

Sachiko Osaki
U.S. Constitution
Dec. 5, 1942

History of the Community We Live in

We are very lucky to move freely, vote for what and whom we want, and most of all, we are not forced to work in this War Relocation Center. All the students are free to attend the school. At the beginning, we did not have much enjoyment. As the days passed by, activities such as social events, sport, library, Tulean Dispatch Newspaper, all types of churches and many other clubs have been established. These activities made our lives full of fun and peeps.

Since Home Economic is my main interest, the composition will be mainly on decorating the room. When we first arrived here, on the twenty-seventh of June, we were greatly surprised at the enormous number of barracks. When we were lead to our room, it was very dusty; and we wondered how we would be comfortable. The first thing we did was to sweep and dust the room. Within a few weeks, my father made tables and benches. Until we got our room plastered, we lived a very simple life with no curtains, closet, etc. Within four weeks, we got our room plastered. We took a couple of days to rearrange the room again. Since my father made the closet on the farthest corner of the room, we decided to put four beds in a row next to the closet and two more beds in front of the closet. We hung cretonne, dusty pink with roses and carnations designed material to separate the beds from the living room. We hung eggshell rayon marquisette curtains and ivory blinds, which matched very nicely with the ceiling and the side walls of the room. The radio and the clock also matched the ceiling. We placed a calendar on the center of the wall

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Sachiko Osaki

which harmonized with a small, bright, blue rug beside the bed. We bought two fold-chairs; which had bright colors of orange, green and eggshell on the seat and side of the chairs, which harmonized with the single dalias that I made out of orange crepe paper. I placed them in a vase made out of bars of pine tree. The table covered with orange stripes and white, also matched with the flowers.

Since the walls, ceiling, curtains, and blinds are in large areas of neutral colors and with few bright colors, colors harmonizes the room and seems to make the room more spacious and comfortable.

Rose Omura
U.S. Const. & Eng III

The Life of a Colonist of Tulelake

What We Started with

We, the Japanese, who hated to depart from our friends, homes, and other belongings are now as busy as bees trying to arrange our new home in a comfortable and inexpensive way with little of our belongings. Few weeks before our evacuation we have been wondering if our new life would be like the early colonists of America. Camp life of Tulelake is much similar to early colonists, but our homes were already built, while early colonists chop trees to build their homes. The life of Tulelake is much easier to live than that of early colonists of America. We have modern equipment to work with, but the early colonists had to make everything. The girls spun their yarn to make clothes while girls of Tulelake buy materials and ready made clothes.

When we arrived at the camp and were taken to inside in army trucks, I was amazed with the numbers of barracks. After registration we were taken to our barracks by a guide. Barracks are covered with tar papers and the inside were dusty with only iron beds and mattresses. I entered the room, put the baggage on the floor, sat down on the dusty bed and thought how to arrange the room.

There were no chairs nor tables, not even lumber to make our furniture. Days passed and weeks came since our evacuation. Gradually by this time we were getting some furnitures made and improved our new home. Chairs and tables were made out of scrap lumber which we got hold of, with only tools like hammer and saw. Later we bought lumber and improved the chairs and tables as we first expected. Boys carved wood and made

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Rose Omura

fancy shelves, while the girls crochet tablespreads, arranged shelves and dressers and later made paper flowers, which made the room an attractive place to live.

The people have thought up many different ideas of arranging their apartment. The residents would not think of such ideas unless in a place like camp where they have spare time. Rock gardens, vegetable gardens, fish ponds and carving and drawing in front of the apartment are the highlights of this camp.

Leisure Activities

Now more than ever the people have more leisure time on their hands. People with talents that were never discovered before are finding that they are capable of making and doing things that they never dreamed they were able to do.

Probably the most popular among all activities is carpentry. The once bare-looking rooms are now so improved that they can almost compare with any on the outside. Some of the furnitures made looks as good as professional. Everyday someone is pounding on their hammers and building screens and other improvements.

What really makes a place look like a home is a garden. This is not overlooked even in Tule Lake. Many beautiful minature rock gardens are being made, which give enjoyment to all the people in the block as well as to the others. The rock gardens include anything from hand carved turtles, frogs, and bridges to people. Vegetable and flower gardens are planted too.

The most popular activities among the younger people are sports and dancing. The recreational departments is furnishing all types of equipment so that sports will not be neglected. Teams and leagues are formed. Whenever a favorite team is playing, the ground is crowded with spectators hoping that their team will be the lucky one.

Dancing is a favorite among the people and both social and folk dancing is taught. Public dances are given about once a week giving them the chance to get acquainted with people from other states and towns.

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Everyday, there is something every colonists must do and can do, so there is no such thing as being unoccupied. With the great improvements that have already been made in this short time, I am sure that within a few month's this place will be a place that we will enjoy.

Rose Takuma
U.S. Constitution
Period VIII
Dec. 3, 1942

How We Created A Home

Although we were fortunate to be evacuated to a Relocation Center, instead of a concentration camp, the feeling I had when I first came here was, "Gee, how can we make a home out of this empty room?" No lumber, no nails at first, but later they gave us some lumber and we found a few nails around the barracks to make a table and a few benches. People would hoard lumber while others had none. It was very dangerous how they went after lumber when a pile came. Later they quite bringing lumber because some people got hurt.

As weeks passed, the carpenters came around to plaster our rooms for us with white plaster boards. After it was plastered we started to make our shelves, partitions, closets, dressers, more tables and benches. First we had to decide how we were going to arrange our beds, where we were going to build our closets and where to put our shelves. People would be hammering away early in the morning till late at night, so that it disturbed others. After we took many days in building our closets and shelves with other people's help, it wasn't so bad after all. We built a porch and a little cement walk in front of our place which made it feel more like a home. We have artificial flowers in our room to make it more lively. As we go in every direction we could see how people had created their homes. Some homes have colorful partitions, and pictures, while others are very simple. Also they have furnitures and things that are made very fancy. They putted up colorful curtains on the windows, dressers, and closets. As we walk along, we find some more new ideas in creating a home. It is difficult to realize how we had created a home out of an empty room.

United States Constitution

Bessie Inouye

What We Had To Do To Start

Our Home

The first thing we had to face in order to start our home was to get our beds set. Setting the beds was the biggest problem to us because we have a stove in the middle of the room. We wanted our home to look well balanced, so it took us a long time to place the beds.

After we finished setting and placing the beds, we had to loosen all the baggage, and hang our clothes. In order to hang all our clothes we had to have a closet or something, so on the very next day we got our closets made.

The next problem was to get some shelves made because we didn't know where to put some other small things we had. We got about two shelves made and two small cupboards made. It helped us very much in putting away the small articles.

We already had our screens on the window so all we had to do was to put the curtains on. But before we put the curtains on we had to wash the windows.

Later, when we got everything in order, we had to get some materials to hang on the closets, and some table cloth for our tables. When we got our things all in order the rooms looked very attractive, fresh and neat.

Dec. 4, 1942, 1st and 2nd per.

A Saturday in the Colonies

Like any other day, on Saturday I woke up early in order to be in time for breakfast. As usual the washroom is crowded with noisy children, laughing teen-age girls, and women who go to work. I finally managed to finish my daily personal clean-up. Then I hurried into the mess hall to find that I'm among the last to enter. A plate of pan cakes is placed before me besides a bowl of cereal. We have had pan cakes nearly every morning this week but I do not mind it any more because I realize that mess hall workers work very hard to satisfy our needs even in hot weather.

After breakfast I started in with the house cleaning. It's really surprising how much dust gathers around the house. Then I suddenly remembered that our raddish garden needs watering, so I proceeded to bring three or four pails of water. Now that the weather here is getting chilly our raddishes aren't showing up very well.

At least once a week our rooms should be mopped. Saturday has been appointed the day to do this, so I brought a pail of hot water from the washroom. Today must be my lucky day for I found that there was some hot water left. Usually it is lukewarm by this time. Moving what little furniture we have around, I managed to finish mopping before the 12:00 dinner bell rang. How time does fly!

A few hours of relaxation and then for a trek to the canteen. Returning hot, dusty, and weary, laden with packages of various articles, I sink into a chair which we laughingly call our "sofa." After resting myself for a few minutes I proceeded to the shower-room. How refreshing the water feels!

When I came out, it was a few minutes before dinner time. After

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dinner I devoted the rest of the evening to my studies until it was time for me to retire for the day. And so another Saturday has gone by.

C H A P T E R V

THE SURROUNDING TERRAIN



22. CASTLE ROCK

MAS INADA

Introduction to Chapter V

During the days the Japanese Americans were held in the Assembly Centers, uncertainty and suspicion heightened the understandable curiosity about where people would be sent for the duration of their internment. Rumors circulated continually concerning the Relocation Center to which they would be sent, and, indeed, whether all the population of a given Assembly Center would be sent intact to the same Relocation Center or more broadly distributed. Little was actually known about the various W.R.A. Centers and the curiosity as to which one of them might be the most favorable for the evacuees often seemed insatiable. This led, of course, to exaggerated speculation and to the continual circulation of rumors.

As for Tule Lake, the name undeniably suggested a body of water, doubtlessly surrounded by trees and verdure, nestled in mountainous terrain where, with any kind of opportunity, one could find very agreeable pastimes. There were doubtlessly much less favorable stories and speculations about Tule Lake. The high expectations some of those destined for Tule Lake held inevitably made their first encounter with the reality of the Center and its environs all the more keenly disappointing. The drabness of the rows and rows of austere, tar-papered barracks, unrelieved by any more graceful architectural feature, left a dismal impression on almost everyone. There was little in their subsequent experience in the "Colony" to engender a more favorable verdict about the physical aspects of the community.

The dwellings, such as they were, rested in a sea of sage brush. The high, arid plateau had few topographical features to relieve the monotonous and uninspiring landscape. The soil was unproductive except for that portion of the Center reclaimed for farming purposes from an old lake bed; this land, through abundant water brought in for irrigation, had been rendered fertile and highly suitable for farming. It was however removed from the residential area. Generally only those who worked in the farm area saw the verdure they were accustomed to see in their old homes. The soil in the residential area, in contrast, resisted even the intensive interest of the Japanese in making flowers and vegetables grow. The colonists returned from walks beyond the barracks compound with pieces of "driftwood" and rocks; the "driftwood" pieces were the wind-sculptured remains of ancient sage brush and stunted trees that lay scattered in the sea of living sage. These along with the rocks were laboriously carried back from excursions and with carefully planted seeds were arranged to relieve the monotony of the place. The bleak sameness of the miniscule yards that lay at the entrance of the barrack apartments was at least in part reduced.

The main exception to the monotony of the physical surroundings was Castle Rock or Castle Mountain (except that on some clear days from some parts of the area, one could see the snow-covered crest of Mount Shasta far to the west). The steep, rocky, treeless hill in its profile suggests a castle falling in ruins. It dominated the western panorama. Although it might have lacked the quality of majesty in some other settings, in the flatness of the surrounding plateau it had the aspect of dignity and beauty.

At the end of his ministry among the evacuees of Tule Lake, the Episcopal priest, Father Daisuke Kitagawa "paused to look up at the rocky, treeless hill standing majestically against the clear blue sky, the hill which had never failed to uplift my spirit amid all vicissitudes."¹ When restrictions against leaving the immediate residential area were lifted, the evacuees made frequent excursions up Castle Rock. The contours of the hill were used by artists and illustrators wherever some artistic representation was called for. In all such representations Castle Rock looms in more striking dimensions than it actually possesses; its height was exaggerated and the special features of its irregular contours represented in more dramatic proportions. The contrast one finds between photographic and artistic representations of Castle Rock is born less from artistic license than from subjective feelings and social-psychological need.

There were other positive things that could be said about the surrounding terrain and its climate as well as its natural life. The old lake bed had provided a natural refuge for migratory fowl resting on their seasonal migrations between Canada and Mexico. The dramatic flights of the ducks and geese created a strong impression on the painters and wood carvers of the community. By Christmastime, hundreds of flying geese had been carved for decorative wear. With all the wind and dust, some evacuees like Rev. Kitagawa noted that even in summer the air in the morning was cool and crisp;

¹Daisuke Kitagawa, Issei and Nisei: The Internment Years (New York: The Seabury Press, 1967) 151.

at sundown the air immediately became cool; autumn sunsets were often spectacularly beautiful. As severe as the climate seemed and as dismal the physical setting, they were not without some redeeming qualities.¹

The essays reveal that at least some of the Tule Lake high school youths were aware of the dramatic battles that occurred in the shadow of Castle Rock during the Modoc Indian Wars. Under a subchief known as Captain Jack, an insurgent band revolted against confinement in a reservation in the area of Upper Klamath Lake in 1870. They made a stand in the natural fortifications of the lava beds near Tule Lake until they were finally defeated by the American army. If the students were inclined to draw any parallels to their circumstances, there is nothing in the small group of essays in this chapter to suggest it.

¹See ibid., 101.

Chujoko Kawahato
11/30/42

(corrected)

"Bloody Point"

Walking here and there, I see thousands of seashells lying around. The great Tule Lake now drained and dry might have been once upon a time filled with water. It is a wide flat land surrounded by mountains. There is one unusual looking mountain located on the resembling an abaloney and another mountain opposite it called the "Bloody Point" or more often known as "Castle Mountain." I have heard the latter was where the Indians of covered wagon days fought long ago. For that reason many chips of arrowheads can be found along the road and between barracks. During the warmer days this mountain use to be visited by hikers almost every Sunday but since the weather has been cold the last months, hardly any hikers are up there. Hiking up "Bloody Point" is really a long breathless climb. There are many paths so all the hikers have to do is follow one of them but little pause or rest has to be taken now and then. Looking down from the top of the mountain a large lake and the project farm can be seen on the other side. The farmland is green, yellow green and divided into patches. On this side, the camp can be seen full view with the large flat hay field on the right. I have heard there is an Indian monument past Klamath. I hope I can learn more about this historical "Bloody Point"

Our Community

As you all know, this Tulelake Relocation Center was once before a lake called the Tule Lake. Many times I've heard people say it once was a lake with full of tall green tules growing all about. Some of you may not know what tules are: they are somewhat like grasses, but much, much taller and thicker. So you see this lake was (named) after this plant, tule.

These tules were all around the ground when I first came here about one and a half feet tall. It made the ground look so beautiful with green color all around, and now it's all dried up. People had stepped on these poor tules to get through. Several times I've seen old and young ladies in this camp weaving baskets, shades, etc. with these tules. Many people have many good ideas. I've seen many lovely things made in this camp, such as beds, desks, chairs, cupboards, book cases, tables, magazine racks, and many others. They look as if they were brought from a store.

The houses we live in are somewhat small for some of the family: but if we plan our rooms nicely, we may have a nice home. I've visited many friends houses and they have it so neat and nicely arranged. Visiting many other friends homes we get better and new ideas. Some homes are not so very well arranged, but most of them are so really nice I think they are better than the homes we had before. Porches and gardens are other ideas to make a home like your own home you used to have.

Add new ideas and try improving your own home, for we may not leave this camp for a long while.

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Kotani, Yui

Let's us all cooperate and try to make this Tulelake Relocation
Camp the best we can and the best camp known.

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Bill Tamura
American Life
Dec. 1, 1942

A Trip To Abalone Hill

On Saturday, September 19th, 1942, while absorbing the penetrating rays of a hot autumnal sun, my eyes were caught by the refreshing atmosphere of Abalone Hill. Instantly the monotony of an otherwise listless day was dispelled by an urge to inhale some of this atmosphere.

After running hither and there in block 56; otherwise known as Alaska, I finally found two boys who had the same idea. Disregarding the advice of our elders; pertaining to the preparation for such an adventure, we hustled off. With the inviting Abalone Hill before us & the blazing sun mercilessly at our backs, we made our weary way through sage-brush and jagged rocks.

After walking what seemed to be about half a mile, we came upon a moss-covered cave. Not being fully prepared for an encounter with any animal whose home it might have been we left in great haste with an occasional glance over our shoulders. While looking back toward the cave, we had been stopped instantly by the rustle ahead in our tracks. We turned nervously around expecting to come face to face with Mr. Bear or Mr. Coyote. Off in the distance scarcely a hundred feet away an innocent jack rabbit was running on its way in quest of food. We looked at each other with pale complexion and a lump in our throats; laughed at the thought of being fooled by such a lowly creature.

Our pride somewhat shaken we headed once more for Abalone Hill. As the sun began to lose its force, we finally arrived at the top. We found a stick five and a half feet high which was stuck between some stones, which had some Hawians name burnt into the stick, having claimed the

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Bill Tamura

Abalone Hill on the 18th day of September and in the year of 42 A.D. We added our names on this list and headed for Clear Lake.

We walked & walked toward Clear Lake but when we got half way we were breathless so we headed for home.

Having not obeyed orders from our elders, we suffered a severe sore throat for lack of water. The reason we didn't bring water was that we thought we'd never get that far.

It took us a good two-and-a-half hours going to the mountain while we made it in one hour coming home. It also pays to orders instead of going empty handed & unprepared.