

Towru Nagano's letter to his brother Joe

Note: Grammar, spelling and names are as originally written:

14 – 12 – 4
Manzanar, Calif.
April 15, 1943

Part 1: Introduction, daily life

Dear Joe,

We've been receiving yours letters stedly and as you mentioned in your last letter, we will send you more letters and much steadier. Dog-gone it, I don't know why I can't write more often, but I've got spring fever or something and although I have good intentions, everytime I start writing, I slack up and hold it off a while. I guess you can observe how good my will power is by the number of letters you receive. You might as well know it now, but I didn't do so hot in last semesters finnals and my grades came out rather lousy. I got one "A", two "B's" and two "C's". Its not so easy to get a good grade out here. Perhaps competition and invironment have something to do with it. Since I haven't anything to do here in study hall, I thought I'd write to you as much as possible in this forty-five minutes. We've had some screwy weather lately. The mornings will be nice and clear without a cloud in the sky, and suddenly without any warning whatsoever, it will be blowing to beat the band in no time.

Part 2: Relocating

If you will recall how dead it was when all the furlough workers left, well, its just like that now. Everyone seems to be relocating. I don't know if you met up with Tom Kanegai and Sam Moriyama, but they went to Chicago and are laying out at the Bethany hall with Smeltzers. We received your card today and you had a little note on the bottom asking if the hospital has sent your small pox certificate. When we went to the hospital, we found out that you had sent them a letter also and so they said they would take care of everything. So you should be expecting it very soon unless it has already reached there. Shig Hohri and some other guys at "Tech" were asking for theirs also. Mariko, David's sister told me that she would send you Yoneko's address. Being as far away from home as you are, I guess you wouldn't mind seeing some familiar faces. Also, Mieko went out to Chicago but Yoneko and her are a little towards the outskirts where it is

a little bit more favorable. Maybe you'll see them, who knows? Victor Yokota, Toru Haga, Fred, Floyd Fujui, George Ishizuka, and some other fellows went but working in Pocatello, Idaho. Kenny Mayeda, George and Mr. Adahara went to Idaho also but I don't know what part. Masato Nagao was going to go with them but the pass didn't come through so he's still around. He sure misses George though. I think Henai is going to Mississippi, but just what his purpose is seems to be a mystery. "Take" will be undoubtedly going soon because quite a few of the volunteers have left already.

Part 3: One Year Anniversary

We going to celebrate our one-year anniversary in our block on Saturday, April 24th. Mr. Ikari has obtained permission through Merritt to go to the mountains, so everyone is in Store for a lot of fun. It sure seems like we've been here over a year, although I'll admit the time went considerably fast. Our recreation hall which was an art hall for so long is now the office of the recreation dept. We have two ping-pong tables, a barbell set, shuffle board, etc; so any time there nothing to do, we hang out there. Benny Yoshiwara and Joe Tani are in charge of it.

Part 4: Rumors

Gee, there's sure a lot of rumors going around. The latest is, if every one votes yes to question 28 as follows: you will not interfere with the U.S. or help the enemy; or something like that Merritt will take down the barbed wire and the military will be taken out. In other words, if you want to walk to Bishop or Lone Pine or any place else for that matter of fact, you are privileged to do so. But if you ask me, that's a bunch of baloney. Similarly, there's a rumor that a kitchen worker had leprosy in block #21, but that's probably a lot of baloney too. Do you remember that when you were in Manzanar all the barracks had space between the sides and the ground? Well they have been boarded all that up so evidently they are planning to use this camp for something after the war or they wouldn't make it so permanent like. Last night I saw the movie "Fleets in" with a newsreel, quiz kids, and a Superman comedy. Boy, you should have seen the Superman comedy. It was quite the thing. Reminded you very much of the comic books.

Part 5: Plane Crash

Oh, I almost forgot, day before yesterday, April 14, one of the planes which cruze around crashed at the west end of the camp. (looking towards the sierra-Nevada Mountains.) It crashed about 7:45 AM. About 50 feet in the west side of kitchen #18. A lot of people saw it although I didn't, and what they tell is that the plane was cruising around as usual when all of a sudden it went into a nose dive. As the plane was swooping down, one of the wings gave away and the plane was heading right towards the music hall. (24-15) Although he lost one wing, he miraculously managed to edge the plane westward and crashed in the clearing right by the road. He (the pilot was still living and had a fifty-fifty chance to live, but two hours later the pilot died. They told me it was a pitiful sight and made them sick for the rest of the day. They also said blood was coming out of his pours, so I guess he was better off dead. Guys got all kinds of suvinoirs (or how you spell it) and you ought to see how flimsy those planes are constructed. I don't see how those planes stay together. It was constructed with ply-wood with about 1/4th strips and covered with a canvas like cloth which was painted. It was a miracle that the plane didn't catch fire but the pilot was smart and cut his ignition. They said there was gas all over the place. So much for that.

Part 6: News From Home, Closing

Now in the way of a little more pleasant news. Southern California's track team may be defeated by California for the first time in 16 years. S.C. has lost three sure point winners including Searles Talley in the High jump who cleared 6'8 1/2 " last season. However you can never tell. S.C. is leading the conference in baseball and U.C.L.A. is second with one - defeat. University high has practically got the track Championship cinched and could take the baseball championship. Since they have both the best sprinter and pitcher respectively and quite a bit of support behind them Unihi will probably take both. They have won their first meet already with Patton running 9.9. Also the baseball team has been defeated in practice games so the Chances look pretty good. We (Unihi) probably won't have a very good football team next year because the seventeen year olds are signing up fast. Also they can finish High School in two-one half years instead of the usual three to assure them of graduating. Coach Wilcox has already lost 4 returning letterman and probably a few more before next season rolls around. Chuck Leech is stationed at Florida in the reserves and is specializing in boxing. Doing darn good, too! Well,

Wetzel has sent everything now so I am completely equipped. P.A. jobs have been fairly steady lately with all these guys going out and a lot of fairwell parties. I think Tom Ichien is going out sometime in May, but I'll give you more specific info later. I don't know exactly what George is planning to do. Well, I guess this is about all for this time but I'll write you again very soon. I hope this letter will make up a little bit for those I haven't written. So until next time, I'll be signing off.

Sincerely,

Towru Nagano