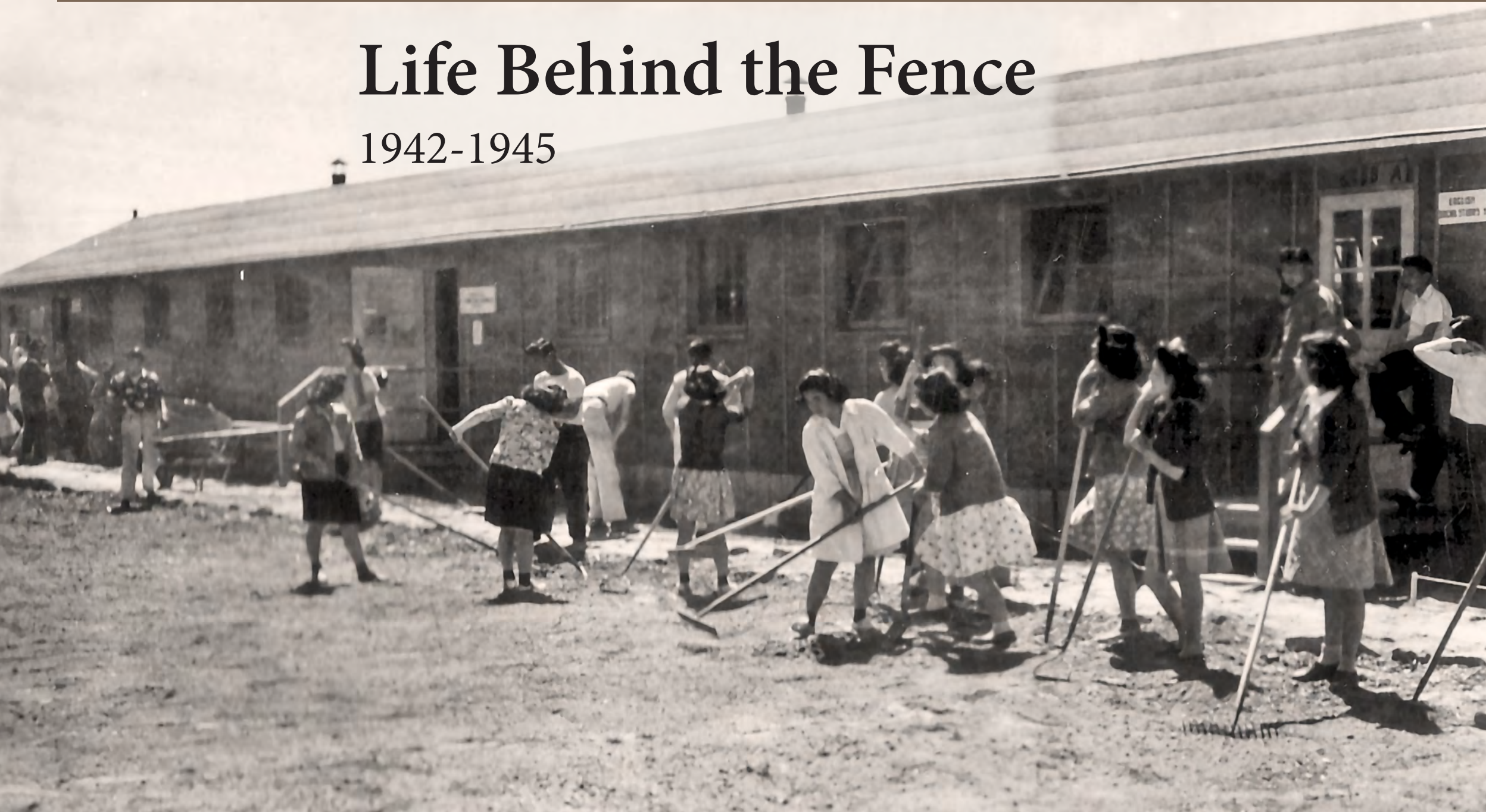


MINIDOKA CHRONICLE

Life Behind the Fence

1942-1945





Hunt High School Mass Choir
prepares for a performance at Jerome
High School, 1943.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent Richard Pomeroy
crowning the King of Hunt High
School, Johnny Okamoto. Princes and
crown bearers are in waiting behind,
May 7, 1943.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION





Superintendent Richard Pomeroy crowning the Queen of Hunt High School, Betty Aoki and court of princesses, May 7, 1943.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Students prepare the area outside the school for a garden.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



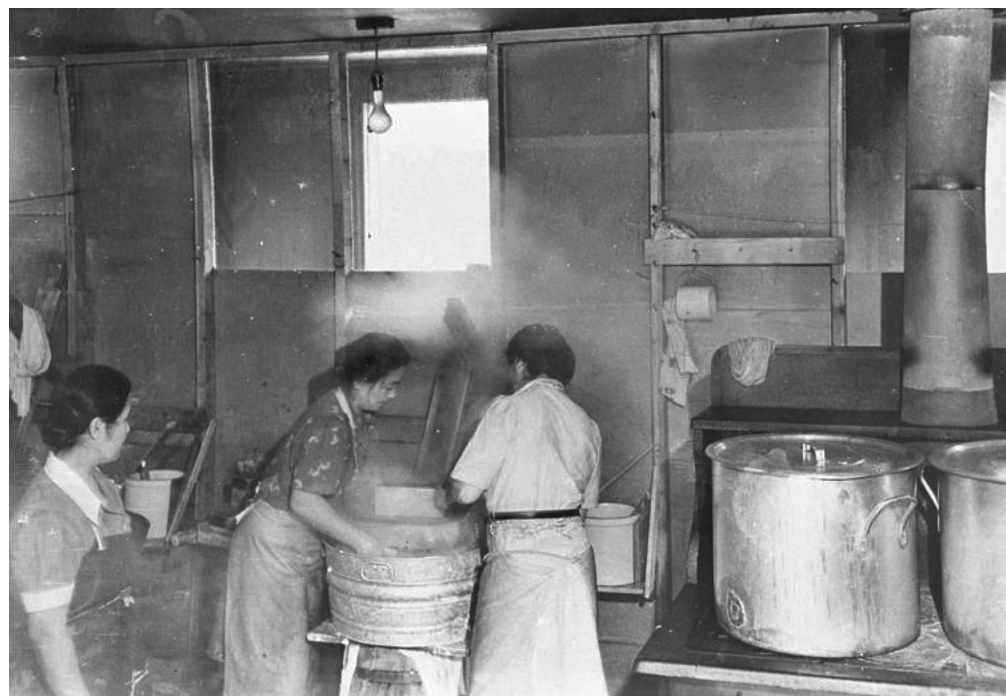


The Co-op store was the only business enterprise allowed to operate in camp. There were four stores, located on Blocks 6, 14, 30, and 40. People could shop here or purchase items through mail order catalogs.

DENSHŌ/THE MATSUOKA FAMILY COLLECTION

The laundry and bathrooms were combined in one building on each block.

THE WING LUKE MUSEUM/THE HATATE COLLECTION





Painting: Playing Go in the furnace room at Minidoka, 1943, artist unknown. Go is an abstract strategy board game for two.

DENSHŌ/THEMAYENO FAMILY COLLECTION

A woman en route to the showers from her barrack building. Incarcerees installed gravel paths and boardwalks to avoid walking through the mud to get to the latrines, ca. 1943.

THE WING LUKE MUSEUM/THE HATATE COLLECTION





Hunt High School's cross
country team

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND
RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Hunt High School's girls
basketball champions

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND
RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



Organized school sports as well as block sports teams played a major role in camp activities and daily life. Fourteen ball fields were located throughout the residential blocks of the camp.

Hunt High School's baseball team

COURTESY/MATSUBU FAMILY



FIRST ROW—Aki Nanda, Tosh Saito, Bob Fukunami—hut boy, George Koda, Ray Shiki,
SECOND—Ted Okita, Lindy Sata, Sho Sakakibara, Jim Kuga, George Anyama, Tom Hayashi, Terumasa Oka,
THIRD ROW—Hank Matsubu, Sob Nakahara, Joe Tanemitsu, Bob Aoki, Charles Kinoshita, Ray Mitsudo, Tak Akiyama—coach.



Hank Matsubu

COURTESY/MATSUBU FAMILY

“Oh yeah, in the evening there was, all in the summer, they had baseball leagues; they had dances every Saturday night in the mess halls. But most of all, after dinner we just kind of hung out. And there again I made a lot of good friends.”

Don Maeda

1943

DENSHŌ/THE DON MAEDA COLLECTION

In 2007, the Seattle Mariners held a special day for these former Minidoka incarcerateds and semi-pro baseball players. Pictured with Mariners Ichiro Suzuki and Kenji Johjima are (L-R) Hank Ito, George Nakagawa, Hank Matsubu, and Joe Matsuzaki.

COURTESY/GEORGE NAKAGAWA





Children eating Christmas dinner in a mess hall, 1942.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

A typical lunch plate served in the mess halls.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

“Some people say it was terrible, but we survived. I know my husband wouldn’t go out for breakfast most of the time, because he didn’t like it, but I was hungry. I’d get up and go to the mess hall and eat. It wasn’t bad.”

Molly K. Maeda
1942

DENSHŌ/THE MOLLY K. MAEDA COLLECTION



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	1
STE. 10								MEAL PERMIT No. <u>22-67</u>							
JUL 27 1943								#11330							
Yosh Asaba								#431190				36-7-A			
Name								Ide. No.				Address			
High School								#22 only							
Place of Employment								Mess Hall							
Bessie A. Wilder								Dinner only							
CHIEF PROJECT STeward								Meal							
VOID IF DEFACED IN ANY WAY															
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY															

This meal ticket was required when eating outside your designated mess hall.

DENSHŌ/THE MAMIYA FAMILY COLLECTION

“So my parents were at Minidoka, and my dad would say, so sometimes they would go to different blocks just to see the different food, and they noticed that some blocks had different food, or it tasted better than other places. The same ingredients, but how they prepared it.”

Ruth Sasaki

1942

DENSHŌ/THE RUTH SASAKI COLLECTION



Mess hall line

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



A typical mess hall kitchen.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Each of the 36 residential blocks had its own mess hall and kitchen staffed by incarcerated. Incarcerated were supposed to eat their meals in their block's mess hall, but that did not always happen.



Cooks were also incarcerated. The quality of the meals varied widely from block to block.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

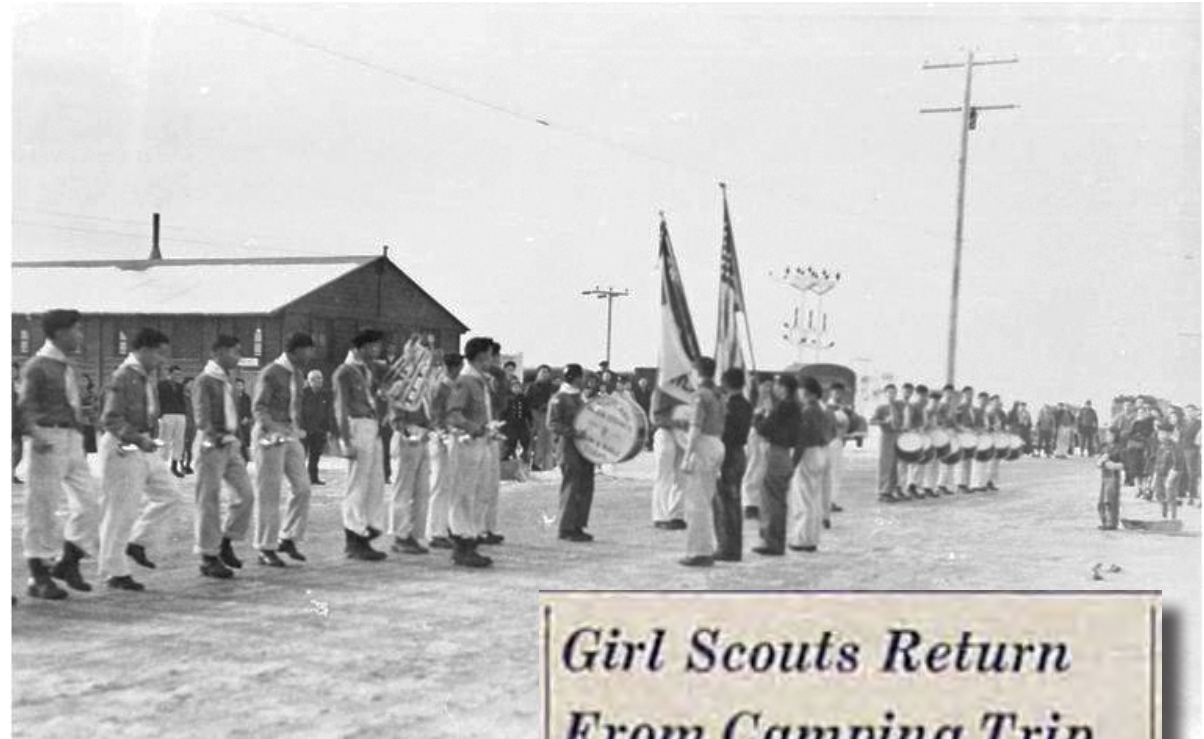
Kitchen staff included cooks, food prep staff, servers, and dishwashers. Pictured is the mess hall for farmers.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



Hunt District Boy Scouts Drum and Bugle Corps (originally Troop 123 from Portland, Oregon).

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND
RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



Girl Scout and Brownie troops at Minidoka, ca. 1943.

DENSHŌ/THE MAMIYA FAMILY COLLECTION



Girl Scouts Return From Camping Trip

Tired, sunburned, but happy, 67 Girl Scouts wearily returned to the project Saturday evening after a camping trip in the scenic Sawtooth Mountains. Led by Miss Veda Satterfield, girls' physical education instructor here at Hunt, they spent four days hiking, fishing and playing softball. The evenings were spent around a campfire; singing and presenting skits.

Scouting offered a welcomed relief from the confinement of camp. Both boys and girls were able to take advantage of outings away from camp.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



PTA mothers got together to mend clothes at the Hunt Nursey School, ca.1943.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



A creative treatment to customize the entrance to a barrack, ca. 1943.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



The Tazumas, an Issei couple, pose in front of their barrack, ca. 1943.

DENSHŌ/THE TAZUMA FAMILY COLLECTION

Mother's Day ceremony honoring mothers whose sons were killed in action, Twin Falls, ID, ca. 1943-44.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



Joseph and Mary Anne Sakamoto, both 80, posed for their golden wedding anniversary, December 11, 1943. They emigrated from Japan in 1894 and ran several businesses in Seattle prior to incarceration.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



The Hospital Area, a collection of barrack buildings, is located on the west side of the camp. Both white and Japanese American medical professionals tended to the camp's needs. Many of the nurses and aides

were incarcerated. Japanese American wages in camp were restricted to what a Private in the army would make, so average wages in camp was \$12-19 a month.



Dentist

THE WING LUKE MUSEUM/THE HATATE
COLLECTION



Hospital interns

DENSHŌ/ THE YASUTAKE FAMILY
COLLECTION



Nursery

THE WING LUKE MUSEUM/THE HATATE
COLLECTION



Hospital room

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



Hospital pharmacy. Mr. Izui (left) and colleague, ca. 1944.

DENSHŌ/THE MATSUOKA FAMILY COLLECTION



A Nisei soldier Hank Gosho visits his wife and baby.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



Bill Matsumoto and Richard Noboru Izumi outside their barrack.

COURTESY/SUNAMOTO FAMILY



Left: Mother and child walking between barracks.

DENSHŌ/THE BIGELOW FAMILY COLLECTION

Bottom Left: Family sitting outside barracks.

DENSHŌ/THE MITSUOKA FAMILY COLLECTION

Below: Nisei couple with baby son in sailor suit.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



The January 27, 1943 edition of the Irrigator reported that 4,550 people were employed in the camp, of which 2,910 are men and 1,640 are women. The camp population at the time is 6,327 people.

Monthly wages, based on what an Army private would have made, were capped at \$19 a month depending on one's job. Doctors of Japanese ancestry were paid \$19 a month, teachers made \$16 per month, and clerical workers, cooks, and farm hands made \$12 to \$14 per month. As in the Army, everyone received a clothing allowance and ration cards. All wages were well below what white workers were paid for similar jobs.

The Motor Pool was where mechanics repaired and maintained all the camp's cars and trucks.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



Below: Women filled many of the office jobs for the WRA administration. They were supervised by a handful of white administrators.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Right: Carpenters building Hunt High School. Carpentry classes were available and many students made furniture for their apartments.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Below Right: Welding was also taught. This trade was useful for jobs repairing machinery, vehicles, and pipelines in camp.

THE WING LUKE MUSEUM



Incarcerees could work at an array of jobs in agriculture, maintenance, and safety.

The WRA worked with the Bureau of Reclamation in using the site that the Minidoka WRA camp was on to reclaim the land from the desert, turning the land into a farmable land for homesteading. After clearing the land, incarcerated people planted a multitude of food crops on 800 acres. The farm project was self-sustaining and even produced a surplus. In 1944, it was reported that the farmland produced enough to feed a town of 7,500 people.

Men and women harvest the first corn crop at Minidoka, August 1943.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



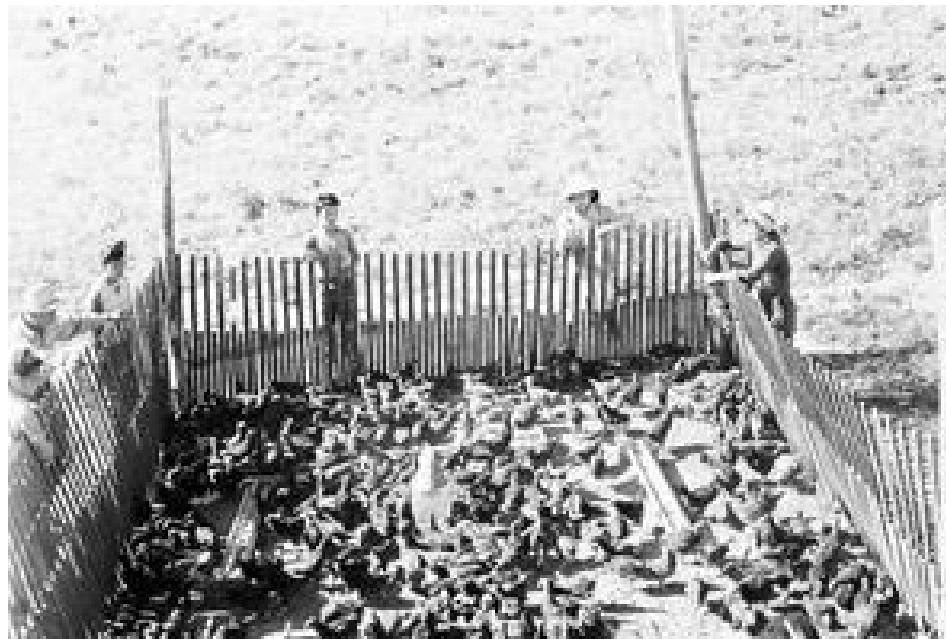


Left: The coal crew loaded their trucks at the local rail siding and then delivered the coal to each block in the camp.

Below Left: A chicken farm and a hog farm provided meat and eggs.

Below: Clearing sagebrush around Minidoka. A heavy tractor pulls a triangle of railroad irons to break off sagebrush, the first step in preparing the land for planting, April 1943.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



Religion played a key role in the well being of the incarcerated. Whether it was keeping faith in a brighter future, praying for a loved one, or trying to find meaning in human loss, religion was a critical element for the community.

Many churches and temples where people had worshipped before the war continued to support their congregations during incarceration. Some, like Reverend Emory Andrews and Father Leopold Tibesar, moved to the camp locations so they could continue to minister to their followers. Others, like Reverend Tansei Tanakawa, was a religious leader, block manager, and incarcerated at Minidoka.



A Buddhist altar at Minidoka (no date).

DENSHŌ



Instead of individual places of worship, religious leaders agreed to cooperate together. Three confederated organizations were created: the United Buddhists, the Catholic Church, and the Federated Christians.

A Sunday school class, Minidoka, ca. 1943-44.

DENSHŌ/THE BETTY SHIBAYAMA COLLECTION



The Most Holy Reverend (Archbishop) Edward J. Riley (center) of the Catholic Diocese of Boise, came to Minidoka to conduct confirmation services. Father Tibesar (right) welcomed him on October 19, 1943.

DENSHŌ

This WRA document is titled "Minidoka: Preliminary Report in a New Frontier Community." It describes the incarcerated as "colonists" and "pioneers" engaged in a bold experiment that is a frontier community. The first and last pages of the report are reproduced here, ca. Fall 1942.

MINIDOKA: PRELIMINARY REPORT IN A NEW FRONTIER COMMUNITY

Administrators, Colonists Strive To Solve Immediate Problems of Dust, Crowded Barracks

Japanese Relocation Papers
Bancroft Library

The Faces of Minidoka Reflect the Determination Of Its Residents to Meet the Challenge of Arid Sageland, Wind and Sun on the Idaho Desert

By Larry S. Tajiri

Last week we spent a day at Minidoka. We met its people and their administrators, tasted its food, choked in its dust.

This is a preliminary report. The story of Minidoka will be told in the months--perhaps years--to come. This is an impression of Minidoka as it is today, three weeks since the arrival of the first evacuee colonists.

Minidoka is a relocation center, one of the ten in Arizona, California, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado and Arkansas which will be the wartime homes for most of the 110,000 Japanese who were evacuated by military order from the great coastal cities and farmlands west of Sierras and west of the Cascades.

Minidoka is located in Jerome county in southcentral Idaho. Its 68,000 acres of virgin desert sageland are some 4,000 feet above sea level. The longest distance from border to border in the relocation area is fifteen miles. When construction work is completed the community will have 35 blocks of 15 buildings each. Each of these block units will be composed of barracks, a dining hall and a recreation building. There will be 37 dining halls in all. A 200-bed hospital is nearing completion. Minidoka will have a fire department with water from two huge towers available for any emergency. It will have a telephone exchange and a community newspaper. There will be two grade schools and a high school. There will be stores, movies and meeting halls. Minidoka will have all the services which normally serve a community of ten thousand.

Minidoka will be a modern American city--frontier style.

From U.S. Hi way 30 you can see the cloud-layers of dust which form an umbrella over Minidoka. Eden, a small community of several hundred persons, is the gateway to Minidoka. The War Relocation Authority has taken over a service station and garage for its office at Eden. The nearest "big town" is Twin Falls, about 30 miles away. Within a month Minidoka, with its capacity population of 10,000, will rival Twin Falls in size.

There is feverish activity at Minidoka as construction work is speeded to accommodate the trainloads of evacuees arriving from the Puyallup and Portland assembly centers. Trucks, churning dust, roar down its unpaved roads. Three thousand white construction workers are building Minidoka under the direction of U.S. Army Engineers. That is the explanation for the Army M. P.'s who stand on stolid guard throughout the center area. When construction is completed, the Army will relinquish control of the area to the WRA. The Army sentries will be withdrawn and stationed outside the relocation project.

Minidoka presents a great engineering problem--the construction of the physical features of a community of 10,000--and a great sociological challenge, the emergency relocation of ten thousand human beings on raw desert land.

The People of Minidoka

The story of a community is the story of its people. The people of Minidoka with the exception of a few non-Japanese administrators and specialists are of Japanese ancestry. But the distinction ends there. The people are young and old, strong and infirm, citizens and aliens. A few scant months ago they were farmers and white-collar workers, students and

cannery workers, housewives and domestics. Some were orator-men and claudia waters of the F sawmill workers Seattle. Other from the truck Minidoka come f and from the pc Seattle. The r their love of t home. Aside fr their talents a American commun

The common nation. The pe willing to atta The faces of Mi challenge of do in the eyes of inevitable. Bu young colonist tialities."

Administration

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The people because of wart conditions as n Most of the peo for the duratio semble a concea

The admini not as "interne The canteen is other efforts t

Dust and h the people of M They say: "Unt lick the terrib thing else."

Something Gooding canal, through Minidok barrack city, b on a shallow di Miller-Gooding ditch is on its scooped out of the ditch will. Then grass will

As in othe of all. Becaus in some cases, family groups i reason for this

basis of family groups existing in the Japanese community at the time of the census of 1930. At that time there were many large families, and few were married. Today there are few large families, since the children have grown up, have married and have families of their own. There are many large Barrack apartments for families of seven people but not enough large families to fill them. They are many young family units of two or three persons and not enough barracks to accommodate them. This has necessitated the practice of placing more than one family group together in the same unpartitioned barrack room. The effect on morale and on morals of such a practice is obvious. The administrators realize this but their hands have been tied because they haven't had enough roofs for everybody to live in separate family units. The story of Minidoka in this respect is the story of Manzanar and Poston and Tule Lake.

Trying to Solve Problems

But it can be said that at Minidoka the administrators are sincerely working to solve this problem of housing. The plan is to cut up the large unpartitioned dormitories for bachelors and single girls into small "apartments" for young married couples. The large "apartment", suitable for families of seven, will then accommodate the single persons who will be classified in groups of similar background and interests.

According to the people of Minidoka, food has not been the problem to date that it has been in other relocation centers and in many assembly centers. The food in the dining halls has been of sufficient quantity and has been well-prepared.

No Class Distinctions

To date there has been no "class distinction" in the dining halls between the food for the Caucasian administrators and the food for the colonists. There has been steak for the administrators and hash for the evacuees.

The non-Japanese personnel eat in the same dining hall with the colonists. They go to the counter and are served the same food in the same cafeteria style. After the meal they take their dishes, just as the colonists do, to the washers.

We had a noon meal at Minidoka. It was the same meal served to the administrative personnel. It happened to be according to the colonists, the poorest meal served since day Minidoka was opened to the evacuees. We were served plate of rice and beans. There was lettuce and tomato salad on the table and an apple at each place. Hot tea was served. There were "seconds" for those who wanted them. As usual we were charged 25 cents for our plate of rice and beans.

Future Lies in the Land

The future of Minidoka lies in the 68,000 acres of brush-covered land on which the project is located. Most of this acreage is tillable and will soon be cleared for agricultural production. The first 200 acres which will be planted will produce subsistence crops for the use of the entire camp. Truck crops, tomatoes, corn, cereal grains, beans, carrots, onions and potatoes will be planted. The present policy of agricultural production will probably be to discourage the planting of farm commodities which will compete with the produce of the farms in the adjacent agricultural district. Surplus produce will be sent to other relocation centers.

Minidoka has a farm labor problem of its own. Most of the people have been evacuated from urban districts and are relatively few farmers among them.

The relocation community is proud of its 200-bed hospital which is nearing completion. The various wings of the hospital

unit are linked together by a great single corridor which is 750 feet long. This hospital will be staffed by Japanese personnel under the direction of a young Caucasian doctor and a young Caucasian head nurse.

Barrack Apartments

The barracks are of the Army's T. O. (theatre of operations) type with slight modifications for family occupancy. We saw two barrack apartments. One 16 by 20 feet was designed for three persons. It consisted of a rectangular room with a coal stove for heating. The room was lined with colotex. Contrasted with the reports of barracks at Manzanar and Poston, these seem of better construction. The barracks, however, have the usual outer covering of tarpaper.

Because of priorities, the flush toilets had not yet arrived, although sewer pipes have already been laid. Crude latrines have temporarily been put up to serve until the flush toilets are installed. The toilets, when they are constructed, will be partitioned.

Each block has its shower rooms and its laundry and wash rooms. The women's showers (an improvement over the first centers in California) are partitioned, although the men's showers are not. There are four bathtubs in every unit for the older people.

Only Beds Supplied

As in other centers, the colonists upon arrival at their new barracks have been given a bare room and only beds and mattresses. They are not issued a single piece of furniture. A scrap pile of lumber left by the construction workers will serve as the raw material supply for the furniture which the evacuees will build. At present this scrap lumber is being classified so that a more equitable distribution of the wood can be made.

"For God's sake," one of the administrators said, "please tell the people to stop shipping food and lumber to Minidoka. We have enough wood and we will have enough food even if we have to buy it ourselves."

Water for Minidoka's kitchens come from two deep wells. Three other wells are being drilled. Water for irrigation will be taken from the Miller-Gooding canal, the maintenance of which will be one of the public service projects on which the colonists will be employed.

Minidoka today is an experiment. It is a twentieth century repetition of the frontier struggle of pioneers against the land and the elements. The Japanese colonists have one advantage, however. They will have modern tools, barring wartime priorities and shortages, to wield in their struggle to subjugate the wild land and to build new homes.

Minidoka is not a concentration camp. But we remember the words of one young colonist as we left the relocation center: "I'm a free-born American, accused of no crime. Why must I remain here?"

This is just a preliminary report, hastily written to meet a newspaper deadline. We would like to see Minidoka in six months, in a year from today. The War Relocation Authority and its administrators need these six months and that year before full judgment can be given. This first impression, in Minidoka's first month of life, is encouraging to us.

Without work or their daily routines from home, both men and women found themselves with idle time or without a sense of purpose. Many discovered their artistic side, creating artwork, crafts, furniture, and sculpture from found materials. Many ventured out into the sagebrush to collect greasewood and basalt for their projects. Others used the desert recreationally for golf or hunting.

Leather butterfly pin
Gift of Mary Okita and Ruby Izui

OREGON NIKKEI ENDOWMENT

Leather hat and moccasin pin
Gift of Mary Okita and Ruby Izui

OREGON NIKKEI ENDOWMENT





Top Left: Wood carving made from gnarled greasewood. Gift of Kazuo Ochiai

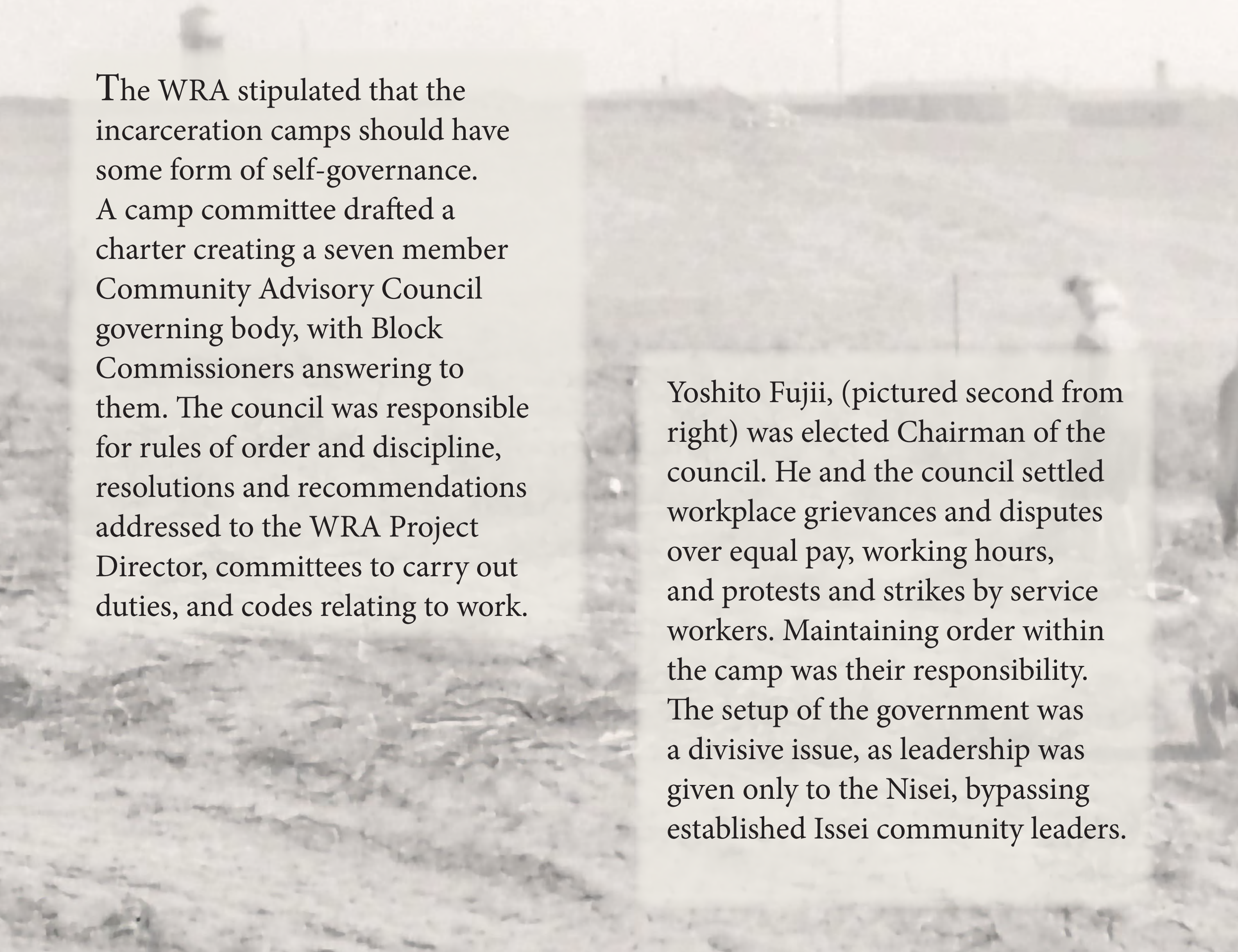
OREGON NIKKEI ENDOWMENT

Top Right: Carved table from sagebrush and greasewood. Yasusuke Kogita, ca. 1942-45

OREGON PUBLIC BROADCASTING/ KAYO LACKEY

Left: Popsicle stick lamp shade Gift of Don Shubert

OREGON NIKKEI ENDOWMENT



The WRA stipulated that the incarceration camps should have some form of self-governance. A camp committee drafted a charter creating a seven member Community Advisory Council governing body, with Block Commissioners answering to them. The council was responsible for rules of order and discipline, resolutions and recommendations addressed to the WRA Project Director, committees to carry out duties, and codes relating to work.

Yoshito Fujii, (pictured second from right) was elected Chairman of the council. He and the council settled workplace grievances and disputes over equal pay, working hours, and protests and strikes by service workers. Maintaining order within the camp was their responsibility. The setup of the government was a divisive issue, as leadership was given only to the Nisei, bypassing established Issei community leaders.



Community Advisory Council (L-R):

Heitaro Hikida, Kuniro Mayeno, Yosajiro Doi, Shigeru Osawa, Jack Chikata, Yoshito Fujii (chairman), Genji Mihara (vice-chairman), c. August, 1944.

THE WING LUKE MUSEUM

