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Introduction

“Please daddy when the war is over do not forget to come for I am waiting [for] you every day,” six-year-old June Hoshida wrote to her father George, held at Kilauea Military Camp on the island of Hawai’i. He was on his way to being interned on the mainland during World War II, one man in the mass federal incarceration of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans.

The incarceration was one of the major domestic events of World War II, an egregious violation of civil rights enabled by a wartime climate of fear and a hostility toward or, at best, a lack of understanding of the Japanese American population that had been fostered by decades of discriminatory legislation against them. Executive Order 9066, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, enabled the incarceration, although it did not explicitly outline it. Without trial or any concrete evidence of disloyalty, all Japanese Americans within 100 miles of the West Coast were first subjected to curfew and various restrictions, then incarcerated by the military in temporary assembly camps and, for the duration of the war, in camps away from the military zone. About two-thirds of them were US citizens, a

fact often lost in the erroneous political and popular discussion of them as “prisoners of war” or enemy aliens. The other third were immigrants ineligible for citizenship under the laws of the time, which explicitly barred Asians from naturalization.

In the camps, Japanese Americans endured not only the mental and emotional pain of ruptured lives, but physically harsh conditions due to the barren locations and poorly built accommodations. Eventually, the incarcerated themselves and the War Relocation Authority (WRA), the civilian agency that administered the camps for most of the war, made some improvements. Life in the camps was often characterized by the Japanese saying *shikata ganai*, meaning “it cannot be helped,” a philosophical attitude that helped the Japanese Americans to make the best of the situation and establish large agricultural operations, hobby classes, sports, and shops to cling to a semblance of normal life. However, there was also unrest, anger, and, on occasion, violence. After the Supreme Court’s ruling on the suit *ex parte Mitsuye Endo* in 1944, Japanese Americans who were US citizens gained the right to be released to their homes on a case-by-case approval basis (some had already gone east through the WRA’s “resettlement” program), and the camps were permanently closed at the end of the war. Many memoirs, fictional accounts, poetry, and documentary accounts of camp life and the difficult return home have been published. The most famous camp narrative is probably still Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston’s 1973 memoir *Farewell to Manzanar*, written with her husband James Houston; it tells the story of her family and their incarceration in Manzanar, the large California camp. It is only recently that accounts of camp life have expanded to include the non-WRA camps run by other divisions, such as the Immigration and Naturalization Services (the Department of Justice) and the military.

Because so few Japanese Americans from Hawai’i were incarcerated, and fewer still in WRA camps, they have not had a loud voice among camp narratives in the past. They were, however, highly represented in the most popular and redemptive narrative of Japanese American patriotism during the war and lasting to the present day. The famed all-Japanese American soldiers of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Battalion, lauded by military comrades and mainstream media, drew almost half of its manpower from Hawai’i, a staggering total of 12,250 men. Originally, the 100th Battalion was drawn exclusively from Hawai’i and fought

attached to other divisions before it was eventually permanently merged with the 442nd in Italy. As has been often cited, the 442nd had the highest per capita casualty rate in US military history, lauded by military officials and greeted upon their return by President Harry S. Truman, who said to them, “You fought not only the enemy, but prejudice—and won.” The achievements and heroism of the 442nd and 100th have been recorded in journalism, memoir, histories, and even a Hollywood movie, *Go for Broke* (after the 442nd’s motto, a Hawaiian pidgin expression). Perhaps the most famous veteran of the 442nd was the long-serving US senator from Hawai‘i, Daniel Inouye, who lost an arm serving in Italy. He and his fellow veteran and senator, Spark Matsunaga, were important leaders in the fight for redress and reparations to Japanese American incarcerated in the 1980s. Other Japanese Americans served in the Military Intelligence Service and other, less publicized divisions. However, their political activism, popularity, and the continued honors that these veterans have deservedly received may have accidentally obscured the fates of the incarcerated minority of Japanese Americans from Hawai‘i. In this volume, military stories are in the background; the citizen nephews of the Hoshidas write to them, visit them, and support them in every way possible, while George muses on the injustice of the treatment of Japanese American citizens and the need for them to prove that Japanese blood is “good blood”—something he was unable to do because of his alien status.

George and Tamae Hoshida, with three of their four children, were only five of the approximately 2,000 Japanese Americans from Hawai‘i incarcerated on the mainland. Those initially arrested were held by the military or Department of Justice’s Immigration and Naturalization Services. Their families who followed them into incarceration were sent to the WRA camps because of the citizenship status of the children and some spouses, and their status as voluntary, nonarrested incarcerated. Hawaiian residents have been mentioned relatively little in camp accounts because of the small total number of incarcerated (1 percent of the ethnic Japanese population of Hawai‘i). Most Japanese Americans of Hawai‘i, due to both the sheer logistical difficulty of incarcerating a third of the population and the more liberal policies of the military leadership there, were not incarcerated. However, they were subject to curfews and other restrictions, as George details, as well as the psychological pressure of propaganda urging them to abandon all Japanese

heritage and the anxiety caused by the removal of most of the heads of the ethnic community. The increasing numbers of available memoirs and oral histories tell of the personal tragedies suffered, illuminating the emotional, psychological, physical, and economic toll of the incarceration in Hawai'i. In particular, the perspectives of Yasutaro Soga's memoir *Life Behind Barbed Wire* and the recently released *Family Torn Apart: The Internment Story of the Otokichi Muin Ozaki Family* (as well as the forthcoming third volume in the series) can be combined with this volume to offer a fuller picture of the experience of Hawaiian incarcerated. George knew Soga and read the Japanese-language release of his memoir in the 1950s, which inspired him to return to his own narrative; he also knew and drew Ozaki in the camps. Some of George's drawings were published to illustrate some of Soga and Ozaki's poetry in the collection *Poets Behind Barbed Wire* in 1983. The three men offer some overlapping accounts of the same events.

The Hoshidas' remarkable narrative gives an intimate account of the anger, resignation, philosophy, optimism, and love with which they endured their separation and incarceration. George (a Japanese national, though he had immigrated at the age of four) was separated from his wife and children for almost two years after he was arrested in February 1942 and incarcerated for his Buddhist and judo activities, passing through military and INS camps at Kilauea, Sand Island, San Antonio, Lordsburg, and Santa Fe before being paroled to join his family at the WRA camp in Jerome. Tamae, a US citizen by birth, and their three younger daughters June, Sandra, and baby Carole, born after George's arrest, followed him into the camps expressly to try to avoid a lengthy separation; they and other families were also possibly "evacuated" all the more speedily from Hawai'i under the military policy of removing those who were on welfare or otherwise "nonproductive." Families went in the hope of reuniting, but never expected that it would take almost a year after their own departure. Because of the lack of specialized facilities in the camps, Tamae had to leave their disabled eldest daughter Taeko behind in a nursing home. Tragically, they never saw her again, as she drowned in a bathtub there in 1944. According to Carole Hoshida Kanada, the lasting grief made her parents more willing than most to speak openly of the incarceration and wartime. George's affectionate descriptions of Taeko, as well as his original dedication, show that her memory was one of the chief motives for his writing project.

This volume compiles an edited version of George's memoir, which includes his wartime diary (written chiefly in English, though he later also practiced his Japanese in it and translated it for the memoir), selected family letters from 1942 and 1943, George's wartime artwork, and official documents for context. His artwork, here collected and published in substantial amounts for the first time, is preserved and exhibited online at the Japanese American National Museum. There have been a few camp narratives told through both art and text, but usually by professional artists such as Miné Okubo, whose art and text formed the first published memoir of the incarceration. Hoshida's admittedly less technically proficient drawings have, however, the advantage of bringing in more unstudied, spontaneous depictions of the incarceration, and his memoir and correspondence are extensive, giving us great insight into the artist's environment and state of mind.

While George did not design all his works to be published together, his art and memoir combine powerfully. He had taken only correspondence courses on drawing and illustration but found this and other hobbies such as woodworking to be crucial sources of comfort in the camps. The style of his art bears testimony to his training through the very popular Federal School in Minneapolis, later called Art Instruction (now Art Instruction Schools). The school's most famous alumnus was Charles Schulz, creator of *Peanuts*, who, as a shy, out-of-place high school senior in 1940, enrolled in the correspondence course as well. For young George, the \$10 a month must have represented an even more enormous sacrifice than it did for the hardworking Schulzes; in his more prosperous years before the war, his salary was \$100 plus a car allowance each month (\$10 covered his rent), but in his teenage years of hard labor it was certainly substantially lower. The magazine ads for Federal School, however, were ideally suited to appeal to an ambitious teenager forced to drop out of school to work; they suggested that "Drawing is a Way to Fortune," a means to find "Your Future." Readers were flattered by assurances of their talent and tempted by the possibility of salaries of as much as \$150 a week. The ads appeared in popular magazines among advertisements for facial soaps, piano courses by mail, and etiquette books, a veritable cornucopia of self-improvement.

George enrolled in these and other courses while working at the Kukaiau Ranch (see chapter 8), about 1925. He describes his studies in a passage not included in this edition of the memoir:

During this time Yoshio continued with his studies on the correspondence course in Commercial designing, Illustration and Cartooning, and also that of the Japanese Intermediate Language Course. He sent home for several books on various subjects also in English and Japanese and studied these as much as he had time. Seeing Yoshio so studious, the boss, Mr. Haemura, gave him special considerations and offered him the southeast corner of the barrack. This corner, although the front was open, was partitioned by a wall from the rest of the barrack into a room of about ten feet wide and gave privacy from other occupants.

Yoshio was delighted. He built a study desk out of some scrap lumber which he found around the camp, and a chair out of an apple box to which he attached a back rest and runners on each side of the bottom to stabilize it. He also made a book case to keep his things in order. A private kerosene lamp gave him sufficient illumination to study during the nights. So, while the others spent their time in card games and idle gossips, Yoshio concentrated on his studies.

Both “Commercial designing” and “Illustrating and Cartooning” clearly refer to the Federal School courses of instruction. Describing this in the 1970s, George almost repeats the scenario of the wartime years, in which he sketches incarcerated at play; his time was more often spent writing letters for himself and others, reading, and drawing.

Like Schulz, George used art as an escape in his adolescence and a channel for his dreams of a better future. After George got married and grew busier with his sales career and family responsibilities, these studies drop out of his account but resurface during the war as a means of documentation as well as a way to pass the time. In his diary he even muses about becoming a cartoonist afterward, but never managed it, though he did later design and produce rubber stamps. He requests in a letter to Tamae that his “Federal School” books be sent to the camp to help him teach an art class. These were probably the Divisions 1–12 Modern Illustrating and Cartooning course, authored by famous artists, which took the student from line perspective through the drawing of human beings.

Some stylistic resemblances to *Peanuts* stemming from their common training can be seen in George’s few cartoon-like drawings: large round heads, snub noses, and a close attention to the child-like proportions of the body for which Schulz became so famous. (Schulz’s own drawings during World War

II, right after his correspondence schooling and before the development of *Peanuts*, show his interest in recording everyday experience during the war, but as cartoons.) But George's drawings had by the war mostly turned away from cartooning to realistic portraiture and landscape drawings, his intense historical interests driving him to document the experience as fully as possible. Jimmy Mirikitani, another young artist of the incarceration whose work was showcased in the documentary *The Cats of Mirikitani*, also used an art correspondence school—quite possibly the same one—and his drawings are similar to George's in the use of line, careful proportion, and strong color contrasts.

George's full-color drawings are beautifully finished and tend to show landscapes or large events rather than individuals. However, the sketches, sometimes hastily done on any available paper, capture bleak moments in the loneliness of the incarceration; they often betray more depression than his writing. While at Lordsburg, he was able to experiment with more advanced techniques such as oil and painting on cloth, though these have not been preserved. George did not at the time intend for these to be published or exhibited (aside from some amateur art shows within the camps), but he did enjoy drawing portraits for camp staff, soldiers, and fellow incarcerated; judging from various episodes, he used portraiture as a means to open communication across a racial barrier with camp administrators, soldiers, and, in one case, African American passengers in the "colored" cars of trains. He saved all of these drawings for himself and his family. Early in the correspondence, he sent several small sketches to his second daughter June, some of which appear here, but censors ruled against allowing any type of drawing in incarcerated's mail late in 1942.

George worked on his memoir over several years in the 1970s, and therefore the first two sections of this volume, on his and Tamae's childhoods and their early married life, were written much later than the wartime section. Notably, the wartime diary often reveals depression or concerns that he hid in cheerful letters to Tamae and June; Tamae often hid worrying situations from him as well. There is a marked contrast in tone between her letters to him describing life in the Jerome camp and her despairing plea for a speedy family reunion, addressed to multiple government officials (see Document 3). Tamae's letters and George's depiction of her experiences offer the point of view of a Japanese American wife and mother, quite rare among incarceration memoirs.

The memoir and letters are all the more remarkable considering that George had only an eighth-grade education and Tamae a fourth-grade education; Tamae was not fond of writing, and her earlier letters were occasionally written for her by her brother or nephew. Their correspondence also had to contend with censorship and significant time delays due to censoring and transportation difficulties; they often had to use their available letter quota (George was limited to two a week while at Lordsburg) to cover business details, including what to do with their Hawai'i home, small expenditures for necessities or hobby items, and their ongoing petitions for reunion. Tamae's exit clearance records reveal that officials were not simply censoring but reading and recording some of the content of their personal letters, noting favorably her stance against "repatriation" to Japan. (This government offer to send Japanese Americans to Japan, rather than keeping them in camp for a war of unknown duration, briefly tempted George, who saw little or no opportunity in a country that would arrest and imprison him. Tamae, who had never been to Japan, was resolutely opposed to the idea.)

George's early memories of immigration and his detailed description of the housing and working conditions of canefield workers illuminate the largely unrecorded experiences of Asian migrant laborers. The day-to-day detail, only part of which is reprinted here, is highly informative, but also notable is how swiftly his narrative moves from a small boy's confrontation with racial and linguistic difference for the first time to an almost matter-of-fact depiction of class and social separation of the races. Also not included are some formative personal episodes from George's childhood and adolescence in which he accidentally injured schoolmates and learned a deep caution and respect for others' physical health and safety, a concern that shows in his narration of his wife and daughter's severe injuries in a car accident and that arises again during the war when he cares for fellow incarcerated Kinzaemon Odachi. His accounts of the canefield workers' camps eerily echo his own adult encounter with roughly built makeshift housing in the incarceration camps, while his meeting with a father who had left Japan before he was born is also repeated when George meets his youngest daughter, Carole, for the first time in Jerome when she is a year old.

George's story of Tamae's early life is slightly less detailed; here, the personal dominates, as Tamae's early injury and deformed hip shaped her career choices and her whole life, but it offers some details about the Hawaiian social

structure of that time and the career options of young Japanese American women. Her struggles when left behind in Hawai'i and then on her own in the Jerome incarceration camp with three small children were, as George notes, much more difficult to endure than his, and are still a source of admiration to her children and grandchildren. Tamae's narrative provides details of the crushing labor of everyday life in the camps, from washing and drying diapers by hand in a damp climate to keeping the wood stove supplied and stoked. The plight of the single mother in the incarceration was rarely told from her own perspective, though glimpses of it appear in famous memoirs such as *Farewell to Manzanar*. Tamae's strength is evident in every line of her carefully composed letters, and never more so than when she resolutely opposed George's fleeting consideration of repatriation to Japan. Her determination to keep the family together and return to Hawai'i never wavered.

Adding to the Hoshidas' own records of their time in camp, government documents that show the official perspective on the Hoshidas, found in the National Archives and the University of Hawai'i archives, are reprinted here, including George's original detention hearing, Colonel Karl Bendetsen's memo on the Hawaiian transport that took Tamae and the children to Arkansas, and the responses to their petition letters. In particular, the military memorandum on George's judo club, the Butoku kai, defines it as a deeply dangerous military society. His membership almost certainly led to his indefinite incarceration as the argument over it during his hearing shows. While the Hoshida children had always heard the family story that George's argument with one of the judges (reproduced here in the appended hearing transcript) probably sent him into the camps, the negative report of the anonymous "informant" included in the hearing materials and the Butoku kai memo show that he had little or no chance of release, regardless. Another negative perspective on the incarcerated is the WRA report on the Hawaiians in Jerome; feeling more singled out, the Japanese Americans from Hawai'i were apparently a troublesome population for the WRA and were viewed as disloyal and pro-Japanese, though Tamae does not record any such sentiments.

Many memoirs of the incarceration, particularly those published quite soon after the war, such as Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter* (1953), offer forced endings of reconciliation between Japaneseness and Americanness, sometimes smacking of an outright forgiveness or justification of the incarceration.



FIGURE 0.1. A photograph of the family during difficult times after their return. Pictured left to right are June, Sandra, and Carole with George at China Hill. This photo was taken several days after the April 1, 1946, tidal wave. Since their water supply had been cut off, they had gone up the hill to find a place to wash.



FIGURE 0.2. This studio portrait was taken around 1962, when the family was living in Los Angeles. From left to right: Carole, Sandra, June, Tamae, and George.

George's memoir, however, offers no such easy resolution; throughout the memoir, he does not hesitate to critique the United States for its hypocrisy in the treatment of racial minorities and, even at the very end, he fears for his family's uncertain future which has been so damaged by their wartime incarceration. The resolution that he finds is a unique one, optimistic like other camp narratives but drawn from his Buddhist beliefs, so denigrated during the rush to Americanize during the war, and the support of loved ones. For this reason, I judged it best to let his own words close his memoir, rather than adding a traditional editorial afterword.

After the war the Hoshidas struggled to rebuild their finances in Hawai'i, since they had had to sell their house and possessions at a loss and had spent a substantial amount of their savings in camp. They stayed in a commercial college, with Tamae's sister, and finally at a Naval Air Station before finding suitable housing.

George could not get his job at Hilo Electric back, and repaired appliances from his sister-in-law's home for a while before he eventually took a sales position at Moses Company. Tamae worked as a seamstress from home, in a

garment factory, and for a dry goods store. In 1959 George and Tamae moved to Los Angeles, where June was already living; Carole finished high school there while Sandra remained behind to attend the University of Hawai'i. Tamae worked in the Frolic Times garment factory, while George sold appliances for another hardware store and then became a clerk and occasional translator for the Los Angeles Traffic Court. George continued to be very active in the Buddhist church and created Sunday School curricula for the church in Gardena that were later used in many churches in Hawai'i.

Tamae passed away in May 1970, and in 1973 Carole and George returned to Hawai'i, Carole to live on Maui with her husband and George to Pearl City to live with Sandra. George participated in a few media features, art exhibits, and the University of Hawai'i's oral history project in the 1980s, and worked on his memoir for many years. He remarried in 1977 and lived on Oahu until his death in 1985, having always retained his firm conviction that the story of the incarceration needed to be told. In the introduction to his original volume, George wrote that he hoped to leave a record of his life to his descendants and also "mark [his] footprints on the sands of time." Fortunately, his entire family's story can now find a wide audience for the first time.

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