown.

Finally, we come to a stop. Kinya and his passengers -- Patsy, Saki and Mari -- get out of his car and the three of us join them for a short walk to the home of **Akira Taka**, a second cousin who is about eight years older than I.

I remove my shoes, (Boy! Good thing! No holes in my socks! Naomi would have killed me!) introduce myself and the others and shake his hand.

Akira, in turn, introduces us to others who are there, including his wife, **Masumi**; Kinya's wife, **Yuka**; **Emiko Yokohama**, wife of a cousin, **Kazushiro**, who is not present and a bunch of others, See *Tracing My Family Roots* page 10

society Oct. 20, 2001, at the Buddhist Temple of San Diego. Please join us in thanking **Mr. And Mrs. Slater** and acknowledging their gift.



Fish Camp in Oil

Leonard and Betty Slater have made a generous gift of two valuable and unique pieces of San Diego history to the **JAHSSD**. The Slaters donated two pre-World War II paintings by San Diego artist **Rose Schneider** of Fish Camp, the prewar Nikkei bayside community.

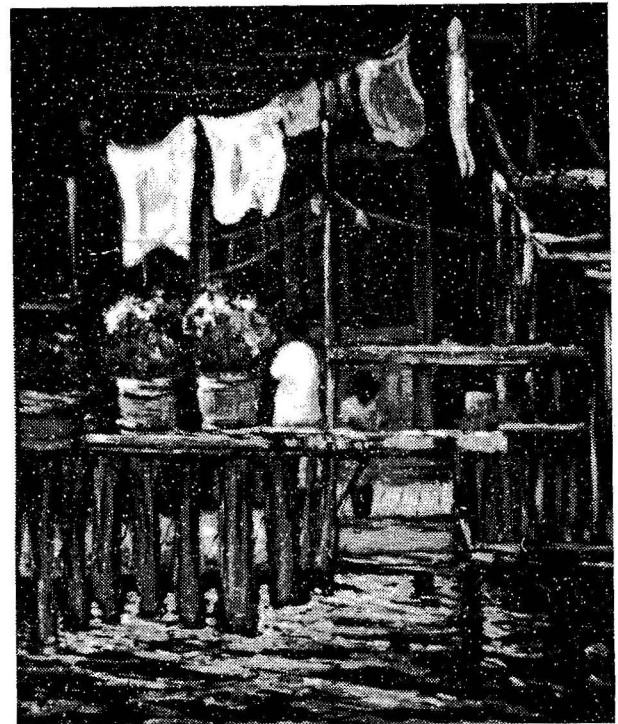
The Summer 2001 issue of The *Journal of San Diego History* reports that **Rose Schneider** was born in La Grange, Mo., on Oct. 5, 1895. She moved to San Diego with her family in 1898. Artistically inclined from an early age, she graduated from San Diego High School and went on to formally study art with two of San Diego's leading landscape painters, **Maurice Braun** (1876-1941) and **Charles Reiffel** (1862-1942). Her work has been favorably compared in style and subject to the works of **Reiffel**.

Schneider died Feb. 20, 1976, in San Diego. Her works were widely exhibited throughout the 1930s and 1940s, including San Diego's California Pacific International Exposition held in Balboa Park in 1935.

Betty Slater says her mother, **Mrs. Esther Moorsteen**, became a friend of the artist while they were students at San Diego High School and supported Schneider's work throughout her life. Both women had a keen interest in people, social trends and how life was lived. At a time when most San Diego painters confined their work to seascapes and landscapes, **Rose Schneider** also looked to people who occupied the land and the sea.

We thank **Elizabeth and Joe Yamada** for facilitating the donation of the two paintings to the society.

The **Slater** gift will be formally presented and acknowledged at the Tenth Annual meeting of our



Searching For Escondido

The City of Escondido is presently searching for current or former residents of that community to participate in a city-sponsored oral history project.

Project director **Susan Walter** tells us that the city is seeking people who lived in Escondido from before World War II until 1955. She is very anxious to have Nikkei included in her project. Susan has gone through annuals at Escondido High School and found the names of graduating Nikkei seniors for this period.

The project would especially like to hear from **Frank Y. Nakatsukasa (1942)**, **Edwin Yasukochi (1948)**, **Akio Fukudo (1949)** (Fallbrook High School), **Dorothy Ikemoto (1952)**, **Ruth Nakashima (1952)**, **Janet Ikemoto (1953)**, **Shirley Nomura (1954)**, and **George Yasukochi (1956)**, or any other Nikkei resident of Escondido during the period covered by the study.

If you can assist please contact **Susan Walter**, (Office) (619) 426-5109, (Home) (619) 476-0453. Susan's email waltent@mymailstation.com Susan would like to complete the project early in October 2001.

We Get Letters

Dear Ben, Mich and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Poston Camp III Christian Church, we thank you for the accommodations in making the Worship service possible on June 3. There were 70 people who attended. Two families came especially for the service.

It was a great reunion! The hotel, program, souvenir booklet,, tote bag, exhibit, activities, etc. were well-planned and organized. The committee members were all very helpful and accommodating.

We appreciate all of your time, effort and creativeness in making this event a joyous and meaningful one.

We will be looking forward to the Poston Camp III Reunion in 2003.

Gratefully yours,
Marie M. Kurihara
The Rev. Dr. Paul Nagano
Poston Camp III Christian Church Committee

Dear Ben,

Greetings and congratulations! With all the preparation, the energy and care given to our Poston III (reunion) you are to be congratulated and, at this writing, exhausted.

Thank you for the marvelous reunion!

Evrything went well and the attendees were excited and made very happy. Please thank your co-chairman and committee for us.

Ruth Okimoto did a masterful job and the project deserves our support and affirmation.

We get letters see page

We get letters continued from page

Our Poston III Christian Church Reunion was so well attended and we have you to thank for that. You were a real inspiration and such a pragmatic Christian.

We are making plans already, according to Marie Kurihara, to arrange for a similar event at our 2003 reunion in Las Vegas.

Thank you again, Ben. You are a real role model for many.

Gratefully,
Paul M. Nagano

Dear Mich,

Thank you so much for your prompt reply to the Poston books (request).

John and I plan to visit Cecilia Ishibashi in early September so if you (have) a photo of all your family

with names written, could you send it to me? I would like to show it to Cecilia.

Cecilia was living at the Heiwa Senior Home in Chicago but her younger daughter, Mary Anne Engling felt she needed her closer to her home in Connecticut so Cecilia moved out there last November and has adjusted quite well.

Thanks a million again for your kindness!

Sincerely,
Kiyo (Kushino) Takemoto

Dear Bob (Batchelder) and Committee Members:

Thank you very much for your donation of August 7, 2001 in the mount of \$500 for the Japanese Friendship Garden. Contributions and membership donations are being used to support the on-going operations and future expansion of the Garden.

We hope that you will be able to visit us and experience the beauty and the cultural events at our new and expanded Garden. The success of the Garden is largely dependent upon the involvement of individuals like you. The Garden gratefully acknowledges your interest and support. Again, "arigato" (thank you) as we go forward to development of the Garden canyon.

Yours sincerely,
Toshiye Kiyoi
Administration

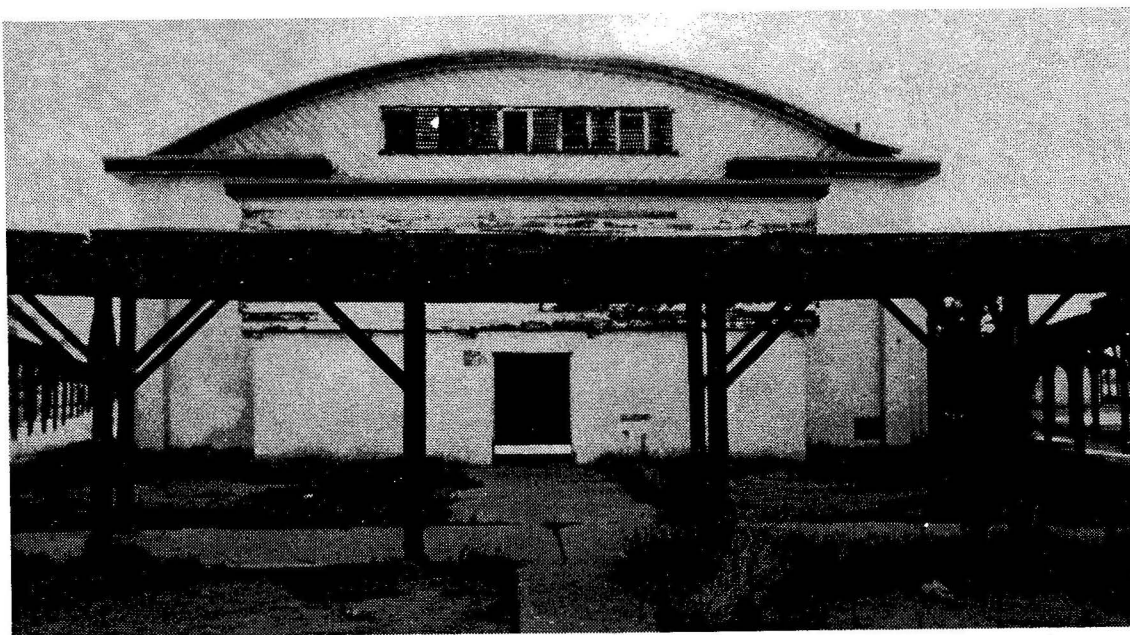
Dear Prof. Estes:

I wanted to dash off a message to thank you and the JAHSSD for your work on the video ***Democracy Under Pressure***. I teach English at Mesa College (contract faculty in my 13th year at Mesa) and I showed the video to two of my English classes. The students in these classes are reading a controversial novel by Bernhard Schlink titled, *The Reader* which is set in pre-war Germany. The video was actually a lucky "find" for me in our Learning Resource Center (I was seeking a recent video with a unique angle to engage the students in the history/circumstances of WWII), and I found it very informative, well produced and moving. Thank you. The video really sparked interest and discussion in both classes and enhanced their growing awareness of the history of the period and the "fragility" of the democratic process.

Thanks again for your work and contributions on the video.

Nancee Kesinger

See WE Get Letters page 14



In the 1960s, the U. S. Job Corps had a training program during which the trainees reinforced the stabilized the adobe brick structures.

The elementary school buildings in Camp II were used by the CRIT Council and the Parker School District for more 40 years. In 1980, a modern school facility replaced the adobe buildings in Camp II.

The Camp III adobe buildings were demolished in the years after the center closed.

In February 2001, the CRIT Council passed a resolution to preserve and restore the remaining adobe brick buildings and to build a model block of black tar-papered barracks.

Plans were to gather as many of the original barracks still in existence in the area and to build a model block.

Despite the setback, project backers in the CRIT Council and former internees still plan to move ahead seeking financing from various state and federal agencies as well as private corporations, foundations and individuals.

Toward this end, **Dennis Patch**, CRIT councilman and education director, and **Jon Villalobos**, director of the Ahakhav Preserve, have been meeting with former Poston I, II and III internees throughout the state to share their proposal and preservation plan.

Patch, Villalobos and **Dr. Ruth Okimoto** of Berkeley made a presentation at the Poston III Reunion June 1-3 in San Diego. Dr. Okimoto is serving as a liaison between CRIT and the former Poston community to disseminate information and

solicit volunteer help for a variety of committees.

The **JAHSSD** is serving as the non-profit collecting agency for Poston artifacts, which will go on display in the Poston restoration project. Donors will be sent letters of acknowledgement for tax deduction purposes.

FROM YUTAKA'S CAMP COOKBOOK

(another meal served in Block 330)
Sept. 24, 1942

Breakfast

Honeydew melon
oatmeal -milk softboiled eggs
crackwheat bread butter coffee

Dinner

Grilled pork chop
lettuce salad
squash potatoes
orange cake bread tea

Orange Cake

8# sugar	4# short
1/3 cup salt	
20 yolks	30 eggs
1 qt. orange juice	1 qt. cold water
5 orang rings	
vanilla	
8# flour	6oz baking powder

Dear Ben and Mich,

While I must apologize for writing so very late, I want to thank again your committee for enabling all of us who attended to have a very enjoyable reunion. You all obviously put in a lot of time and effort and it was evident; and the results were great. Along with all those people who wrote to you earlier, I want to include my appreciation for what you all did.

The booklet was also extra work and the exhibit was extra-extra special in that it enabled all of us visitors to recollect and also see interesting things while also crossing paths with each other. I enjoyed the exhibit and always think it sure is nice to have someone like Don Estes active in your organization.

Again, you people did a great job!

Most sincerely,

Babe Karasawa

P.S. This may be interesting because of the coincidence. I'm a volunteer docent at the Japanese American National Museum. One day, another docent asked me to be at the Museum at a certain time. That docent, a retired school teacher, said her fellow teacher friend is bringing her mother to see our Common Ground exhibit because her mother was a fifth grade teacher in Poston. That's how I met Mrs. Ruth Calhoun to whom I asked Mich to send a reunion notice.

Two days before I met Mrs. Calhoun, I was given some photos owned by Mrs. Kimi (Shimizu) Abe, a former Camp III children's librarian, to donate to our museum. When I looked at the photos four days later, it was amazing because one included Mrs. Calhoun. So I sent the photos to San Diego and Yuki Kawamoto called me two days later to tell me that Mits had a similar photo of her own class and Mrs. Calhoun was in that one also. To complete the connections, it turns out that Mrs. Abe and Mrs. Calhoun were corresponding with each other until 18 years ago. Mrs. Abe knows Misao (Hazama, Block 328) Okino, who is the Museum volunteer who brought the photos to me. Finally, Mrs. Calhoun had a wonderful time. She was very, very happy.

(Editor's Note: And we were very, very happy to have had Mrs. Calhoun and Mrs. Barbara Washler Curry join us at our reunion. We hope they and other former teachers will join us for the 2003 reunion in Las Vegas or wherever Central Cal decides to hold it.)

Caught Doing Something Nice

As a society composed completely of volunteers, we are heavily dependent on the help of our members and friends when it comes to carrying on our mission of preserving the Nikkei story here in San Diego. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following for their invaluable assistance.

We offer our deep thanks to **Tomi Kozuma**, who has presented for our fabric and apparel collection a young girl's kimono, obi and geta that had been given to her by her mother, **Mrs. Sakayo Kawamoto**. Tomi believes that either she or her sister, **Fusa Shimizu**, wore the apparel before World War II. Tomi's daughter, **Gerry Eide**, also wore the garb several times in the 1950s.

We extend our grateful appreciation to **Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Slater** for the donation of two beautiful and historically important paintings of Fish Camp to the society. Our thanks also go to **Elizabeth and Joe Yamada** who facilitated the bequest. Please see the accompanying story in this issue.

A big "thumbs up" to **Joyce Teague**, who alerted the society to a number of historically significant items that went on sale at the **Buddhist Temple of San Diego's Obon Again** sale this summer. Our curator was one of the first in line to purchase some very fine additions to our growing collection.

We would like to recognize and thank **Mrs. Masako Shima** and **Hisae and Bob Batchelder** for their willingness to share the art of **Mr. Akira Shima** in a retrospective exhibit that will be featured at this year's annual meeting. The featured exhibit is curated by **Mr. Shima's son-in-law, Bob Batchelder**.

Once again we are in debt to **Yukio Kawamoto** for designing and hand crafting the frames for this year's **Kansha Awards**. These frames stand as testimony to **Yuki's** well-deserved reputation as a skilled wood craftsman.



Audrey Barry

10016 Campo Road, Spring Valley, CA 91977
Ph: 619-670-9953 Fax: 619-670-3397

Japanese American Historical Society
of San Diego Presents:

**Annual Meeting and Kansha Award Presentation
Exhibit of Artwork by Akira Shima**

Speaker: Ms. Darcie Iki

Japanese American National Museum

Subject: "REgenerating Community: Exploration of the Resettlement Years"

Kansha Awards to:
Agnes Benson, Ben Honda (Posthumously),
Fred Katsumata and K. J. Takashima

Saturday Oct. 20, 2001

San Diego Buddhist Temple
Annex Hall
2929 Market Street

10 am - 1 pm

Our Program is free and open to the public

Obento Lunch \$15 (Must Be Pre-Ordered)

For ticket reservations please complete the form below and return by October 15, 2001. Reservations may be picked up at the door on October 20th.

For program information please call: Jeanne Elyea (619) 690-1151; Yukio Kawamoto (619) 286-8203; Ben Segawa (619) 482-1736.

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Number of Obento @ \$15 each _____ Total amount enclosed _____

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Please make all checks payable to the JAHSSD. Mail to JAHSSD / Obento P.O. Box 620988 San Diego, CA 92162-0988.

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