



1943

## Lil Dan'l: One Year in a Relocation Center

George Akimoto

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# Gil Stangil



ONE · YEAR · IN · A · RELOCATION · CENTER





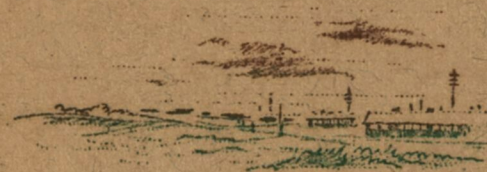
ONE · YEAR · IN · A ·  
RELOCATION · CENTER

## FOREWORD

Lil Dan'l, symbolizing the eight thousand and some odd evacuees of the Rohwer Center, has cavorted through the pages of the OUTPOST for twelve long months.

Of what Lil Dan'l and we evacuees have experienced, much can be said and written--our disappointments, our happy moments, our apprehensions--but it has always been a characteristic of Lil Dan'l to show us the humor and ironies in the trivial and yet vital things that have happened to us.

In these few pages, the little tragedies and minor comedies that we shall remember with a smile are recorded for future reference.



- This publication is dedicated to those evacuees who have come through this most critical period of their lives unscathed in spirit, undaunted in courage, and prepared to face the future with renewed fortitude.



## ARRIVAL

OCTOBER 1942: 4,500 evacuees from Santa Anita, then 4,200 more arrived from Stockton--among them was one stowaway from "somewhere between California and Arkansas."

Amid the confusion of bags, baggage, bawling babies, bankers and bums, Lil Dan'l arrived at the Rohwer Relocation Center in Desha County, Arkansas. With a cheerful grin and a friendly, "How y'all," he started life anew with the motto, "One for all, and all for one."



## KNOCK, KNOCK. WHO'S THERE?

### OUTPOST:

It was on a midnight dreary,

While we pondered weak and weary;

There came a knocking, knocking at our door.

"Who's there?" we challenged, reaching for our Dick Tracy super-pistol.

There in the doorway stood a miniature frontiersman with a coonskin cap.

"We were just deciding your name. Look at all the suggestions," pointed the staff to the bare table.

"My name," roared the stranger, "is Lil Dan'l. My name has always been Lil Dan'l. What's your story?"

"What a coincidence!" we replied meekly, our eyes fixed on the huge blunderbuss staring us in the face. "It's Lil Dan'l by a unanimous choice."



\* THUS, Lil Dan'l was introduced to the OUTPOST and became its mascot. Although he has kept his last name a deep secret, we are led to believe that his full name is Lil Dan'l 'con. Mat-ta-ku.



# FIRST IMPRESSIONS

*Dear Diary:* Today a guy in our block caught a Rattler nearly six feet long; they say there are more in the wooded area. There's no hot water in our neighborhood yet, so we walk six blocks to take a shower. Am making new friends everyday. Some of the barracks are still being built. It's still hard to believe we are so far from good old California.



## • COLD SHOWERS AGAIN

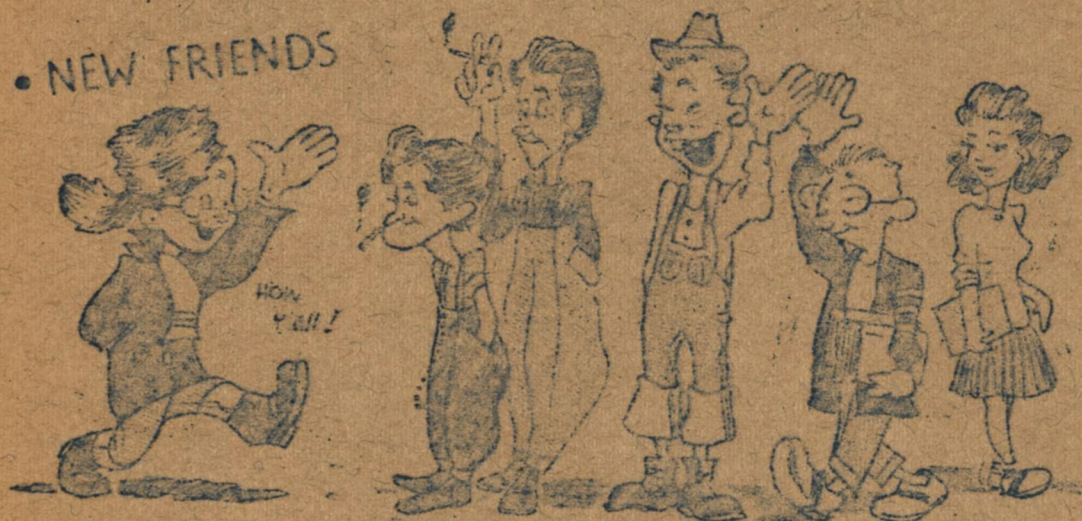


"Hot dang! Hot showers!" sang out Lil Dan'l gaily as he trotted up to the showers. "Help! Murder! Tsumetai!" shrieked a blue-nosed, shivering gent as he tore by. "I really didn't need a shower anyway," muttered Lil Dan'l as he turned away.

# OF ROHWER



## • NEW FRIENDS





## 6 FURNITURE for OUR APARTMENTS



• Lil Dan'l moved into his 20' x 20' apartment, which was completely furnished with 1 cot, 1 mattress and 1 heating stove; he needed chairs, tables and shelves. Lumber piles mysteriously dwindled or disappeared completely, and soon Dan'l's ingenuity produced the necessary furniture.

## FUEL SHORTAGE 7 REMEDIED

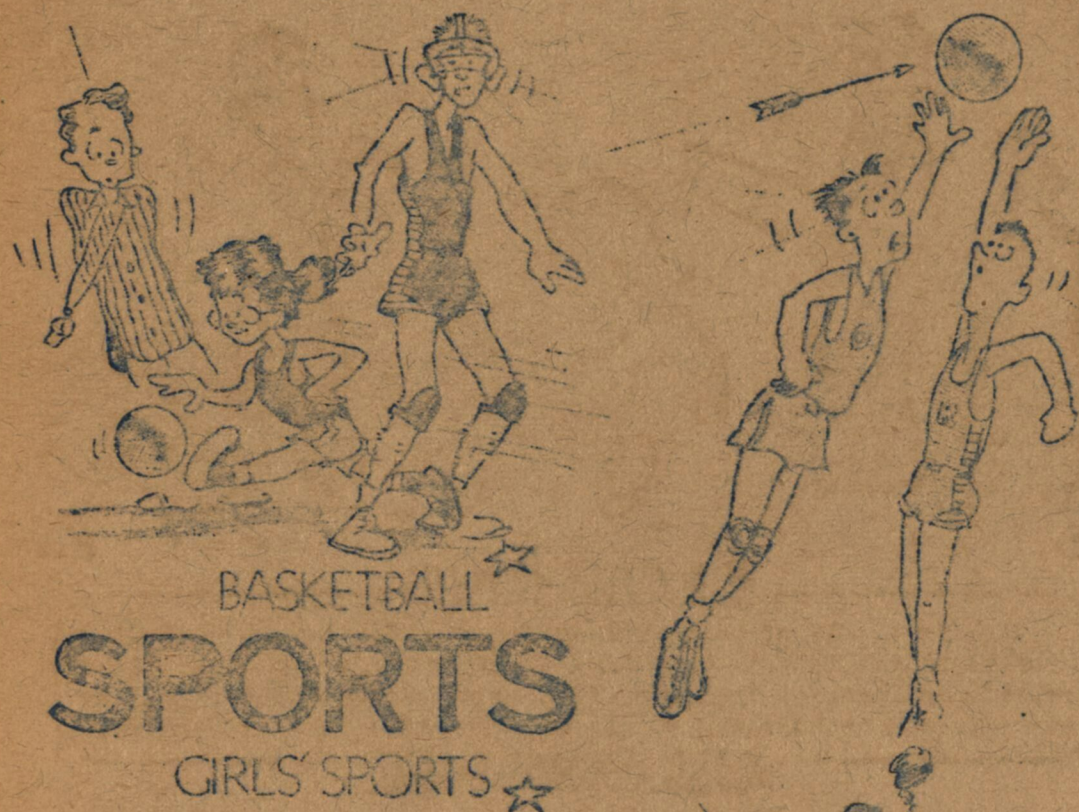
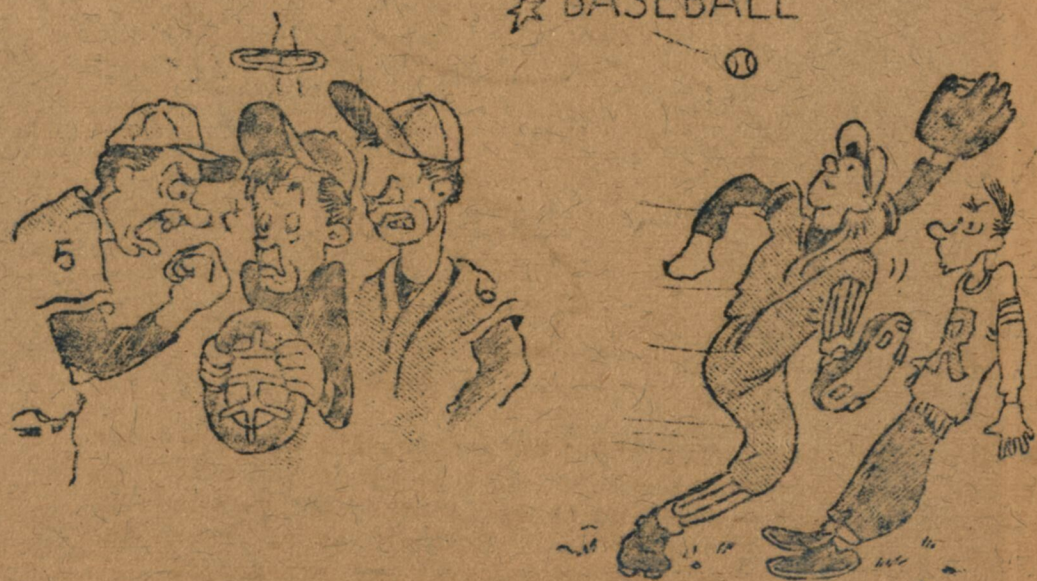


• With winter fast approaching the center, Lil Dan'l and his friends found their wood-sheds empty. Women and children, young and old—all rolled up their sleeves and tackled the nearby woods with sharpened Sears Roebuck axes. Soon the wooded area became a stretch of saw-dust and axe-chips.





★ FOOTBALL  
**CENTER**  
 ★ BASEBALL



BASKETBALL  
**SPORTS**  
 GIRLS' SPORTS ★



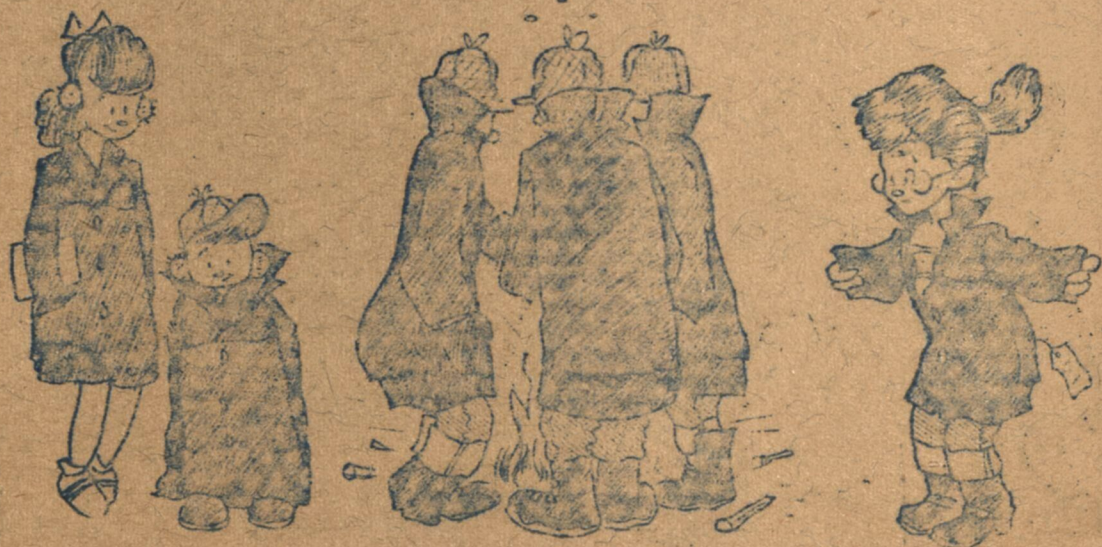




## CLOTHING

The first GI clothing allowance came in November of 1942 when black mackinaws were issued to Fort Belvoir residents. "Pea-coats" soon became a familiar sight everywhere in the center, for even women and children were all sporting this "latest fashion."

## ALLOWANCE

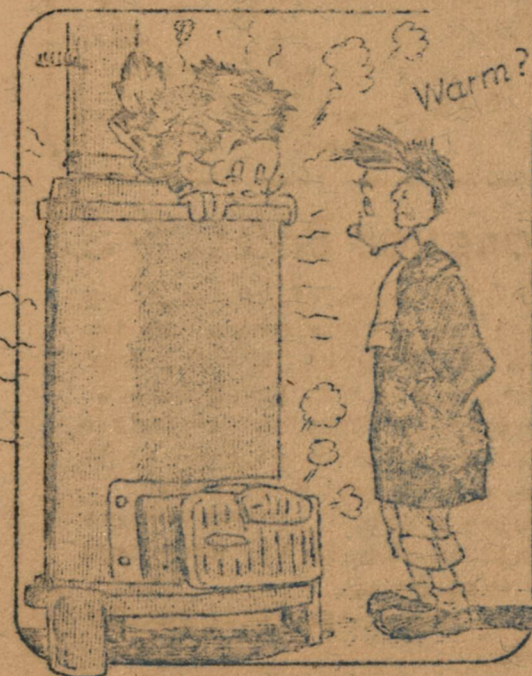


# ARKANSAS WINTER



Slippery Walks

First  
Snow



Warm?



It rains by  
Bucket-fuls.





## Queen Contest and Coronation Ball

With the words, "I crown you official queen of Holwer," Ray D. Johnston, Project director, placed the silver crown on the regal head of her majesty the queen, Shigeo Nakano, thus climaxing the month-long contest sponsored by the Royal Dukes.

Contestants had been sponsored by various clubs and organizations; votes were sold--all profits from which were donated to the numerous community organizations and to worthy causes.

The Coronation Ball was stupendous; a crowd of 650 persons thronged the lavishly decorated hall to witness the crowning. There the raffish winners were also announced.

The Royal Dukes' Queen Contest and Coronation Ball was one of the social highlights of the year.



## MINOR SPORTS







NOEL PAGEANT TO HIGHLIGHT  
GALA HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES



SAINT NICK WILL DELIVER  
THE GOODS TONIGHT



## FIRST HOLIDAY SEASON IN ROHWER

An unidentified aircraft circled the darkness above the center, and Saint Nicholas peered out of the cockpit at a scene of laughter and gaiety below. Even the black barracks seemed to glow with warmth and spirit.

Smiling grown-ups herded bright-faced children into the

various mess halls to await Santa Claus, and soon the air was filled with cheerful Christmas carols. Shrouded with brightly colored paper decorations, a feeble fir tree stood in one corner.

Santa Claus staggered around the corner with his heavy load of non-rationed stuff, and ran into four little boys with ruffled hair and dirty faces.

"Look where you're goin', ya

ignorant drip!" commented one of them.

"They who ith this doity yogore. Wot'th your thtory," lisped the youngest one.

"Oi, let's beat 'im up. He ain't so biilig," came another.

Santa's eyes popped out. He picked up his enormous bag, and sputtering something about, "Dear, dear, this coming generation of kiddies," shuffled off in the direction of the mess

halls to spread goodwill and cheer to the other children in the center.

From a distance came the strains of "Moonlight Mood"—a dance somewhere in the community.

An old man dragged by, moaning out a lyric of the old country with deep, guttural sounds. He seemed happy.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



# Feminine ACTIVITIES



Knitting



Weaving



Flower-arranging



Going to School

# THE Children



Ya wanna  
make sumpin  
out of it ?!!



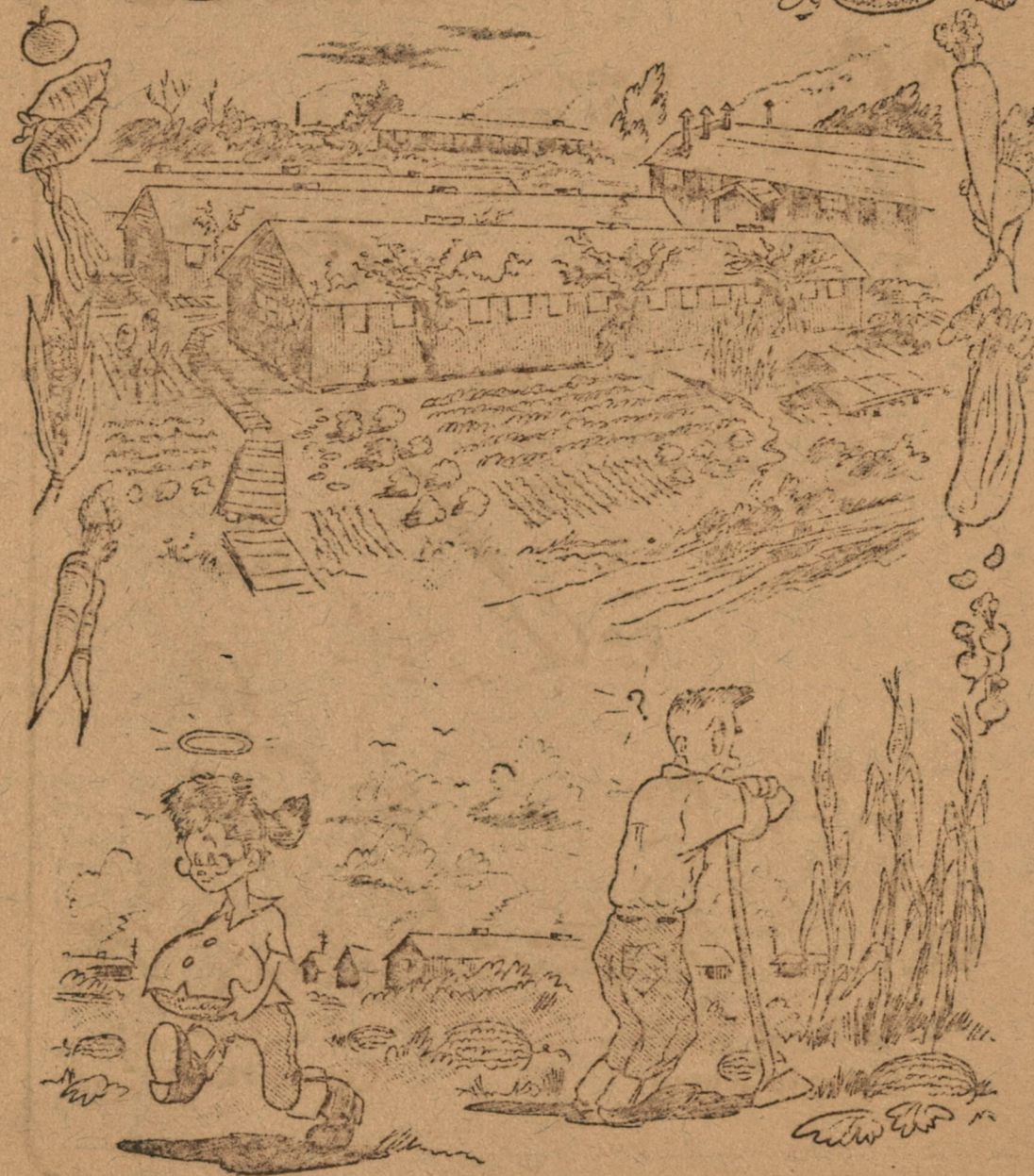
CRAYFISH



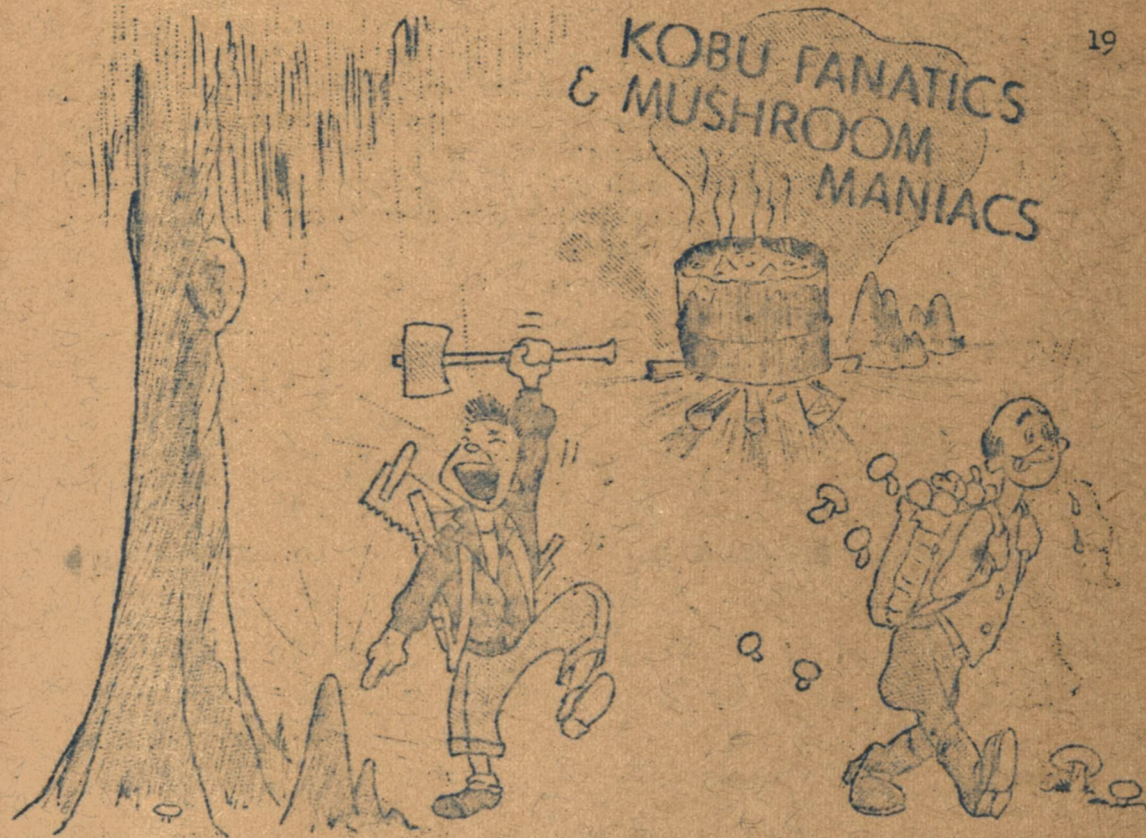
Coming Home



# VICTORY GARDENS



# KOBU FANATICS & MUSHROOM MANIACS



• A shadowy figure crept stealthily through the forest, his excited eyeballs bouncing from side to side within their sockets. Large beads of sweat oozed out of his forehead.

Suddenly he stopped frozen to the trail, and his narrowed eyes peered ahead into the grove of twisted Cypress trees. Then, his shaking hands reached for the instruments hanging from his belt.

With one blood-curdling scream, the kobu fanatic disappeared into the thicket, brandishing his axe and saw; in a few moments you will see him emerge with his prize--just an odd-shaped Cypress knee.

Such is life in our forest, on any sunny day--shadowy figures creeping through the woods, hunting kobu, mushrooms or whatever it may be. We are truly getting closer to mother nature, or can it be that we are getting closer to the asylum?



## 20 DANCES

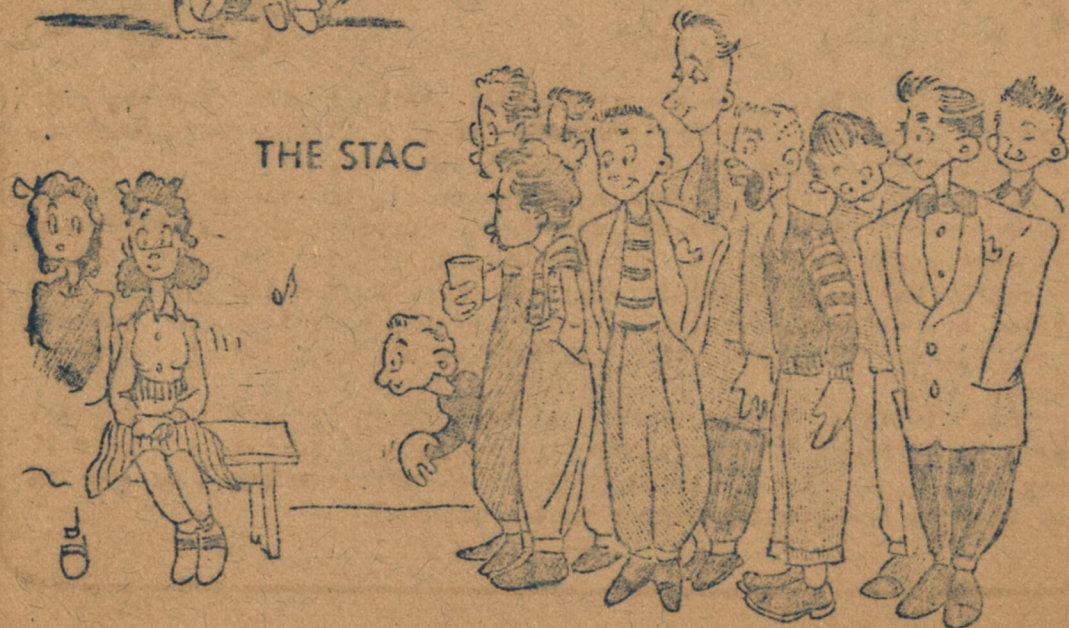
...were quite frequently held, and for many this was their only form of recreation. Ah yes, to dance to the soothing strains of current favorites in the soft glow of the colorful chandeliers would help anyone to forget his cares and worries even for a few hours.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

MAY I CUT IN?

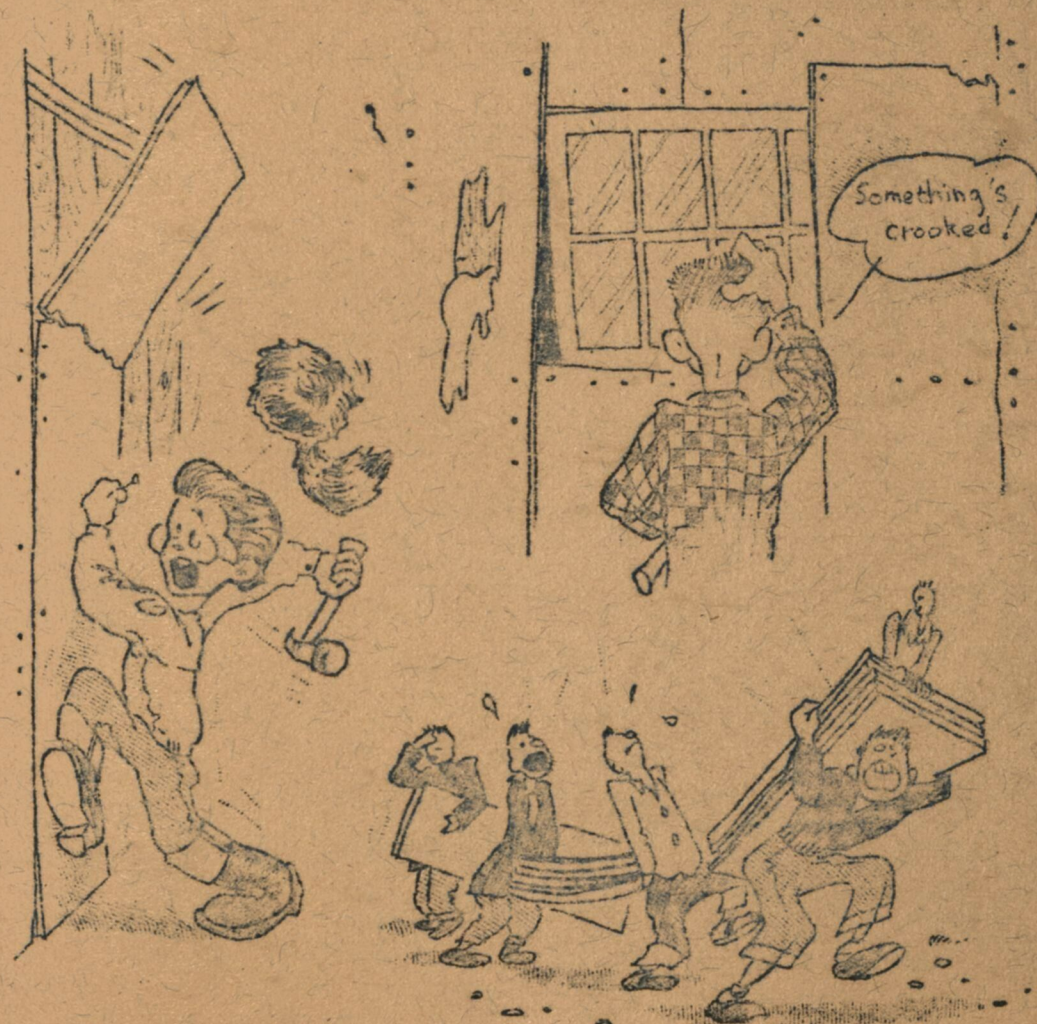


THE STAG



## 21 PUTTING UP WALLBOARDS

In December wallboards were distributed to each apartment to be put up by the residents themselves. These plaster-boards covered the ugly, bare lumber on the two walls that were left unfinished by the contractors and added the necessary warmth and finishing touch to the appearance of our new home.

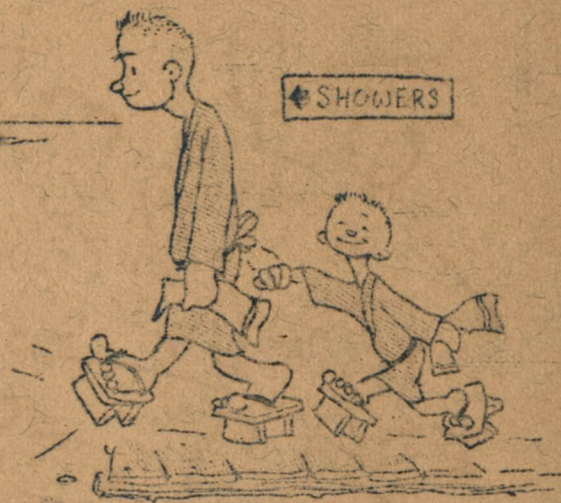
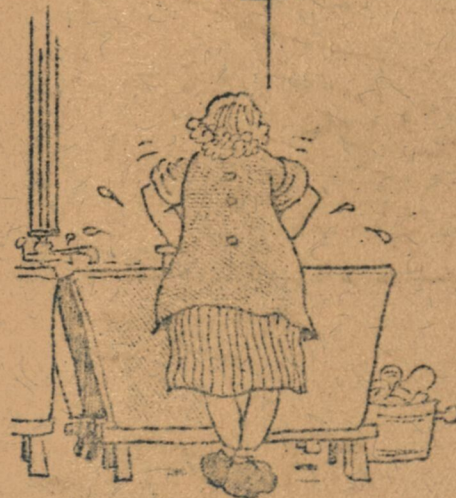
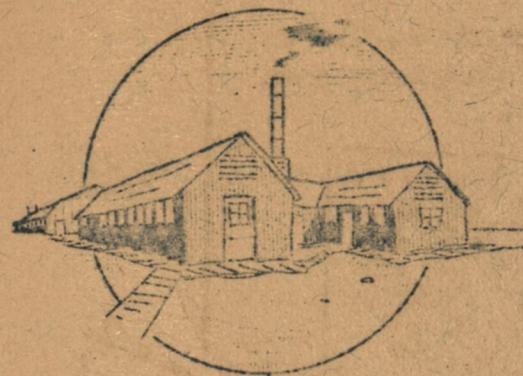
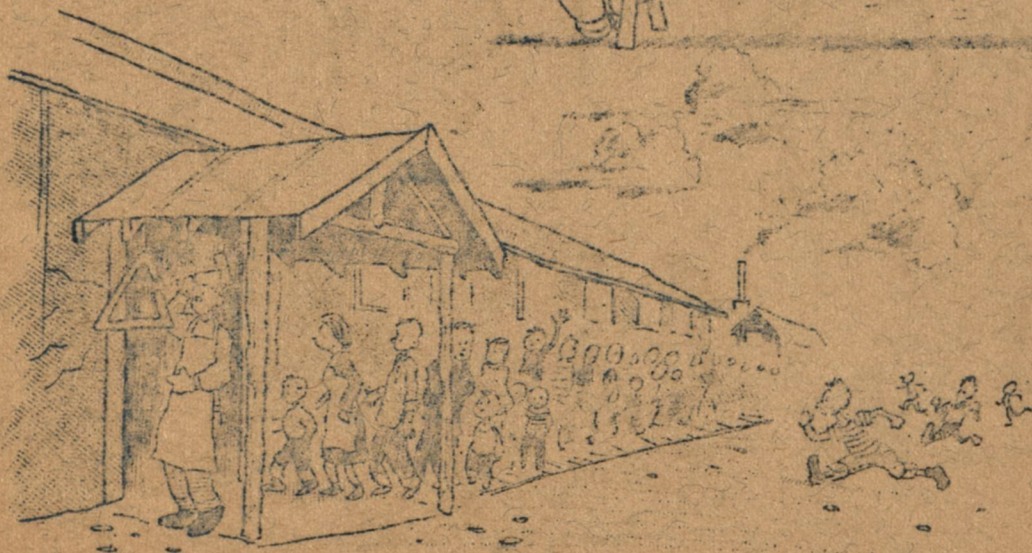




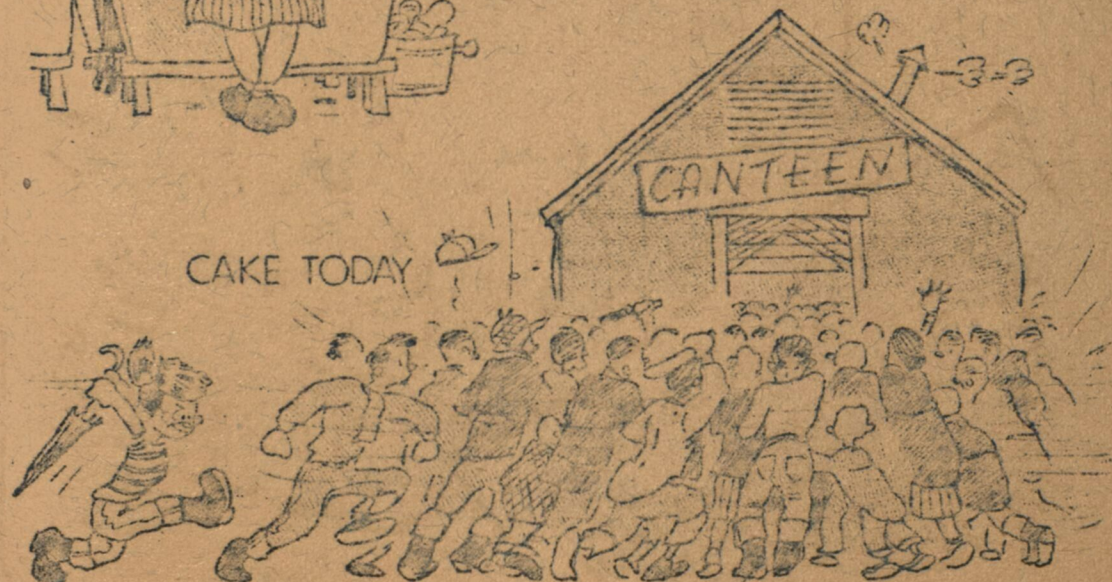
## Familiar Sights

Rows and rows of long, black barracks, same size, same shape, same number of windows--victory gardens surrounding the dusty tar-papered houses--mess gangs clanging in the distance--the clacking of "gata" on the wooden walk leading to the shower room--fish odor from the mess hall--the crowded Canteen--lumberjacks--hospital stackstuck in the distance--olive-drab trucks thundering by--howling babies--a morning glory beaming from a roof-top--this is Kohler.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

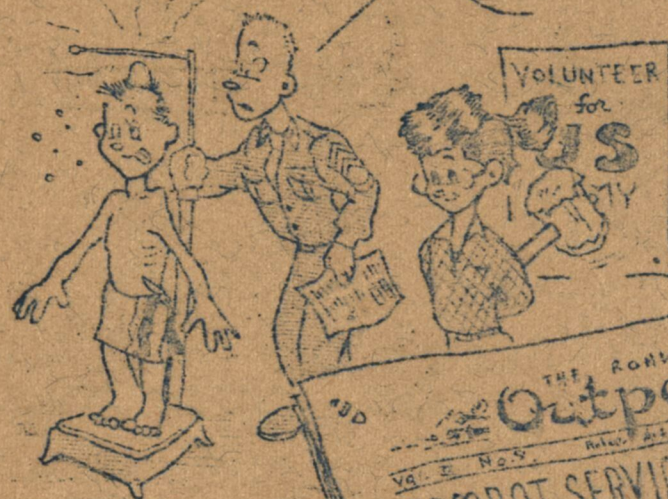


CAKE TODAY





Yup, you just made it! You're  
in the Army now.



THE RONNER  
**Outpost**  
Vol. 2 No. 4  
COMBAT SERVICE FOR NISEI

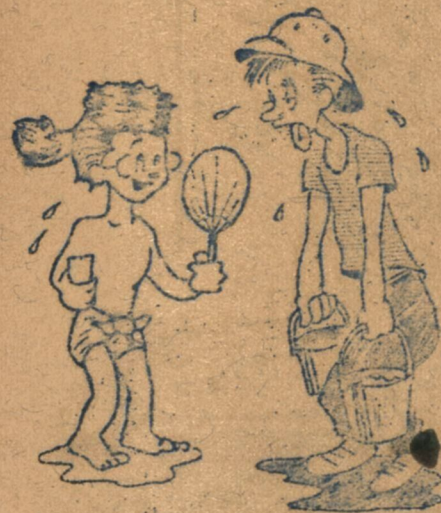
Bon voyage



THE RONNER  
**Outpost**  
Vol. 2 No. 5  
SEGREGATION TO BE UNDERTAKEN  
MYER REVEALS PROBABLE MOVING DATE  
IN THE  
IS R

HOT, ain't it!

ARKANSAS  
**SUMMER**

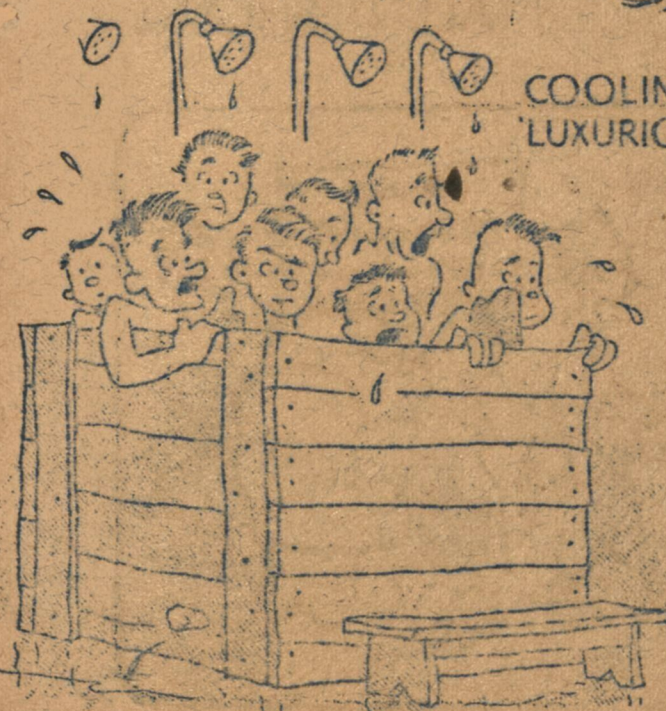


It must be a  
mirage!



COOLING OFF IN OUR  
'LUXURIOUS' BATH.

Move over!

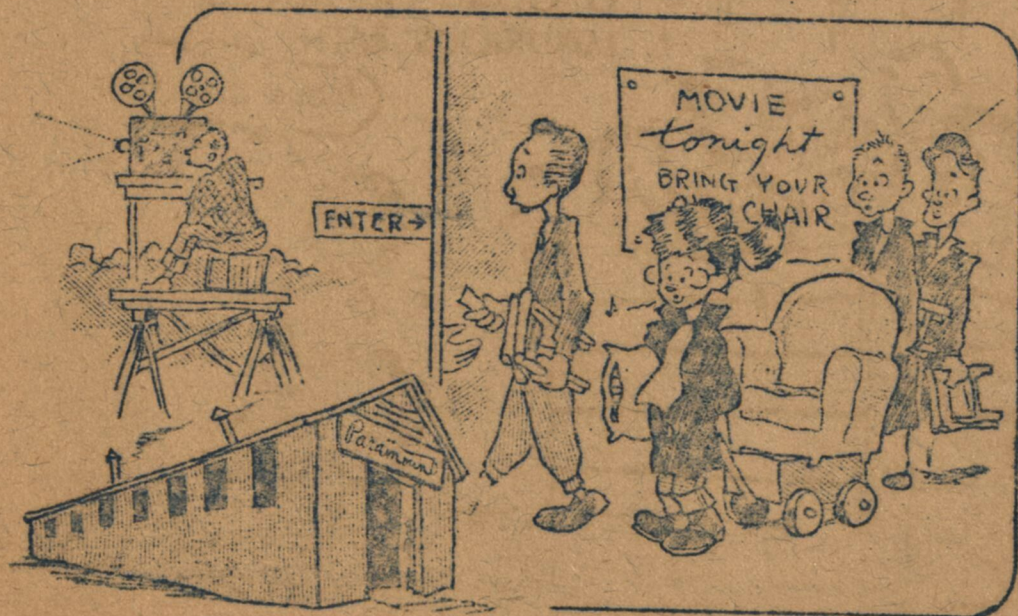






TALENT SHOWS

MOVIES



## RELOCATION

THE ROAD BACK TO  
NORMAL LIVING



...And so, Lil Dan'l fades from the picture, and your artist throws away his pencil stub and paper to heave a long sigh of relief. The bags under his eyes will soon disappear, but the memories of the incidents recorded in this magazine will linger on.

May this pictorial review give you enjoyment in the years to come and help you to remember your first year in Rohwer.



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