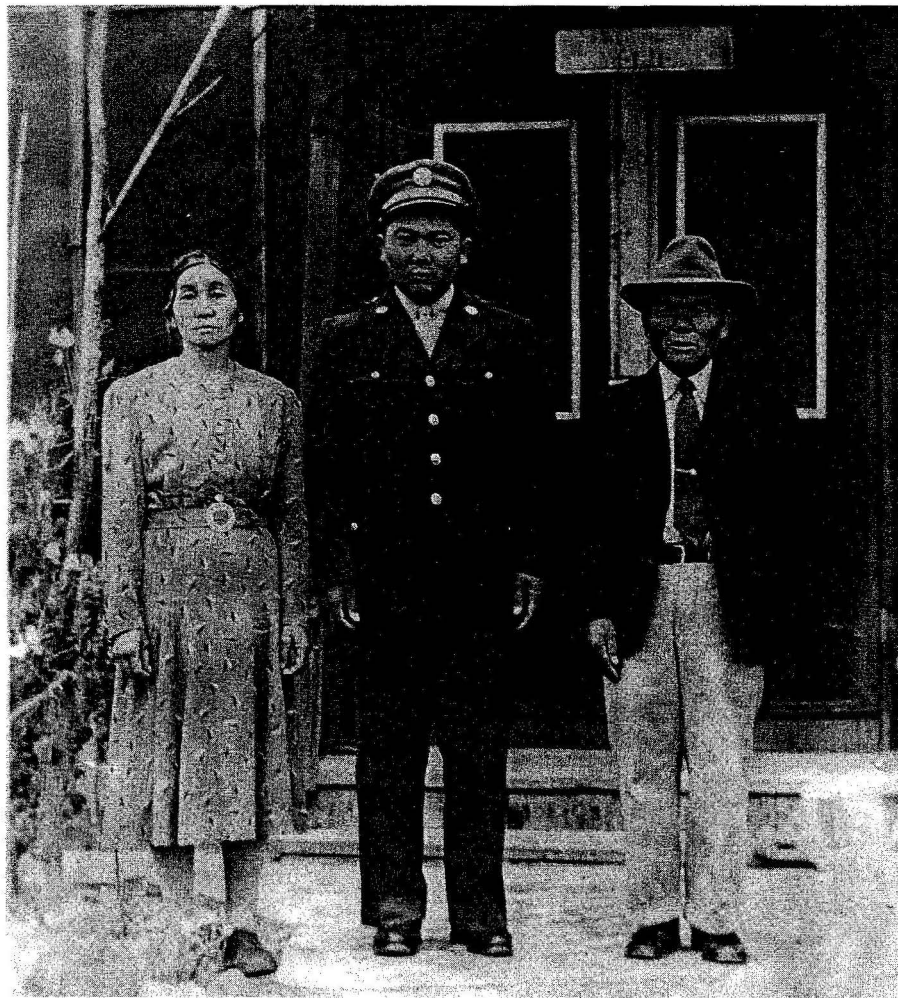


FOOTPRINTS

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

Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego



Young Nisei soldier Frank Torio is flanked by his mother, Suna Torio, and father, Yoshichiro Torio, in front of the Torio Family barracks in Poston Internment Camp

VETS MEMORIAL DEDICATION IS MAY 30

by George Furuya, Veterans Memorial Committee Co-chair

Please mark your calendars for the dedication on Memorial Day, May 30, at Mount Hope Cemetery. After two years of planning, the Japanese American Veterans Memorial Project at Mount Hope Cemetery is moving along on schedule with the dedication set for Memorial Day 2005 at 10:00 a.m..

The unveiling of the memorial is in conjunction with the annual Memorial Day Service presented by the Buddhist Temple of San Diego, the Pioneer Ocean View United Church of Christ, and the San Diego Japanese Christian Church.

The finished black granite monument is currently being inscribed. In the meantime, the Veterans Memorial Committee is working on the details of the dedication program, and putting together a booklet to commemorate this historic event.

Thank you to everyone whose contributions made this dedication day possible.

VOL. 14 NO. 1 SPRING 2005

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DATES TO REMEMBER

- MARCH 13: Buddhist Temple (BTSD) Spring Benefit Luncheon (11:30~1:30), \$12 per bento. 619/239-0896
- MARCH 14~16: Poston Camp III Reunion, Golden Nugget Hotel, Las Vegas
- MARCH 18: Asian Story Theater presents "Return of the Monkey King" (7 pm), Sherwood Auditorium, \$8-\$14
- MARCH 18: JAHSSD Board Meeting (6:30 pm), BTSD Sangha Hall
- MARCH 19: "Living in the Dharma," lecture by Socho Koshin Ogui, Buddhist Churches of America (7 pm), BTSD. Free and public welcome. 619/239-0896
- MARCH 20: Pioneer Ocean View United Church of Christ (POVUCC) Palm Sunday and New Member Reception (10 am)
- MARCH 20: BTSD Ohigan Service (10 am), ABA Chow Mein Luncheon (12 noon), \$5. Eat in or take out.
- MARCH 26: JAPAN FIESTA: S.D. Riptide vs. All-Japan Samurai Warriors (4 pm Japanese Cultural Gala, 7 pm kick-off), Sports Arena, \$10. 619/239-0896
- MARCH 27: POVUCC Easter Breakfast (8:30~9:30); Family Easter Sunday worship (10 am); Kids' Easter Egg Hunt after service
- APRIL 3: Vista Buddhist Temple (VBT) Service with guest Venerable Dr. Karma Lekshe Tsomo (10:00 am), Welcome Luncheon (11:30 am). 760/941-8800
- APRIL 10: BTSD Hanamatsuri Service (10 am)
- APRIL 10: MS Walk, Embarcadero Marina Park
- APRIL 12~14: Meiji Era Photo Exhibit and Japanese cultural events, Southwestern College. JAHSSD will participate; details TBA at www.jahssd.org.
- APRIL 16: JAHSSD Board Meeting (8:15 am), BTSD
- APRIL 24: BTSD 4th Sunday Intro to Buddhism Class (9 am), Sangha Hall. Free
- APRIL 23: PAAM Conference (Pacific Islander Asian American Ministries), POVUCC
- APRIL 23~24: VBT Hanamatsuri Bazaar (12~6 pm), 150-B Cedar Rd., Vista. 760/941-8800
- MAY 15: BTSD Gotan-e Service (10 am)
- MAY 15: *Footprints* Summer Issue submissions deadline
- MAY 21: JAHSSD Board Mtg. (8:15 am), BTSD Sangha Hall
- MAY 22: Film *Unlikely Hero* (2 pm), S.D. Central Library. Free
- MAY 28: Imperial Valley Memorial Service
- MAY 30: Cypress View Memorial Service (8:30 am), Tri-Church Mt. Hope Memorial Service (10 am), Rosecrans Memorial Service (TBA). Please confirm times with your church.
- MAY 30: Japanese-American Veterans Memorial dedication, Mt. Hope Cemetery, 10 am. Check www.jahssd.org.
- JUNE 5: Japanese Cultural Bazaar (11 am~5 pm), BTSD. Free. 619/239-0896

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

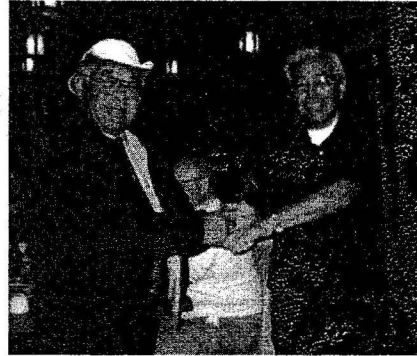
by Mich Himaka

Akemashite, omedeto gozaimasu!

Here's wishing one and all a happy, healthy, prosperous and lucky 2005, The Year of the Rooster!

Okay, so I'm three months late with this greeting. *Excuse me!*

This is the first of my four messages to the general membership and I can only tell – not promise – you that I will do my best imitation of our past president, Vernon Yoshioka, who led us admirably for the recent past two years.



Outgoing JAHSSD prez Vernon Yoshioka hands the gavel to incoming prez Mich Himaka at the annual holiday dinner at the Peking Cafe, December 2004

Under Vernon's able leadership, we accomplished a lot. Those things that stand out include the very successful fund drive to build a monument honoring the Nikkei veterans of all wars and non-Nikkei spouses of our extended community. We will dedicate the monument on Memorial Day 2005 in conjunction with the annual Community Interfaith Service at 10 a.m., Monday, May 30, in the old Japanese section of Mount Hope Cemetery.

Another accomplishment during Vernon's tenure included the successful showing of *Farewell to Manzanar*, the made-for-TV movie telling the story of the Wakatsuki family as seen through the eyes of a young Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and based on her best-selling book of the same name.

I say it was an accomplishment because we were able to get the word out about the showing, arrange for the screening at the Educational Cultural Complex, send out fliers advertising it, and arrange for fancy snack food to serve the attendees, all in less than a month's time—and we were still able to attract about 200 members and friends.

And finally, under Vernon's leadership, we got started on a search ultimately for a home for the JAHSSD. Our own home! Is that really a possibility? We hope so. I know we will need plenty of help and it won't be done in a year or two.

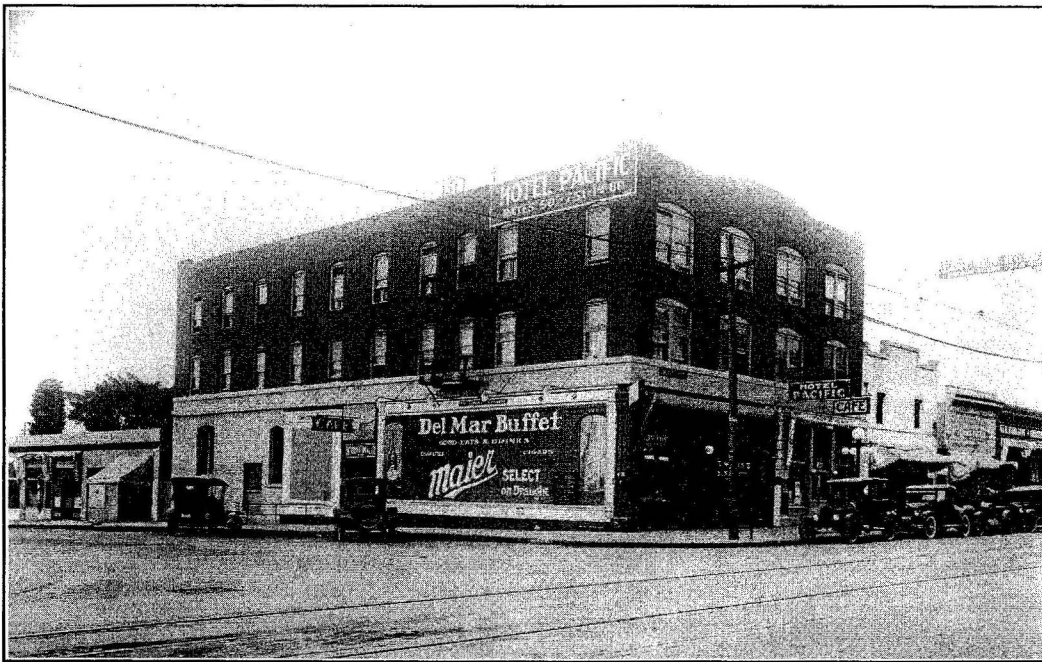
However, thanks to the likes of the search committee chairman, Robert Ito, and his group of high-powered individuals, the search for such a site it on!

How serious are we to get this accomplished? Robert has recruited the likes of Sumi Kastelic, Joe and Liz Yamada, Moto Asakawa, Linda Canada, Mike Inouye, Loni (Takahashi) Schuder and Ben Segawa to serve with him.

If there are any other volunteers with connections to people with clout who wish to help us get this project going, please contact Robert or any board members.

So as we close the Vernon Yoshioka era, I want to thank him and his wife, Shinobu, without whose blessing he couldn't serve, for all that we were able to accomplish. We are also thankful that he will continue to serve with us on the Board and look forward to even more help in the future.

Talk to you again in three months.



Tsumagari's Pacific Hotel was located at Fifth and Island Avenues. Great photo, but how do we date it?

A MOMENT IN TIME: Classic Photos from the JAHSSD Archives

by Don Estes

In the last five years, there has been an upsurge of interest in protecting the core Japanese urban districts that flourished along the West Coast of the United States prior to, and in some cases, after World War II. San Diego, like many cities with a substantial Issei population, had its "Japantown," too.

When they were being interviewed in the early 1970s about early San Diego, many Issei described the "heart" of the Nikkei community as being the northwest corner of Fifth and Island Avenues. To be more specific, they always mentioned the front of the **Pacific Hotel**.

The prominence of the Pacific Hotel was one of several reasons we were excited by the recent gift of **Mrs. Tsuneko Hironaka Koyama** of Midlothian, Illinois, which included an original 8"x10" photograph of the hotel. Tsuneko's donation represents the earliest view of the hotel in our collection.

Whenever we receive a historic photograph, particularly when it shows buildings, it comes to us with varying degrees of mystery. Sometimes we get lucky and valuable information identifying the photograph is included, oftentimes written on the back of the photograph.

In this particular case, Tsuneko included the names four Nikkei businesses shown in the photograph, including the name **Takeji Tsumagari**, the proprietor of the hotel.

On the left side of the photograph showing part of the North side of Island Avenue is the barbershop run by her mother, **Ichii Hironaka** at 414 Island. Next to the barbershop at 416 is the **Sekishima-do** bookstore and drug store run by her stepfather **Dr. Gizo Kitabatake**. Around the corner on Fifth Avenue, two buildings north of the hotel is the billiard parlor of **Sutematsu Iwata** and next door to him is the grocery of **Den-ichi Kawasaki**. **Dr. Isamu Takeda**, the community's first Nikkei dentist, and his wife, **Fukuko**, occupy the hotel's second floor corner room.

Thus with Tsuneko's assistance, we already knew quite a bit about the photograph. The addresses and first names came from Japanese *Nenkan* (directories), city directories, and the record of the 1930 census.

Dating the photo was another matter. Here the photo provided some help: the autos parked on the street. With the assistance of **Larry Oaky** of the **San Diego Automotive Museum** in Balboa Park, we determined that the second car from the corner, in front of the hotel, is a Hudson that was produced between 1924 and 1927.

The quality of the photograph was also such that with the help of a magnifying glass, we could make out the license plates of four of the cars. The plates showed three numbers, a space followed by three numbers, with the word "California" written along the left side of the plate. When we compared the plates on the cars with the collection of California plates in the Automotive Museum, we discovered California used that format only for the years 1924 and 1926.

While looking at the photo with his magnifying glass, Larry pointed out something we had missed: a small black sign on the second floor just above the "Hotel Pacific" sign hanging over the sidewalk. With an eight-power photo loop, the sign can be read as "San Diego Trading Company." Using Japanese *Nenkan*, we discovered that the **San Diego Trading Company** was in fact a real estate office run by **Josuke Sakamoto**, an Issei pioneer and the first licensed Nikkei realtor in San Diego. Sakamoto opened his office in the hotel in 1925 and moved the office in 1927. Given this last piece of information, we're fairly confident the date of the photograph is 1926.

The only people in the photograph are two sailors looking into Iwata's pool hall.

If we can leave our readers with one message, it is certainly to identify your photographs for the future. You may have a wonderful memory for names, dates and places, but that may not be much help to your grandchildren, or future historians for that matter.

JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES: The Akiji Watanabe Story, Part IX

by Fran Watanabe

We continue the story of pioneer San Diego Issei Akiji Watanabe, researched and written by his daughter, Frances Watanabe Wada of Seattle. We thank Fran for her permission to reproduce her father's story for our readers.

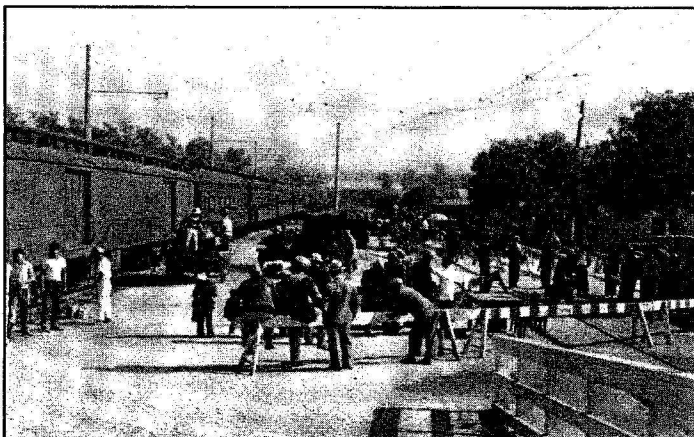
The Smell of Horses

Our first "home" in Santa Anita was in a former horse stable. The address was Avenue P, Barrack 38, Unit 3. It consisted of two "rooms" separated by a half-door—an outer space, where the feed for the horse, saddles, stirrups, brushes and other paraphernalia were no doubt stored; and an inner area, where the horse was kept. The inner room became our bedroom.

Each family was given canvas bags which were stuffed with straw. These were our mattresses, and canvas-folding cots were our beds. I recall how over a brief time the metal legs of the cots left deep depressions in the rough asphalt flooring. It was dark, crowded and

JOURNEY TO THE U.S. continued from previous page

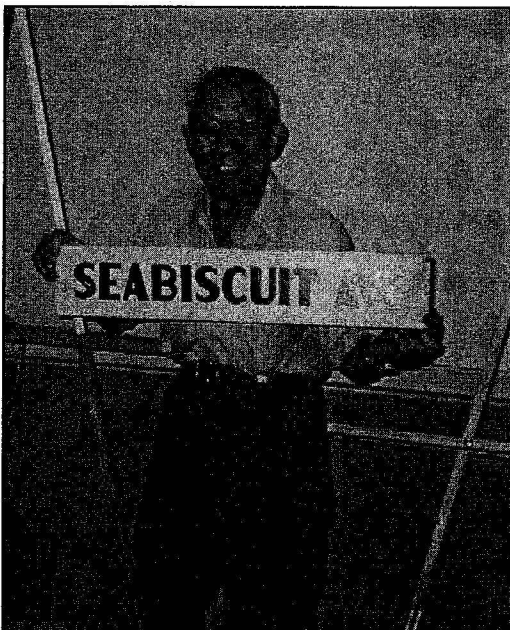
depressing inside the stable, lit only by a single dangling light bulb. And no matter how much disinfectant and gallons of paint they used prior to our arrival, the horse stable was still a horse stable.



The train carrying the Watanabe family pulls into Santa Anita

No one was idle in Santa Anita. We young ones attended school held on one side of the grandstand while on the other side large camouflage nets were being prepared by the older Nisei as part of the war effort. Cooks prepared meals under the grandstand. We picked up our meals on metal trays at the parimutuel ticket windows and ate at large tables set up where those betting on the horses would have been checking out the odds on the races.

My father got a job as a mailman and used the position to press for better housing conditions for us. He succeeded in obtaining quarters in a wooden tarpaper covered barracks located near the grandstand: Avenue 4, Barracks 24, Unit 8. For some reason I recall the "street" in front of our barracks being named "Seabiscuit Avenue," for the famous racehorse. I was very grateful to my father for "pulling a few strings" to get us away from the lingering smell of horse manure.



At the last Poston Reunion held in San Diego, Arnold Watanabe presented JAHSSD with the street sign he rescued outside his family's horse stall residence at Santa Anita

Hearings for the various detainees taken into custody by the FBI were going on while we were getting settled in our respective centers. My mother was held in San Pedro, outside of Los Angeles. Letters and postcards kept us in touch with each other during this time. At long last on April 22, she had a hearing at which several witnesses, including her

former Marine students, testified on her behalf. On July 16, 1942, she was finally released and rejoined the family in Santa Anita.

Unfortunately, many of the Issei males detained by the FBI were not released but were instead sent to prisoner-of-war camps such as those in New Mexico, Louisiana and Texas, as well as other locations housing German and Italian POWs. They had to experience the humiliation of mail censorship and close scrutiny by the military; yet they were not captured enemy soldiers but rather bonafide legal residents of the United States. Many of these men were not able to rejoin their families until the end of the war. And sadly, some never did, as they passed away in these prisoner of war camps.

Next Installment:

**Welcome to the Arizona Desert...
and Barbed-Wire Fences**

JAHSSD HOME SITE COMMITTEE FORMED

Following his talk at the annual meeting late last year, a facilities development committee chaired by **Robert Ito** was formed to assist the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego with developing a plan for "finding a home." Now referred to as the **HOME Committee**, the group currently consists of **Linda Canada, Sumi Kastelic, Ben Segawa, and Elizabeth Yamada**. **Mike Inoue** and serves as an advisor to the Committee.

The JAHSSD Board's charge to the HOME Committee is to identify and prioritize programs, functions, and activities; determine space requirements; explore collaborations; develop criteria for such a facility; and prepare cost-benefit analyses.

Three meetings have been held thus far, with members assigned to gather information or make site visits between meetings. For example, Liz Yamada has been checking out Japanese American historical societies or museums in San Jose and San Francisco; Robert Ito and Linda Canada have visited and interviewed staff at both the Pioneer Museum in El Centro and the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles; and Sumi Kastelic has been evaluating the space requirements of the current collection, and drafting suggestions for organizational and scheduling elements of the proposed plans.

Through a series of short surveys completed by board members, the HOME Committee is gathering input to determine the type of programs and exhibitions that JAHSSD might undertake in the future. These surveys will help the Committee make recommendations as to the type of museum facility that will be needed.

At the present time, the HOME Committee is viewing the process of finding a new home as a three-step endeavor. The first is to properly house the collections in secure storage. The next step will be making a recommendation for interim space that might be used for programs, exhibitions, and office. The third step will be to assess the feasibility of a permanent museum.

The HOME Committee will be making its first recommendation to the JAHSSD Board at their February 19 meeting: that a secure and temperature-controlled storage facility be obtained which will enable materials collected to this point to be organized and evaluated, and most importantly, kept in a single location.

JAHSSD Members and friends interested in assisting the Committee's efforts are invited to contact Robert at (858) 560-5205 Ext. 101, or rpito@itogirard.com.

Updates on the status of the Committee's work will be provided in each issue of *Footprints*.

IN MEMORIAM

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

AKIKO KOHLER ~ November 18, 2004

SUEO TANABE ~ December 2, 2004

KENNETH HIDESHI TACHIKI ~

December 4, 2004

KAZUYO MCCLELLAN ~ December 10, 2004

GENZO SEKI ~ December 12, 2004

KIYOSHI NAKAMURA ~ December 29, 2004

DON DAIJIRO KONISHI ~ January 4, 2005

SHERRY SHIMONO STANLEY ~

January 20, 2005

YOSHIKO YAMAMOTO WHEELER ~

January 22, 2005

SACHIKO LEWIS ~ January 30, 2005

KURT SHIGERU YAMAUCHI ~

January 30, 2005

SUMIKO TSUBAKIHARA ~ January 31, 2005

MASAMI HONDA ~ February 8, 2005

JEANETTE M. MORIOKA ~ February 18, 2005

ALICE AIHARA DOMINICI ~ February 18, 2005

SHIZUKO O. BENBOW ~ February 18, 2005

FREDERICK MASAMI FUKUSHIMA ~

February 27, 2005

MISAO KAWASAKI ~ March 5, 2005

CHANKO-NABE

by Joyce Nabeta Teague

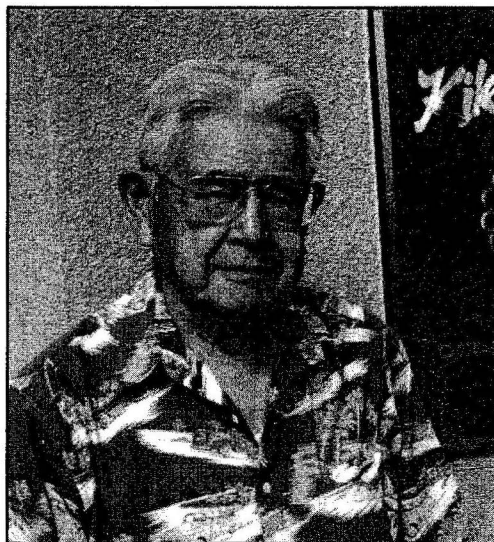
Quiet Dedication

Early last February, Ralph Honda sent out an e-mail notice to Buddhist Temple Sangha members that his uncle, Masami Honda, had passed away at Kiku Gardens at age 87. Though I had known Masami for only a fraction of his long life, the news filled me with great sadness.

After Masami's memorial service, I wrote to his children, Amy, Meg and Stanley, that if it hadn't been for my involvement in the RE-generations Oral History Project, coordinated by the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in the late 1990s, their father might have remained a name from the temple's membership roll, or run across now and again in lists out of the temple's past – former board presidents, chairman of this or that event, and so on. But it was my great fortune to be asked to interview Mas in 1997 about his post-World War II resettlement experience for the JANM project. I became a humble admirer of this soft-spoken, self-effacing, and good-humored man.

Masami was a combination of quiet intelligence, charm, confidence, and common sense. He had a genuine concern for others. He had an easy-going manner. He enjoyed a good laugh. And he was a dedicated worker. But what most impressed me was that he seemed to have a sense of purpose every day, and he truly enjoyed what he did.

Mas said more than once that he felt he got the equivalent of a college degree by learning how to deal with people and difficult situations as a young man interned at Poston, assisting in legal matters there, and coordinating camp-wide and inter-camp youth activities. He learned through keen observation, by assuming responsibility, and by just rolling up his sleeves and *doing*. This positive attitude always served him well, but particularly right after the war when he was asked to use his legal experience to help the Buddhist Temple regain the temple property from the government agency leasing it so that it could be converted to temple use again. In this and in all his tasks, he was patient but determined till the goal was accomplished.



Masami Honda in front of Kiku Gardens where he dedicated much of his time during the last 22 years of his life. The photo was taken by the author in 2002, the year he was given the Kansha Award for lifetime community service.

It seemed to me in the brief time I knew him, Mas was a person for whom casual commitment was not an option. In 1983, a few years after the death of his beloved wife, Ruth, he moved into Kiku Gardens as a charter resident and volunteer. Life there was so involving and challenging, he soon focused his time and attention on the residents and their lives there, becoming Assistant Manager and eventually Manager.

Legacy of a People Person

A few weeks ago, I received a call from Meg Honda, Masami's youngest daughter, who resides in Los Angeles. She and her siblings had decided to donate to the Buddhist Temple letters and legal documents they had found related to his involvement with the temple, particularly during those years when the Issei elders were incarcerated and young Masami became the legal representative of the temple board. Included in this generous gift are copies of insurance papers listing the temple and personal items which were lost during the 1943 arson. These alone should make for fascinating reading.

Amy, Meg and Stan also gave to JAHSSD five boxes of materials related to their father's involvement with Poston Camp, the JACL, the San Diego Gardeners Association and Kiku Gardens. At this writing, we've not yet had time to look closely at what is included in the gift. But doubtless there will be information useful in bringing us closer to the people, circumstances, time, and events of the past that are continually fading further from our view.

Too often when much time has passed, "history" comes to us as an undated black and white photograph or mysterious notations on a yellowed sheet. We try to piece together their meaning with the glue of faltering memories or hearsay. The more "puzzle pieces" there are at hand, perhaps the easier the job of reconstructing what happened, who was involved, and why. It's strange how history works – that by looking back, we can have a better understanding of ourselves today.

So we are grateful to Masami's children for deciding to share these

CHANKO-NABE cont. from Page 6

important materials with both the temple and JAHSSD. Over time, we hope to bring to the pages of our newsletter stories about Masami and his place in local Nikkei history. Eventually, with assessment and cataloguing, these materials and others given to the Society for the sake of posterity will be made accessible to researchers and historians who are trained to make sense of them.

But for me, on a personal level, Masami's true essence does not need the evidence of artifacts, no matter how important to our history. He was a man to be appreciated for how he treated people. His generosity of time and spirit made a difference in the lives of those who knew him. I count it a privilege to have been one of them. His legacy lives in our hearts. My deepest gratitude.

All of the REgenerations transcripts, including Masami Honda's, can be viewed online in their entirety by going to: <http://texts.cdlib.org/dynaxml/servlet/dynaXML?docId=ft0n39n5t5>. Click on Oral Histories.

CREPE MYRTLE FOR A FRIEND

by Rio Imamura

The crepe myrtle is a summertime beauty. It's a bare tree in the winter and slow to blossom in the spring. But its colorful flowers stay on the tree a very long time.

The Japanese named the tree *sarusuberi*, a tree whereby even a monkey slips and falls because the bark is thin and peels easily. Kaga Chiyo (1703-1775), a famous Haiku poetess from the Edo Period, sang,

Bloom and fall over and over

Sarusuberi flowers

Last for the entire summer

Crepe myrtle in Spanish is the scientific name *largestraemia*, honoring a Swedish merchant/botanist. I read that crepe myrtle gets its name from the crinkly look of crepe paper. The color of the blossoms varies from red to pink to white.

I have a special bond with crepe myrtle. Before returning to Japan in 1994 after 20 years in the U.S., I bought a crepe myrtle and donated it to the Japanese Friendship Garden in Balboa Park. I dedicated it to the memory of Yukichi Ikeda, a Japanese expatriate. Here's the story.

Wives of Japanese expatriates join their husbands in the U.S. three or four months after the expatriate first arrives. The expatriate wants to first get accustomed to his new work site and secure housing for his family.

Yukichi Ikeda and I were in the same foursome at an intercompany golf tournament at the Admiral Baker Golf Course in Mission Gorge. Yukichi was about 30 years old, honest, handsome, likable, hard-working, and a good golfer. His golf that day was excellent, possibly because he was to pick up his wife, Miyoko, at the airport after the tournament.

A few days after the tournament, Yukichi left work earlier than the rest of us, saying he was taking his wife to a fine restaurant for dinner. We cheered him; he blushed, then quickly left.

That afternoon, I went for my daily swim before going home when I was paged over the intercom. My wife was in a panic. She said that Yukichi had been shot and taken to the hospital in Point Loma. I dressed quickly, then sped off to the hospital, praying all the way for him.

Upon my arrival, I learned Yukichi was breathing, but in a coma. Miyoko was there, obviously in shock, pale and all tears.

Apparently when the couple had left their car and headed toward the restaurant from the parking lot, two men blocked their way and demanded money. They went to snatch Miyoko's handbag and Yukichi faced the robbers to protect her. A shot was fired and he fell to the



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Deborah Sato

ground. The Japanese money Miyoko carried was intact in her purse. The robbers fled empty-handed after shooting Ikeda. An unfortunate confrontation; a very cruel crime!

The police interrogated Miyoko for a description of the robbers, but she was unable to give any information. It was a moonless night and very dark.

Yukichi never regained consciousness. Upon the arrival of his family, he was taken off life support. Ikeda's father informed us that Yukichi had contracted for lifelong employment in San Diego.

A collection was taken for Miyoko but she refused it. We reserved the \$1500 to do something in his memory.

Since I served on the Board for the Balboa Park Japanese Garden, I knew the Garden would accept a horticultural donation once the garden was built. I chose a crepe myrtle because it bears beautiful long-lasting summertime flowers which attract visitors.

I have since learned that Miyoko remarried and is living a happy life.

\$1500 was for the tree only. No labor was charged by the local Japanese gardeners who generously volunteered their services. My belated THANK YOU for their fine gesture.

IN GRATITUDE

The membership and the Board of the JAHSSD gratefully acknowledge the following monetary donations to the JAHSSD since our last newsletter. If we have inadvertently omitted your gift, please accept our sincere apologies and notify treasurer Bob Batchelder at (619) 421-6330 for correction.

JEANNE KASHIMA and FAMILY
in memory of Tets Kashima

Mr. ROBERT ITO

ANONYMOUS

DON and CAROL ESTES
in memory of Michael Kawamoto

DON and CAROL ESTES
in memory Masami Honda

BILL and JOYCE TEAGUE
in memory of Masami Honda

MAZEGOHAN

by Mich Himaka

Here I am again. Don't know what to write about but making another stab at it.

Before I forget, I want to remind everyone that on Memorial Day, May 30, 2005, at 10:00 a.m., the much anticipated unveiling and dedication of the Japanese American Veterans Memorial Monument will be held as part of this year's Community Memorial Day Service at the old Japanese section of Mount Hope Cemetery.

We hope the monument will be something the entire community can be proud of and we thank everyone who contributed to the fund.

Jumping ahead to something else, the JAHSSD Board in January met three elders from the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) at the home of Susan Hasegawa and Bruce Sherman. Visiting us were Louise Patch, Gertrude Van Fleet and Ron Moore. (I know Mr. Moore from a previous visit with the CRIT council members a few years ago.) Louise and Gertrude are octogenarian Mohave tribespersons, while Ron is a member of the Hopi tribe.

Also visiting with us were their young escorts, Germain Patch, Johnson (J. D.) Patch, Robyn Patch, and Jay Cravath of the CRIT Education Department, who arranged the visit for us. Germain and Johnson are Louise's grandsons and Robyn is the niece of Dennis Patch, who has been heavily involved in the Poston Restoration Project with our organization and others.

The visit was an icebreaker for us to meet some of the tribal elders as we prepare to move ahead with a joint effort to proceed with the Poston Restoration Project. The CRIT tribal council has approved the project and joined with us to make this project a reality. The Nikkei community effort is led by Dr. Ruth Okimoto, a former San Diegan whose father, Rev. Tameichi Okimoto, was pastor from 1937-46 at what formerly was known as the Japanese Holiness Church, now known as the Japanese Christian Church.



CRIT elders (left to right): Ron Moore, Gertrude Van Fleet, Louise Patch

The three elders were interviewed for about an hour on video by Don Estes and Susan Hasegawa. They then fielded some questions from the rest of us. It was an emotional meeting for many of us as Louise, in her heartfelt remarks at the end of the meeting, compared our plight as a community during WWII to that of the tribal people for many years before.

For this issue, we asked veterans to talk about their experiences in the military. Guys are always reluctant to speak about their experiences because much of what they witnessed is not pleasant. Not everything is as John Wayne or Tom Hanks portrayed in their movies. That is not to say that what they portrayed is not accurate. What I mean is war, of course, is not rehearsed.

War happens. Injuries occur. People die. Men, women and children. They lose limbs. They hurt. They cry. Yes. Guys cry. They cry for their moms and dads. They're no different from anyone else. It's lonely out there on the battlefield, even with hundreds of their fellow soldiers alongside them. It's a lonely place out there.

But that's not to say humorous things don't happen to military men.

For instance, start with the physical exams every guy goes through. Imagine hundreds of guys lined up wearing only their undershorts.

A doctor sits on a stool behind a guy about butt-high in front of him: "Bend over and spread your cheeks."

Dutifully, the guy (who is facing away from the doctor) bends over, puts two fingers in his mouth and "spreads his cheeks" as the doctor ordered. Of course, the doctor is snickering as are any number of guys lined up next to the guy.

Or, say you're out marching in formation and you continuously are out of step. The drill sergeant halts the troops and approaches you, stomps on your left foot making it throb like nothing you have felt before and tells you: "The foot that is sore is your LEFT foot!"

(Of course, that never happened to me! It was usually my RIGHT foot he stomped on!)

Remember "Gomer Pyle?" He's the television Marine who always screwed up but somehow still managed to graduate from boot camp. I think every military outfit had a "Gomer Pyle, Total Screw Up." Usually, those guys—the really BAD screw ups—wound up getting kicked out.

On the other hand, those guys probably were laughing at the rest of us who stayed behind. Think they knew something we didn't know??

And then there was the guy who, more than anything, wanted to wear the wings that flight crewmembers got to wear after recording so many hours of flight time. He went up on his first flight and threw up all over the crew's cockpit. He did it the second, third and fourth time, too, so they never let him get on an airplane again. Still, he wore a pair of wings on his uniform when he went into town, which was beautiful Lake Charles, Louisiana, where we were stationed. We all knew he didn't earn those wings, but we never let on to the girls he tried to woo.

And who can ever forget those ditties we recited while marching to our classes? "I don't know but we've been told..."

Or my favorite one which we sung to the "Col. Bogey March" featured in the movie, *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. It went: "Horsexxxx, it makes the grass grow green!" (Think about it.)

And then there was the "chain letter" thing that Jim Yanagihara, Jimmy Kido and I had occur to us once. I believe it was Jim Yanagihara (who was in the Army) who wrote to Jimmy (who was in the Navy) and me (I was in the Air Force) when he got the measles. Before you knew it, Jimmy Kido got the measles. Shortly after that, I got the measles. So there we were, the three of us laid up in different hospitals with the seven-day measles.

And there was the story we still laugh about. It happened to Jimmy Kido, who was stationed aboard the destroyer, *John W. Thomason* (DD-760). He told us how his ship took a hit while off the Korean coast. Jimmy said that incident literally "scared the crap" out of him. Fortunately, he was sitting on the pot at the time.

True. Military life wasn't all work and no play for some of us. It wasn't fun but there were moments that were funny. For all who served, it was duty. Everyone pulled it.

But to those of you who saw combat, we salute you. You deserve all the recognition we can give you. We salute those of you who didn't see combat, too. This monument is for you, you, and you. All of you who served in WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Desert Storm, Iraq, and the peacetime military.

Thank you, thank you all very much.

VIETNAM 69-70

by Gary Himaka

I was only "in country," as the expression goes, a month when I saw my first combat action.

On my first patrol, I was trying to get used to the heat and humidity when we finally stopped to take a needed break. I was so dog-tired that I remember thinking, "I don't care what happens. I just want to sit down." Then I collapsed under a tree to rest against my 80-pound backpack. I took off my helmet. Then someone yelled, "Get down!"

A lone Viet Cong at a bunker complex fired upon us, I was told later on. He must have been on guard while others nearby were cleaning up or moving out when our point man came upon the him sitting atop a bunker. He must have been just as startled as our point man. Once the VC realized who it was, he sprayed the area with his machine gun and tried to run. Our point man fired back and shot and killed the lone gunman.

All that was happening up front. Further back in the line, all the rest of us heard was gunfire. When I rolled over to take cover, I didn't quite know what was happening. (Six months later, one of my friends told me that there were three bullet holes in the tree a few inches above my head that day and I hadn't even been aware of them.)

A few weeks after that initial encounter, my company was back from a six-week stay in the field. We came into a forward base camp for a week stand-down, showers, hot food and change of clothes. We also would restock on supplies and ammunition.

On our last night in the bunkers, a large force attacked us. Our bunker became the focal point of the attack. Our position was overrun and we were trapped in the bunker. Then one of the enemy tossed in a hand grenade. We couldn't get out. The grenade exploded and I was wounded in the legs.

I made my way out of the bunker, without my glasses or weapon. I made my way down the bunker wall to the next position. I came across my buddy from Fawn Skin, California, near Big Bear.

Further down, I came upon one of the command bunkers. There, I ran a couple of trips to the ammo dump to bring back ammunition to those on the wall who had their weapons. The medic, who was with me taking back the ammo, then noticed I was bleeding.

While the medic was tending to my wounds, our Executive Officer came up behind me and started asking if I was a "Choi Hoi," an enemy who had surrendered himself. Both the medic and I told him, in no uncertain terms, that I was one of his troopers.

The enemy had made it inside the wire (base walls) and was running amuck. The rest of the Company mounted a counter attack and drove them out of the base. It took some assistance from air support and attack helicopters, but eventually the enemy was driven out of the base camp. By morning, the fighting had stopped and the injured were being evacuated.

These were not the last of my encounters. My tour of duty lasted for fourteen long months. Not only did I have to deal with the stress of the daily uncertainty, but I also had the extra burden of looking like the enemy.

I came out of the experience with a different perspective on life. I came to realize what was important. I became a different person.

(Editor's Note: Gary Kazuo Himaka is married to the former Karen Sugiyama. They have two sons, Todd and Garrett, and they live in National City. Gary is the eldest of four children born to Osao and Setsuko Himaka. He was drafted into the Army in October 1968 and served until June 1970. He went in at the same time as two other San

Diegans, Alan Tomiyama and Dennis Otsuji. Overseas, he ran into Stephen Arata and Al Endo in the Tay Ninh Province near the Cambodian border. While in the hospital recovering from malaria, Gary had the bed next to the nephew of his former barber, Lloyd Ito of Pablo and Lloyd's Barber Shop down the hill from where he grew up. Gary was up for promotion from E-4 to E-5, but accepting it meant that he would have to wait around until after the initial push into Cambodia. He turned it down because his flight home was leaving that week. When he arrived in Oakland, he was processed out and discharged. However, he missed his flight home, so he spent his first night as a new civilian sleeping in the USO at the Oakland Airport.

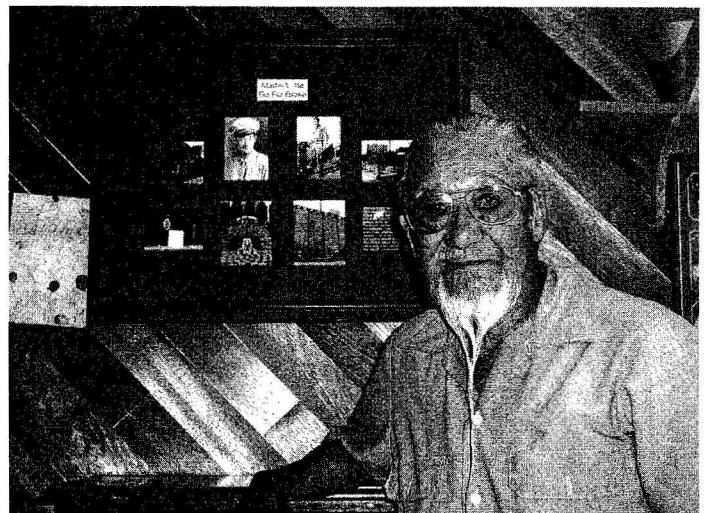
(Gary failed to tell me the commendations he received while in the Army but Karen didn't. Karen proudly revealed that her husband earned a Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Air Medal, Army Commendation, National Defense Medal, Vietnam Service Ribbon with four stars for each of four major battles engaged in and a Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. And yes, your Editor also is very proud of his nephew for all the commendations he earned while serving his country. I hope that Gary's writing of his experiences proves, in some way, therapeutic for him. And we are all glad he returned home safely. ~M.H.)

A PROUD VET: LLOYD ITO



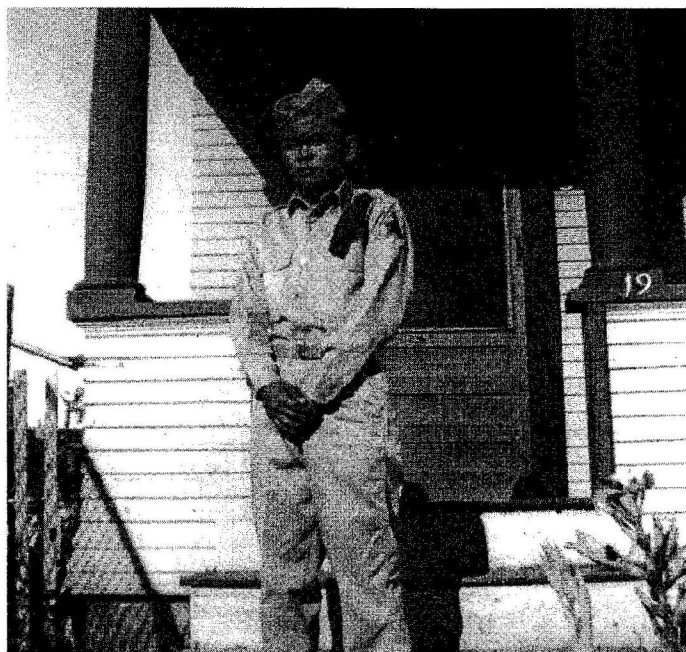
Left: Martin Lloyd Ito joined the Army at age 21 out of Poston Internment Camp and eventually became part of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, serving as a radio operator. He was discharged in 1946

Below: Lloyd Ito in his home last year, next to photos of his service days. He was being interviewed by Yu-Yu Magazine about his combat experiences. Photo courtesy of Terry Nicholas

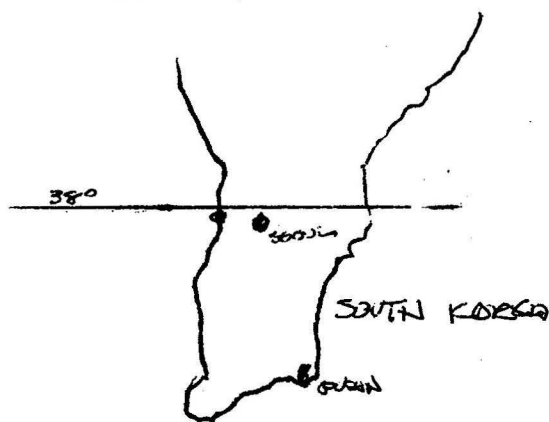


KOREA: A DIARY IN PHOTOGRAPHS

Native San Diegan and JAHSSD Board member Jim "Gopher" Yanagihara joined the Army at age 19 on Valentines Day, February 14, 1951. After boot camp, he trained as a medic in Osaka, Japan. In early September 1951, his company was sent to Pusan, Korea. He served in Korea through May 9, 1952, when he was rotated home. Rev. Jim, as he is now known, was discharged from the Army from Letterman Army Hospital in February 1954. The photos on these pages document some of his activities during the Korean conflict and the conditions under which he worked. We thank him for sharing these photos from his scrapbook.



Jim Yanagihara, age 19, in front of the Yanagihara home on 19th Street



Rev. Jim's drawing showing the 38th Degree Parallel dividing North from South Korea. Dates and location of his service while stationed in Korea:

September 3-5, 1951: Landed in PUSAN

Sept. 6, 7, 1951: YONG DONG PO

Sept. 24-Oct. 5, 1951: SEOUL (Bloody Ridge)

Oct. 6, 1951-Feb. 24, 1952: YANGU (Heartbreak Ridge)

March 30, 1952: TAEGU (Left for R&R in Japan)

Jan. 4-8, 1952: KYOPYUNG (Corps Reserve)

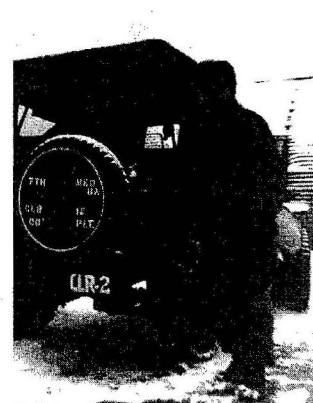
Feb. 25-March 20, 1952: INJI PASS

Feb. 28, 1952: WONJU

April 3-May 9: Rotated home



Heartbreak Ridge, Nov. 1951



Heartbreak Ridge, Dec. 1951

Below: Evacuation of casualties, Nov. 1951



Below: "Some medic-digging ditches," March 1952



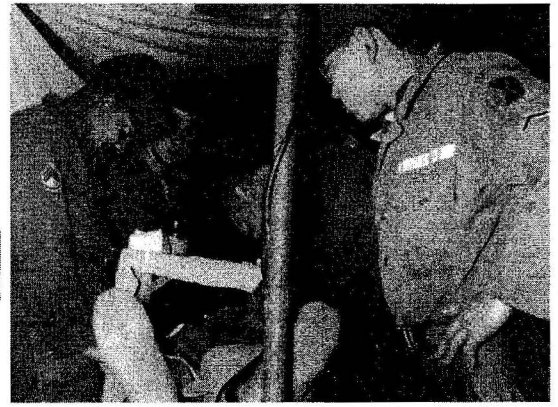
KOREA: A DIARY IN PHOTOGRAPHS (cont.)



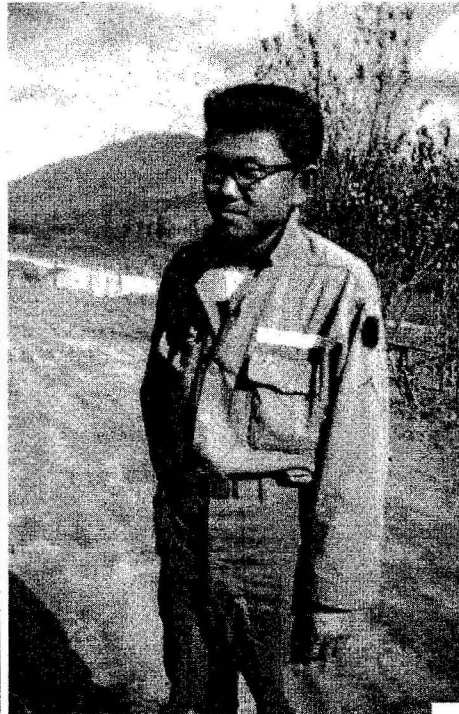
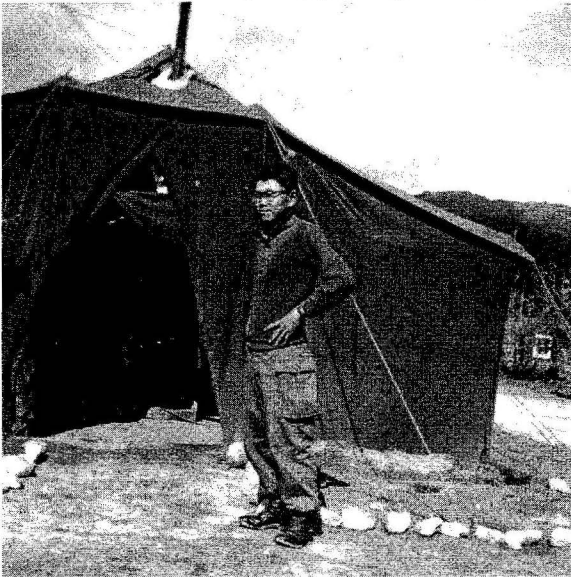
With Shig "Rick" Oyama (right), Yangu



With SPC Rodney Wienrick (left), Heartbreak Ridge, Dec. 1951



Team removing shrapnel from an injured soldier



Left center: Sporting a different look than when he left home!

Below: "Just got through taking a bath," Kyopyung, Korea



Upper left: Home sweet home—Corps style

Center left: Bunked between Steve Magera (left) and Al Tinsley



Typical terrain of Yangu, Korea



With Angie Napoli (shaving)



"Noya and me," Yangu

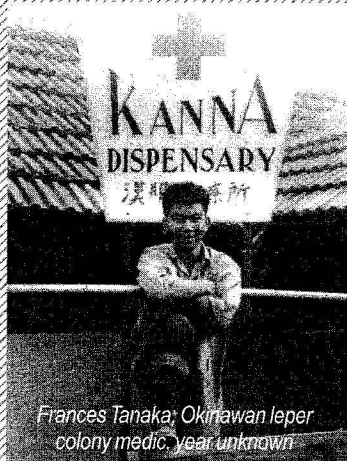
A Photographic Salute to

Yuri Frances Vetter, 1944

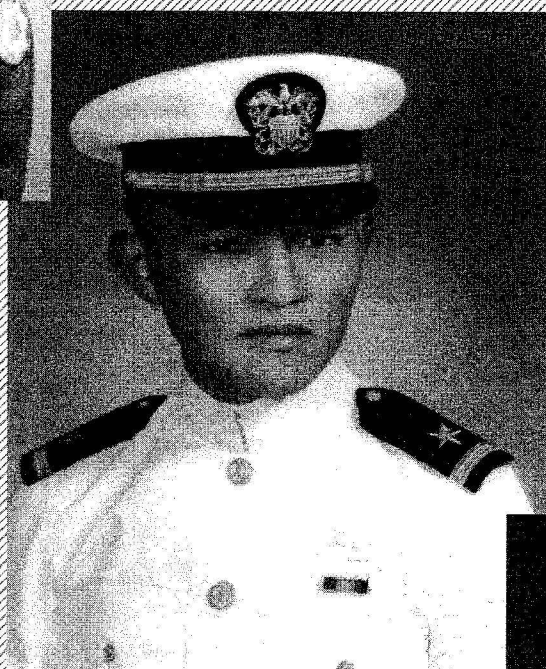


Bill Vetter, c. 19

Harry Kowase, ?, Frank V



Frances Tanaka; Okinawan leper colony medic, year unknown



Fred Segawa, near Florence, Italy, 1945



Haruki Koba, c. 1940

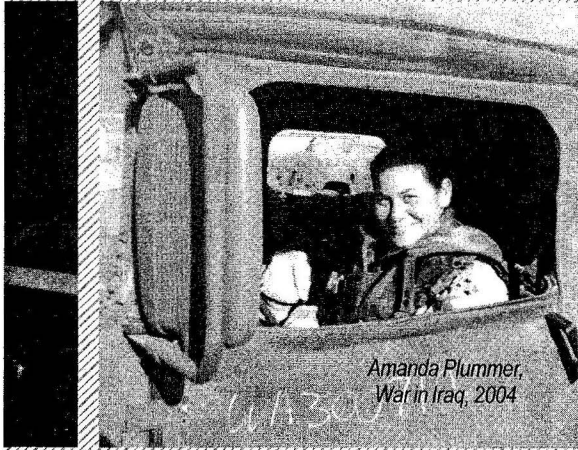


Sam Yamaguchi, February 1945

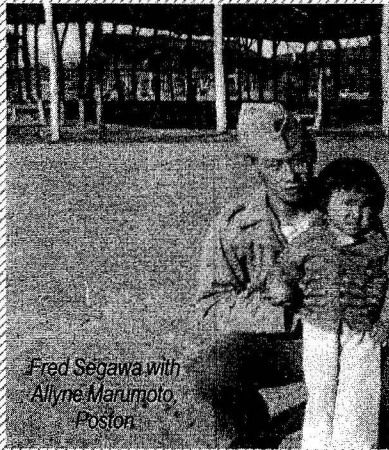


These photos come from the JAHSSD archives. We welcome and encourage your contributions of service-related photo

San Diego Nikkei Veterans



Amanda Plummer,
War in Iraq, 2004



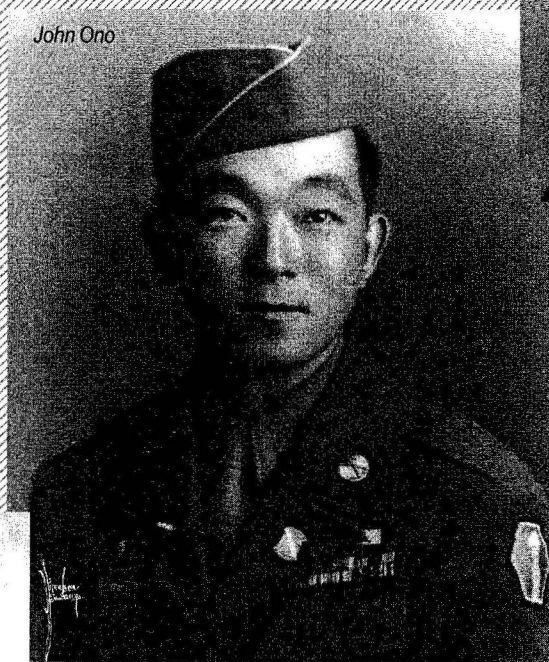
Fred Segawa with
Allyne Marumoto
Boston



Sam Fujita, 1941



?, Abe Takahara, year unknown



John Ono



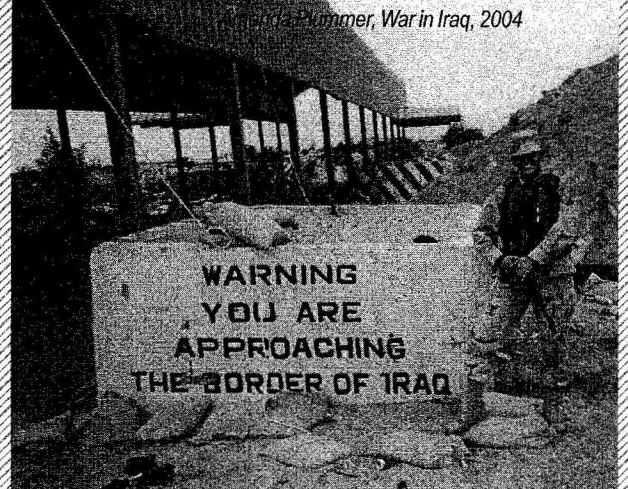
Ronnie Ishizaki, Germany, c. 1957



Amanda Plummer, 2004



George Doi, Camp Roberts,
Calif., December 1941



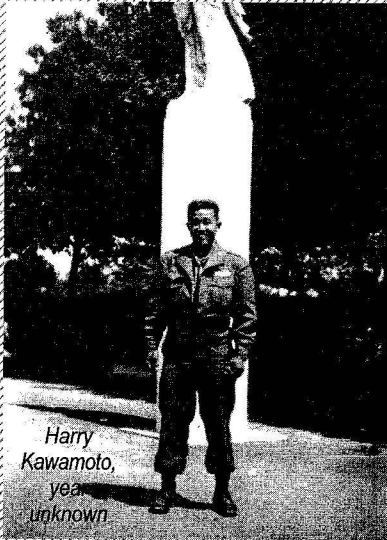
Amanda Plummer, War in Iraq, 2004

specially after World War II. Or let us make a copy for future publication or for use in exhibits; you retain the original.

A Photographic Salute to San Diego Nikkei Veterans (cont.)



1st Lt. Alice Kurashige with parents, Kiyome and Akira Kurashige, c. 1960



Harry Kawamoto, year unknown



Drafts: Hidekazu Michael Ishikawa (left) and Isuee photo



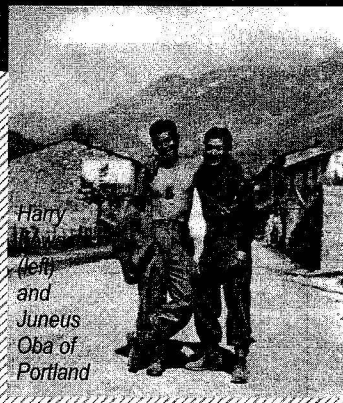
Cpl. Toshio Abe, Camp Savage, Miss., 1943



Original members of VFW Post 4851, year unknown, (photo Isidama)



off Konishi, Italy, February, 1944



Harry Kawamoto (left) and Juneus Oba of Portland



Bert Tanaka, Rome, 1944



Isamu Hasegawa, Italy, 1945



with gear, 1945



Tanaka, unknown



Left: Robert Shimomoto, 87, still fits in the "P" coat he wore in Camp I, Block 39. He recently donated the coat to JAHSSD

Young filmmakers Akira Boch (left) and Masaki Miyagawa appeared at the screening of their new documentary, "9066 to 9/11," at the Day of Remembrance program at San Diego State University, February 2005



"UNLIKELY HERO" HERE IN MAY

The one-hour film, *Unlikely Hero*, will be screened May 22 at 2:00 p.m. at the San Diego Central Library.

Steve Okino's documentary chronicles the story of Hawaii-born **Bruce Yamashita**, who in 1989 reported to boot camp at the Marine Corps Officer Candidate School at Quantico, Virginia. There Yamashita says he was subjected to intense racial harassment for nine weeks. He was disenrolled two days before he was to graduate.

During a five-year battle to have his record corrected, Yamashita uncovered a pattern of discrimination against minorities in the Corps. Affidavits from officers and information obtained through the Freedom of Information Act proved his charges of discriminatory practices.

In March 1994, at age 37, Yamashita received an apology from the Marine Corps and was commissioned as a Captain in the Marine Corps Reserves. Now 48, Yamashita serves as a staff lawyer in the Hawaii attorney general's office. ...

"It would have been easier for Bruce Yamashita to remain silent and quietly move on," **Norman Mineta**, Secretary of Transportation and former Congressman, stated at Capt. Yamashita's commissioning ceremony. "But that would have been a grave mistake for Bruce and for the entire United States military."

The film will be shown in the 3rd floor auditorium of the downtown Central Library. For more information on Yamashita and the film, go to www.unlikelyhero.org.

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HISTORIC VOTE TO MERGE:

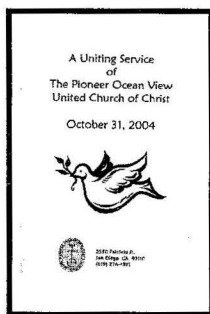
A Journey of Faith

by Gwen Momita

On July 18, 2004, members of **Ocean View United Church of Christ** voted to merge with **Pioneer United Church of Christ**, located in Clairemont. This historic vote was a culmination of eight months of hard work by these two churches. As a member of both the newly-formed **Pioneer Ocean View United Church of Christ** and the JAHSSD, I want to tell you a bit about our Faith Journey from a historical perspective. Because of space limitations, it will be impossible to name every individual who brought us to this point. In addition, Pioneer UCC also has a wonderful legacy of its own, which I will be unable to address at this time.

The Beginning

We at Ocean View United Church of Christ have a rich history! A look at our past shows that relocating is not a new thing for our congregation. I marvel at the fortitude of the original founders of our church who showed much courage, perseverance, and foresight. In spite of tremendous hardships, they never lost sight of their original goal: to follow God's vision.



Program cover for the October 31, 2004 Uniting Service

In 1907, a handful of young Japanese men immigrated to San Diego to find work and a new future. These Issei pioneers, eager to interact with others who spoke their own language and shared their cherished customs, gathered at the **Chinese Mission**, sponsored by the **First Congregational Church**, in downtown San Diego. Within a short time, it was decided to form a separate Japanese Mission under the continued guidance of the First Congregational Church. Thus, the first **Japanese Mission of San Diego** was established at 540 Seventh Street.

Within months, the core group had increased to 30 young men, prompting a second move, this time to 527 Eighth Street. Several missionaries, some hakujin (white) and some nihonjin (Japanese), led the congregation. Over the next few years, they reached out to migrant farm workers and fishermen by holding Sunday afternoon sermons, classes in English language instruction, and opportunities for social interaction. Families arrived, attendance grew, and children were baptized.

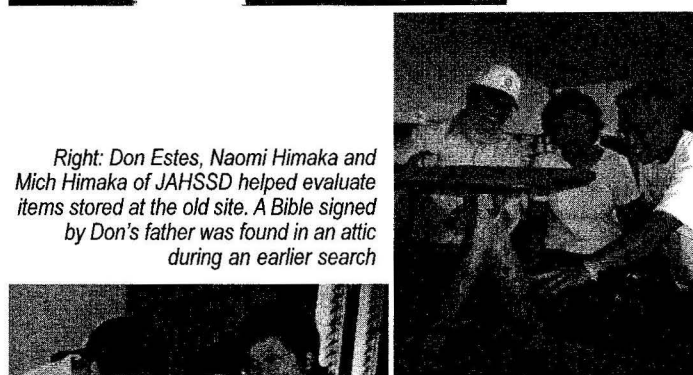
In 1912, it was decided that the Mission would become a branch of the First Congregational Church and be named **San Diego First Japanese Congregational Church**. After raising \$10,000 – not an easy task in those times—land was purchased and we made our third move to 431 Thirteenth Street. Some of the key members who signed the original constitution were **Sogo Aizo**, **Yamamoto Mitsuzaburo**, and **Ozaki Toraichi**.

The following years were fraught with struggles, adversity, and discrimination. God blessed us by sending an insightful and dedicated leader to our midst, **Reverend Kenji Kikuchi**. Throughout the Depression and the devastating upheaval of World War II (when we experienced "relocation" of a different sort), Rev. Kikuchi and our forefathers continued steadfast in their faith. Amazingly, we celebrated our 40th Anniversary while resettling in San Diego following those trying years in camp.

Once back in San Diego, our growing congregation again found it necessary to find larger facilities! We raised the necessary funds, this time \$50,000, and in 1952 relocated to Thirty-Fifth and Ocean View Boulevard. (As an historical side note, we recently found the actual invitations to the groundbreaking ceremony, written by Rev. Kenji Kikuchi and addressed to members of San Diego's city government. I wonder how many officials responded positively and attended the ceremony?)



Left: OVUCC members Jeanne Elyea, Dale Kusumoto and the author with items found in Ocean View's office building, formerly known as the Japanese Family Center



Right: Don Estes, Naomi Himaka and Mich Himaka of JAHSSD helped evaluate items stored at the old site. A Bible signed by Don's father was found in an attic during an earlier search



Left: Shinobu Yoshioka, Mitzie Norred and Jeanne Elyea helped with boxing and packing church belongings for the move to the Clairemont site

The Ocean View site remained our place of worship for 54 years. There, our Church Family witnessed weddings, baptisms, funerals, worship services, Easter and Christmas celebrations, and our special Ocean View Bazaar. However, sadly, our congregation was not growing.

In 1977, under the able leadership of **Dr. Yoshikuni Kaneda**, our first Long-Range Planning Session was held. In order to increase membership, a new location was seen as essential. The possibility of relocating was explored. Once again, money was a key issue!



The Kasubuchi Family at the last Ocean View Bazaar, September 2004

HISTORIC MERGE cont. from Page 14

During the ensuing years, and now under the guidance of **Reverend Tom Fujita**, our church was able to raise enough monies to make meaningful improvements to the existing property, but never enough to purchase land in prime areas. In the deepest corners of our hearts and minds, the distant echo of this sentiment remained: relocate to ensure our future.



Liz Yamada, daughter of former minister Kenji Kikuchi, speaks at the last service held at the Ocean View site, November 2004

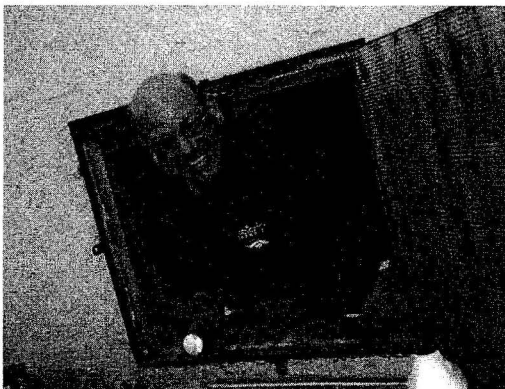
The Big Dilemma

In 2001, with the charismatic leadership of **Reverend Norma DeSaegher**, our congregation began to grow. Although we remained predominantly a Japanese American church in "flavor" (and I don't refer only to our famous potlucks), we welcomed all. Diversity in every arena was embraced. Our sanctuary actually began to feel cramped, a new and good feeling, but one that needed to be addressed. Thus, the huge dilemma: did we truly want to invest large sums of money into this property in order to enlarge the sanctuary? Was this the place to rest our future? Did our vision encompass more?

The Merge and Our Future

What happened next, I feel, was the result of right leadership, right timing, and Divine Guidance. Our ever-diligent Board of Trustees and Church Counsel, under the leadership of Pastor Norma, began to seriously look into the possibility of "merging" with another congregation. After several false starts, we were introduced to Pioneer UCC. It seemed like a perfect fit: we were looking for a place to relocate, they were looking for more members.

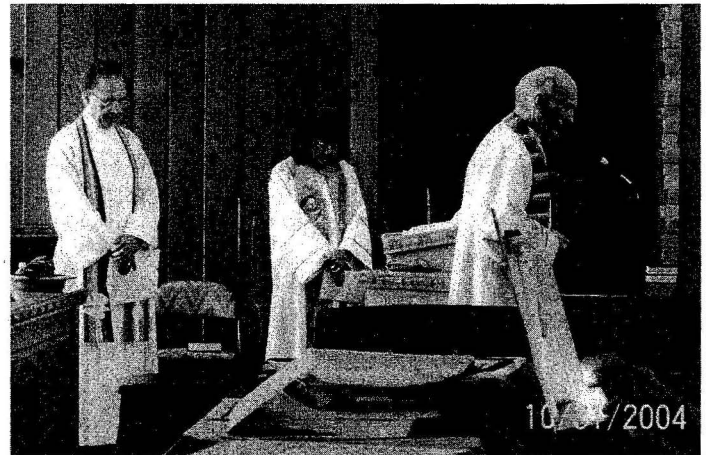
Duane Siefers completes a search of the crawl space under the Ocean View Church, looking for the elusive Time Capsule. To date, it has not been recovered



The Merge Committee, with **Duane Siefers** as Chairperson, **Yuri Kaneda** as Moderator, together with **Moto Asakawa**, **Roy Arakawa**, **Susan Namba**, **Steve Sato**, **Dale Kusumoto**, and **Tom Ozaki**, met countless times. Both congregations held large and small group meetings. Questions were asked, opinions were expressed, numbers were hammered out, and "getting to know you" luncheons were held. Each and every congregation member did some deep soul searching. How could we leave this site which had been such an integral part of our religious and social lives for so long?



Merge Committee (L to R): Rev. Norma DeSaegher, Yuri Kaneda, Roy Arakawa, Duane Siefers, Tom Ozaki, Steve Sato, Susan Namba, Dale Kusumoto. Not pictured: Moto Asakawa



Left to right: Reverends Dan Romero, Norma DeSaegher and John DeSaegher preside over the Uniting Service, October 31, 2004

Finally, the momentous day came for both congregations to step forward and be counted. The overwhelming positive vote to relocate showed that we were willing to face new challenges in uncharted waters.

We are moving forward once again, embracing an expanded Family of Faith. And now, we truly have an "ocean view"! I believe, like our Issei pioneers, we will follow God's vision into the 21st century and beyond.

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UCSD'S NSU CULTURE SHOW

by Joyce Teague

If I have ever wondered who will oversee the legacy of my grandparents, parents and even mine after I am dust, I was surely sitting in their midst at the **2005 Culture Show** presented by the **UCSD Nikkei Student Union (NSU)** last February 6.

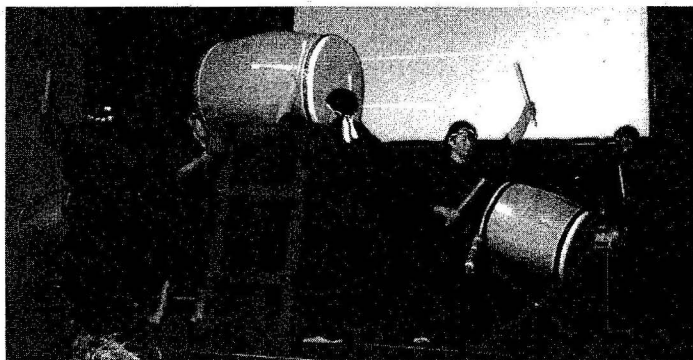
Presented in the Price Center Ballroom on the University of California San Diego campus, the fourth annual Culture Show was both produced and performed by enthusiastic members of the NSU, a student-run campus organization which includes young people of Japanese descent, as well as Japanese natives and students interested in Japanese language or studies. (*See related story in next column.*)

This year's Culture Show presented an amalgam of Nikkei heritage as interpreted by college students in a lively and informative entertainment. At its center was a murder mystery spoof called *Lost In-Vestigation*, written by **Arisa Amano**, director of the Culture Show, and **Geoff Tsudama**, assistant director. The play amusingly melded live stage performance with the projection of an atmospheric video produced by **Wesley Chan**.

Adding the video element allowed for additional parodies of both Japanese and American contemporary pop culture. Visual and auditory references to film noir, the manga craze, martial arts, neo-horror films like *Ju-On*, and popular TV series like *24* and the current trend of investigatory procedurals like *CSI*, were peppered liberally throughout the hybrid presentation for comic effect. The results were generally successful and resonated with a receptive audience.

The show also featured impressive karaoke duet performances of contemporary Japanese pop songs by **Arisa Amano**, **Angela Hsiao**, **Joyce Hirotsu** and **Rie Watanabe**. Ms. Watanabe showed her versatility by also performing a fan odori in a traditional kimono.

A highlight of the evening was a rousing taiko performance by **Asayake Taiko**, a 15-member student group formed barely three years ago (and to my knowledge only one of two performing taiko groups in San Diego). They debuted two new numbers, new members, and a newly completed Odaiko, a big drum which they boast is "the largest in collegedom." What they occasionally lacked in rhythmic accuracy, they more than compensated for with a passionate and exciting performance.



Asayake Taiko performs one of three numbers featuring the Odaiko

The 30-member hip hop dance troupe **Ascension** capped the evening with acrobatic grooves 'n' moves I can only make in my dreams. Established in 1999, Ascension is a wildly diverse group of runs-the-gamut looks and fashion senses, but solid group choreography brought them together for a fun performance which still allowed for individuality.

This year's Culture Show happened on Super Bowl Sunday, but nonetheless boasted an audience of 300. You might try to make next year's show if you want to come away with the feeling, as I did, that our cultural heritage is in very good hands.

Young Voice:

THE NIKKEI STUDENT UNION

by Conrad Ohashi

Conrad is a general staff member of the Nikkei Student Union and the current spokesperson for UCSD's Asayake Taiko group.

The **Nikkei Student Union (NSU)** is a nonprofit social and cultural organization on the University of California San Diego campus dedicated to bringing together students who share a mutual interest in Japanese and Japanese-American culture.

Formerly known as the **Japanese American Student Association**, the organization was established in 1988 to promote cultural awareness within UCSD and the San Diego community. Events such as trips to the Japanese American National Museum in Little Tokyo, a quarterly **Sushifest** fundraising event, community service projects, pilgrimages to the Japanese American internment camp at Manzanar, an annual **Culture Show**, and other social and cultural events are a part of NSU's yearly repertoire.

The NSU currently boasts an active membership of about 150 students. Programs such as the **Sib and Family Mentorship Program** allow the organization to provide a second home for students adjusting to college life. In addition, members are immediately invited to become a part of the staff upon joining NSU. This allows new members to feel welcome, get involved, and contribute to NSU's success right away.

This year, NSU is involved in planning the **Revisions Nikkei Youth Conference**, tentatively set for Spring 2005, to help reach Nikkei youth on a national level. Our organization works closely with other Nikkei student organizations around the Southern California area through the **Intercollegiate Nikkei Council (INC)**, and also maintains a close-knit relationship with the **Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)**.

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POSTON BARRACKS RETURNED

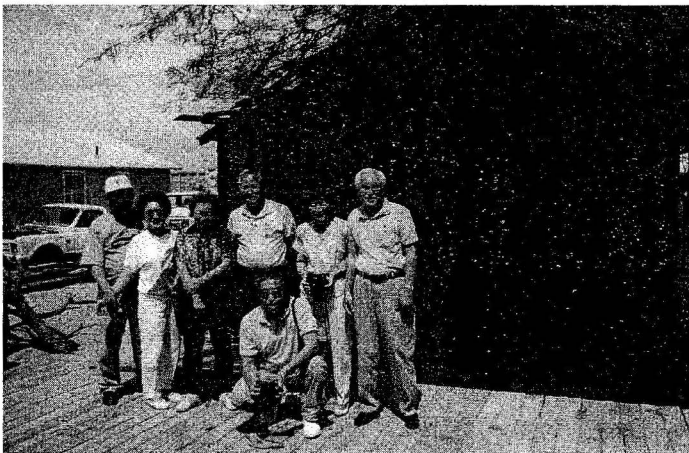
by Don Estes

After an odyssey of 60 years, an original and virtually unchanged Poston barracks building will be returning Poston.

The former barracks will be relocated to the site of the Camp I high school, which was recently dedicated by the **Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT)** for the use of the **Poston Restoration Project**.

Following the closure of the three Poston camps, many of the barracks were sold to the public for \$50 each and moved off the reservation. The rough wooden buildings were converted into homes and storage spaces.

A portion of one such barracks was relocated behind the Lemon Tree Nursery near the intersection of Riverside and Eagle in Parker, Arizona. Somewhere between Poston and Parker, the barracks was cut in half to make two buildings. Put up on concrete blocks, the **Lemon Tree Barracks**—with its distinctive Poston “double roof” and much of its original black tarpaper siding intact—was never converted into housing.



JAHSSD members (L to R): Masami Honda, Toshiko Springer, Mits Kawamoto, Yukio Kawamoto, Grace Segawa, Ben Segawa and Mich Himaka (kneeling) in front of the Lemon Tree Barracks, 1996

Behind the barracks, the floor of what was probably the other half of the original barracks, is also on blocks. Bare of any structure but with the ends of tin cans nailed to the floor to cover the knotholes, the floor testifies to the stories of poor construction materials used at the Poston camps.

Over the years, the original owner declined offers to buy the aging building. With his passing, the heirs also refused all offers. As knowledge of the building's existence spread, it became a regular stopping place for Nikkei visiting Poston.

At one point, the new owner asked \$20,000 for the building, but there were no takers. Several years later, the price was dropped to \$10,000. This year, the estate of the second owner has offered to donate the building to the Poston Restoration Project, an offer that was accepted with alacrity. The **Del Webb Foundation** of Phoenix has been approached to assist the moving costs.

After 60 years, the **Lemon Tree Barracks** is almost back home.

Info on the
POSTON RESTORATION PROJECT is online!
College students did the website design
gratis as part of a contest.
Go to: <http://www3.jjc.edu/wow/default.htm>

WE GET LETTERS

Dear Don:

It was a pleasure to talk to you this a.m. I visited the JAHSSD website and brought up the two articles you mentioned. Great reading. Pass along my appreciation to your son. Both articles will prove very helpful as I try to reconstruct what happened to Yoshio Kobuki after December 7th. I continue to appreciate your help.

John Christgau
San Francisco

Dear Don and Ben:

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for the presentation you gave us. All the students told me that your discussion of the history of the San Diego Nikkei community was very meaningful to them. They were glad to learn about the Japanese American experience.

Shigeki Yamaguchi, MD, PhD
Dokkyo University School of Medicine
Tokyo, Japan

Dear Estes-san and Segawa-san:

We appreciate your kindness and the presentation to our students of the history of Japanese Americans in San Diego. I don't believe any of us fully understood what the Issei and Japanese Americans went through over the past 100 years. [Your presentation] was very much enjoyed by our students.

It is now thirty-five degrees Fahrenheit here in Tokyo, very, very cold.

Paul Chiharu Ando, Associate Professor
Dokkyo University

Dear Mich:

Thank you for letting us know about Mas Honda's passing. He indeed was a great friend of the JAHSSD and the entire San Diego Nikkei Community. He was a leader by example and deed. I'm grateful that not only were we able to publicly acknowledge his contributions to our community while he was alive, but that we also have his oral history to share with others. I think his story typifies the San Diego Nikkei experience. It serves as a valuable reminder to those of us who follow in his footsteps what our responsibility is to the community and to each other.

Debra Segawa Kodama
Chula Vista

BOB'S BUDDIES STEP OUT

Bob's Buddies, the JAHSSD team of elite walkers, is preparing to *stand up* for the fight to find a cure for Multiple Sclerosis, and *step out* for the 2005 San Diego MS Walk.

If you're interested on coming out for a healthy morning of fun and comradeship, our team of intrepid walkers, co-captained by **Mich Himaka** and **Don Estes**, will meet on Sunday, April 10, at Embarcadero Marina Park just behind the San Diego Convention Center.

Already collecting pledges or signed up to walk are **Bob, Hisae and Kira Batchelder, Dan Collins, Bill and Jeanne Elyea, Don and Carol Estes, Diane Jensen, Karen Kawasaki, Mich and Naomi Himaka, Yuki and Mits Kawamoto, Gwen Momita, Nancy Shimamoto, Allyne Tachiki and Justine Tachiki.**

In 2001, the team qualified for the Bronze Award by raising over \$1,700. In 2002, we qualified for the Silver Award with \$3,871 in pledges. In 2003, we qualified for the Gold Award at \$7,012; and last year, we attained the Diamond Award with \$10,312! This month, we are going for our best year ever. Everyone's welcome, so come on out and join us.

If you'd like to register to walk, please contact the team secretary, **Carol Estes** at (619) 280-9418 or e-mail tabuchiasegawa@aol.com.

CELEBRATIONS!

On October 28, 2004, Imperial Valley resident **Larry Shimamoto** received a unique honor from the Imperial Valley Unified School District Governing Board: they passed a resolution naming the Imperial High School football stadium the **Shimamoto-Simpson Tiger Stadium**. Installation of a neon sign with the new name is planned.

The other honoree, **Jim Simpson**, has been a District photographer for 50 years.

This recognition was given to Larry for his 26 years of service to the high school's football program and his fund-raising efforts for District athletic programs. Larry provides a meal at every Tiger home football game for the athletes, coaches, cheerleaders and volunteers. Included in the meal are his home-baked pies.

Larry, a former president of the JACL-Imperial Valley Chapter, is aided in his cooking task by many volunteers, including his wife, **Irene**, and often their three daughters, **Phillis**, **Beverly**, and **Cynthia**, as well as members of their families.

"This honor is historic," **Tim Asamen** of the **Pioneer Museum** said recently. "Larry is the first Japanese American in Imperial Valley to be honored by having a public facility named for him."

Congratulations to Larry on this terrific honor!

AN ISSEI PIONEER

by Dick Jensen

Back in the 1970s, it dawned on the local community that the Issei would not be here forever and there was a renewed interest in their lives and to honor them while we were still able to do so. Many years later, my thoughts went back to the 1970s and our yearly trips to Hawaii, where I had met my previous wife in 1968, while with the Peace Corps.

In the early 1970s, I was really into Koi, and for me the highlight of our trips was to buy fingerlings from Mr. Okihira, who was both a farmer and breeder of Koi on his property in Kaneohe. He was one of the very early Koi breeders in Hawaii, whom I understood had to can the fish in Japan to keep them alive for the long trip by ship to Hawaii. I presume this method used the same theory as the fish surviving in ice-covered ponds during the winter.

Mr. Okihira was well-known as one of the early developers of breeding stock for the *taisho sanke*, a black Koi with red and white markings. He was known to be very successful in performing surgery on the fish to remove cancers or ill-placed scales. He also developed processes to keep the ponds free of parasites in Hawaii's tropical climate.

During the middle 1970s, the State of Hawaii filed an imminent domain suit against Mr. Okihira, as his property was needed to build a highway over the middle of his ponds. His long-time personal attorney was also at that time the State Attorney General. Mr. Okihira knew he couldn't win the suit, but was just trying to hold on to the property for the rest of his life, being aware he was too old to start over again in another location.

During the period I knew him, Mr. Okihira would complete all his fish-selling transactions in the yard, never in his home. During our last visit, when my daughter Jennifer was three years old, she had to go to the bathroom. Mr. Okihira allowed my wife to take Jennifer into the house to use the bathroom. To get to there, they had to walk through a well-stocked natural science laboratory. My wife, though at the time a math teacher, had earlier taught science. She was amazed that the laboratory looked as if it belonged to a graduate student or Ph.D. However, we were all aware that Mr. Okihira had only a Japanese middle school

education. I lost contact and do not know if he was able to hold on to his home prior to his death in the late 1970s.

An Amateur Historian

Although I have had a 40-year interest in Japan, [at different periods] my earlier interests were Japanese prehistory and the Heian Period. When I was studying history in the mid-1960s, there was a lot of information about the Meiji Government and the effects of national policy upon the people; however, very little was known, or at least published in English, about the life of the farmer, who at that time made up over 80% of the population, and probably about the same ratio of those who immigrated to America.


About ten years ago, I started wondering why Mr. Okihira and others did so well after arriving and getting off the ship. Most interest in this generation has been focused on their lives after arrival. My interest is in what molded this rural population, including most of the Issei, before getting on the ships.

Much of the information I have obtained has been through reading and a lot of information I gathered during and after a return trip to Japan, while I was unmarried back in 1991. After my return home, I had a six-year relationship with a very bright woman who, with her two then-school-aged children, lived with me. Toyoka had spent her childhood in a hamlet located in the mountains of Naori, along the headwaters of the Oita River. Although she has since earned her Masters in Sociology at SDSU, she was really part of the last generation that was not heavily influenced by television and other external influences during her childhood.

Today one can drive, on a good day, from Naori to Oita City in less than 40 minutes. Sixty years ago, there were no paved roads in the area and it was still a two-hour walk to the bus stop, and then several more hours to get to the city. I asked her literally thousands of questions about rural life and her family. We completed together several stories about her childhood on topics that I have never seen in written form.

We were also able to document family history and events which concerned her family members born from the latter part of the 19th century up until about a decade ago. None of her relatives immigrated abroad. Instead, many moved early in the last century to the city of Kokura, where I believe their lives were the same to that point as those who come here [to the U.S.]. When we came across events that were not clear from things Toyoka had heard in her childhood, she was able to clarify them with her mother, who was then one of the few pre-war members of the extended family still alive.

The information [we] gathered has been shared with the younger members of her family and that knowledge will last for at least another 50 years. I know much more about her family than I know about my own. Before our separation, I felt as if I was being adopted into the Saito family, as Toyoka's father had been during the late 1940s, and I felt close to people I had never met, many who have been dead for 50 years or longer.



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A PHOTO FROM THE JAHSSD ARCHIVES



There *were* some Japanese Americans on the West Coast during World War II: Staff Sergeant Hideo Ochi, U.S. Army, was part of a detachment composed of 15 Nisei soldiers stationed at Fort Ord outside Monterey, California. Their mission was to familiarize troops going to the Pacific with Japanese military strategy, equipment and uniforms. Ochi, who resides in Chula Vista, is shown here during the making a U.S. Army Signal Corps training film.

This moment in San Diego Nikkei history is brought to you by:

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"NISEI FARMER" AVAILABLE ON DVD

After screening at over 30 film festivals around the world, including the 2004 Nikkei Filmfest co-sponsored by JAHSSD, **Dean Yamada's** short film, *The Nisei Farmer*, has been released on DVD.

This poignant 12-minute film takes place in 1988 when the U.S. government makes reparations for the injustices suffered by the Japanese Americans during World War II. Memories of a stolen youth haunt a Nisei farmer in Northern California, forcing him to confront his bitter past in order to restore his broken marriage.

Inspired by writer/director Yamada's late father, the film was awarded the Grand Prize for Best Short Film at the Rhode Island International Film Festival. **Jude Narita** won the Best Actress Award at the Method Fest for her portrayal of the farmer's discontented wife.

The DVD's bonus features include Yamada's audio commentary about his quirky father, who passed away during the post-production of the film. Also included on the DVD are three earlier works, including the precursor to *The Nisei Farmer*.

The DVD is available from the Japanese National Museum; or go to www.theniseifarmer.com for purchase information. Yamada recently donated a copy of the DVD to JAHSSD's film collection.

SAN JOSE TO HONOR INTERNED BOY SCOUTS

The **Santa Clara Council of the Boy Scouts of America** has announced that they will hold a reunion dinner to honor all Japanese American Scouts interned during World War II.

The dinner will be held on Thursday, June 9, 2005 at the McEnery Convention Center in San Jose. The keynote speaker at the reunion will be the event's Honorary Chair, U.S. Secretary of Transportation **Norman Mineta**, who was a Scout at the Heart Mountain camp.

Honorary co-chairs of the event include **Sam Araki, Mike Honda, Ko Nishimura, Gerry Sakamoto, and Yosh Uchida**.

According to the Santa Clara Council, a portion of the proceeds from the event will be used to sponsor Nikkei who were Scouts while interned during World War II at the reunion. The balance of the proceeds will benefit the local Scouting campaign to extend scouting to all interested youth.

For more information on this event, please contact **Ron Schoenmehl**, Assistant Scout Executive, at (408) 280 5088, or e-mail him at RonS@sccc-scouting.org.

FONG FONG: A FOND FAREWELL

JAHSSD's last board meeting at Fong Fong Restaurant on Aero Drive took place last winter. Fong Fong, a favorite place for many in the Nikkei community to get together on a Saturday morning for "Hawaiian Breakfast," is set to close this month. We thank Mr. and Mrs. Wong for opening up early for us, and for all those plates of manapua, chashu fried rice w/eggs over easy, fried Spam, Portuguese sausage, and countless cups of green tea and hot coffee.



Noriko Inoue and Bob Batchelder

Upper left: Gwen Momita, Ben Segawa, Nancy Cowser

Upper right: Mich Himaka, Don Estes, Vernon Yoshioka



Debra Kodama, Jilly Kodama, Susan Hasegawa



Jeanne Elyea and Naomi Himaka

Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego

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FOOTPRINTS STAFF:

Editors: Joyce Teague, Michio Himaka
Desktop Publisher: Paper Pushers Editorial Services
(paperpushers@cox.net)
Editorial Assistance: Bill Teague

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UPCOMING in SUMMER 2005 ISSUE

- A detailed story on the unveiling ceremony for the Japanese American Veterans Memorial Monument, including many photos of the historic event
- Bonbu Club? You may never have heard of them, but this Sansel group of gal pals is celebrating its 20th anniversary. A photo history
- A complete listing of our current membership
- Your stories and photos...but you need to send them in first!