

## INTRODUCTION TO THE NICHOLSON PAPERS

Born in Karuizawa, Japan, in 1924, Samuel O. (Sam) Nicholson was raised in both pre-war Japan, where his father was a missionary, and the Japanese American community in Pasadena, California, where his father, then a local minister, led efforts to support the Japanese Americans incarcerated in Manzanar and other American concentration camps during World War Two.

With Sam Nicholson's dual-focus on both his family life in these settings and a first-person account of what Sam saw and did helping his father at Manzanar, he helps us understand the people incarcerated at Manzanar and the events that shaped their lives there.

Sam Nicholson's background explains his insights into Japanese and Japanese American culture during those turbulent times, and frames Sam's stories of his own World War Two alternative service and his subsequent return to post-war Japan. Always insightful, with openness and disarming candor, Sam Nicholson's stories combine spirituality, without being preachy, and historical narrative, without being judgmental.

The Nicholson Papers provide important historical and social context to the complex intercultural and intracultural relationships at play, in both America and Japan, in the middle of the 20th century. The Nicholson Papers also reveal a hopeful and optimistic view, presented in these fascinating stories, of how ordinary people manage to create a better world in the midst of turmoil and tragic events.

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2020