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Tule Lake kids] [Marguerite J. Cook]**

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A letter written by Marguerite J. Cook
(Mrs. Guy W. Cook) to college class mates
round robin - recounts experiences at
Tule Lake
Dear Girls: Guy W. Cook

Tule Lake project
Newell, Calif.
March 18, 1943

GUY W. COOK
NISEI COLLECTION
University of The Pacific

The letters held so many interesting stories this trip and I shall try to add a few lines about my work here.

This has been a radical departure from our mode of life and work. It has been very interesting with never a dull moment. Stud. Struggling to learn the names and put them with the right face kept me busy for several weeks. I took a group of Jr. High boys and girls and have enjoyed them very much. Gradually they have told me about evacuation, assembly centers and camp life. It has been difficult for these American born and educated children to understand why this should happen to them. They talk about "back home" and how homesick they are for former friends and normal life. Some of them have fathers in internment camps but they salute the flag and pledge allegiance with as much gusto and sincerity as any one. In fact one boy ~~was~~ whose father is interned ~~so~~ built a standard for our room flag and proudly leads the salute. Rumors and ~~frights~~ frightening reports have driven these people to sell homes and property for little or nothing. Heartless racketeers have robbed them ~~&~~ shamefully.

Recently the evacuees have been put through a third registration. First they were registered at home, fingerprinted and questioned before evacuation. When they arrived here they were again registered and ~~also~~ classified for work etc while in camp. Now they are being registered so they can be relocated in the middle west or east. They have been moved about and befuddled and confused so many times that few of the middle aged or older ones care to leave camp until they can go "back home". I have not become sentimental nor have I lost sight of the fact that there are many disloyal Japanese and Japanese

americans in our country yet I have witnessed ^{heard} some heartbreaking stories. One mother has a son who belongs to the U.S. navy and is now a prisoner in Japan. There are cases of families separated, perhaps a father and daughter are living here. The mother and two sons visiting in Japan were detained when war opened. Some american born Japanese have older brothers and sisters engaged in business or education in Japan. It seems difficult for people between 40 and 60 who were told they must be placed in these camps for protection from an unfriendly public to understand now why they are urged to go out to work in a new and strange and severely unfriendly public. They are so confused and bewildered and afraid so they ask to remain here until the war is over. The younger ones prefer to go out and seek new pastures if only they can be assured that their parents will be safe and fairly treated. The children have a strong sense of filial duty. The Japanese belief in ancestral ~~to~~ solidity crops out frequently. A family name must never die. If a young man is a younger son in one family and he marries into a family where there are no sons then he takes the name of his bride and lets his brothers carry on his ^{own} family name. Most of them have both Japanese and american names but they use the american one.

We have attended church, community programs, exhibits and 'Little Theater' productions. We have great respect for their talent and resourcefulness. I ate one meal in their mess hall. Everything was clean but simple. We had rice, macaroni with bologna sauce, green beans, raw vegetable salad, bread but no butter, tea and dried peaches. I saw no chop sticks or other things to mark it oriental.

You can tell the older group who have been trained in Japanese customs of courtesy. A group of twelve or more assembled near our apartment each day. They gather in the laundry room and get supplies to do the daily cleaning in our apartments. As each one comes the others bow + bow + smile + smile. Then they gossip (an ^{acquired} american custom) and laugh until

time to go to work. When work is done they return to the laundry room and visit and knit until time to go home. Then they all bow + smile + bow and smile some more. The younger folks have never learned the bowing act. They wave and say He! pal What's doing! By the way all of these women knit, sew crochet and make artificial flowers. The men all do carving, gardening and cabinet work. The exhibits of art, carving + flowers together with dolls and crocheting etc is interesting.

One old couple came to register and I feel sure they are truly new dealers because they have 2 sons one of whom is named Million and the other Billhow.

There are some children who have a decided speech handicap. One day we had a very wet snow and the southern Californians were so overjoyed ~~at~~ at the sight of it that they romped and rolled in it. One boy came in very wet. The teacher got him up to the stove and was solicitous about his condition. She said you better sit here - "your trousers are wet aren't they?" "No" he replied - "They ain't but my pants is."

It is interesting to visit their homes and see how bravely they try to fix them up and make them more livable. Some who have had luxurious homes and bank accounts in six figures find themselves here with frugal meals and bare living quarters. Yet most of them are loyal and look hopefully for a fair re-adjustment when the war is over. Some wish to go back to Japan but most of them want to continue as Americans.

I could write pages and pages about things I've

seen and learned since being here but everyone isn't as interested as I am. I do feel that we have a problem which will not be quickly nor easily settled. I only hope it is wisely and honestly settled.

The bugler next street has just blown "taps" so I'll say "lights out" and go to bed.

Loveingly,
Marguerite

{Tule Lake project}
{Newell Calif. }