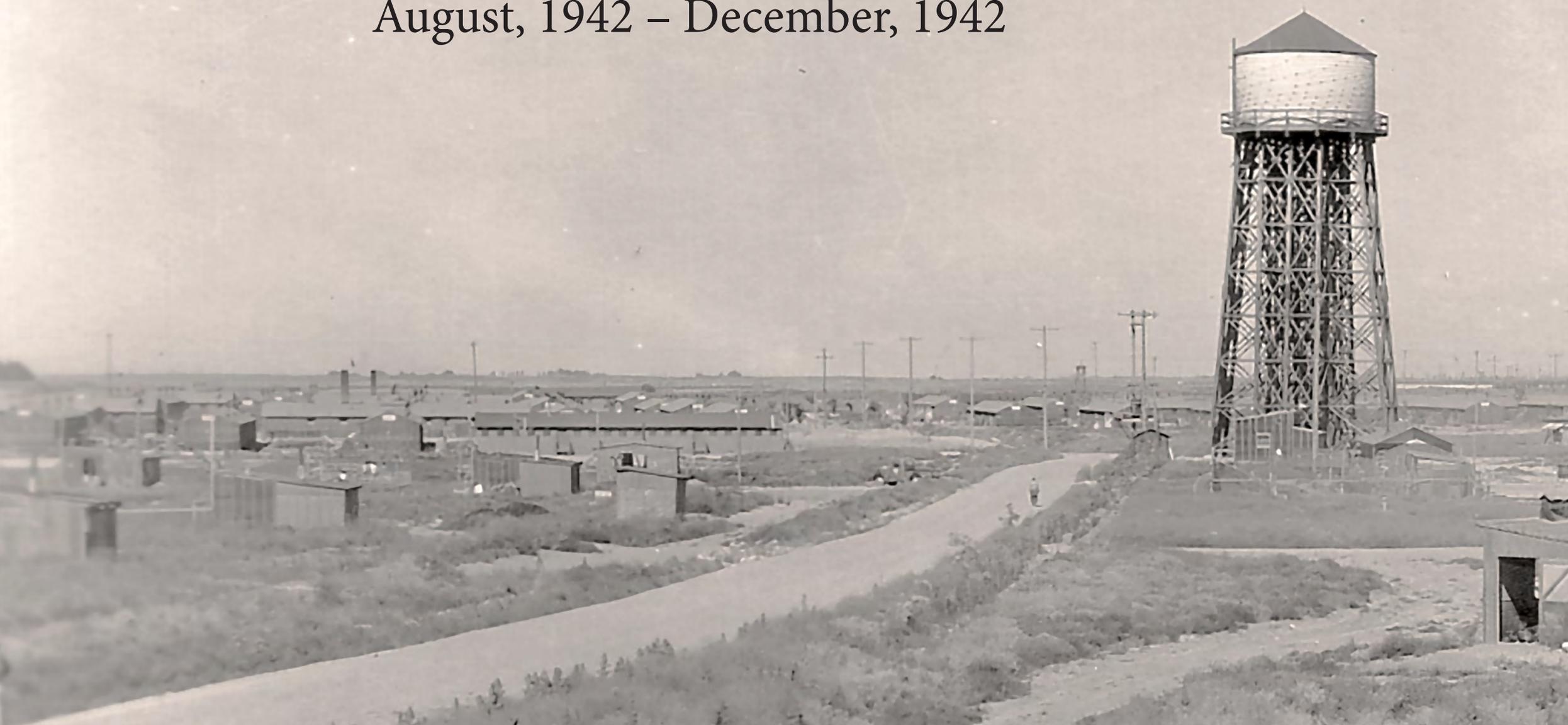


# MINIDOKA CHRONICLE

## First Impressions

August, 1942 – December, 1942



“And the train stops out there in the middle of nowhere, and then they say, they, ‘Well, this is where you people get off.’ And you get out there and look around, there’s nothing but sand and sagebrush there. And the only thing that was there that was of any luxury was these tour buses from Sun Valley, Idaho.”

Robert Mizukami

1942

DENSHŌ/ROBERT MIZUKAMI  
COLLECTION

Buses line up to take incarcerated from the train to the camp. Over 600 incarcerated are on each train.

Eden, Idaho, ca. 1942.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS  
ADMINISTRATION/FRANCIS STEWART



Three brothers looking out the window of their train car as they arrived in Eden, Idaho from the Puyallup Assembly Center. (L-R) Gereald, 5, David, 6, and Chester Sakura, Jr., 1 ½ years old.

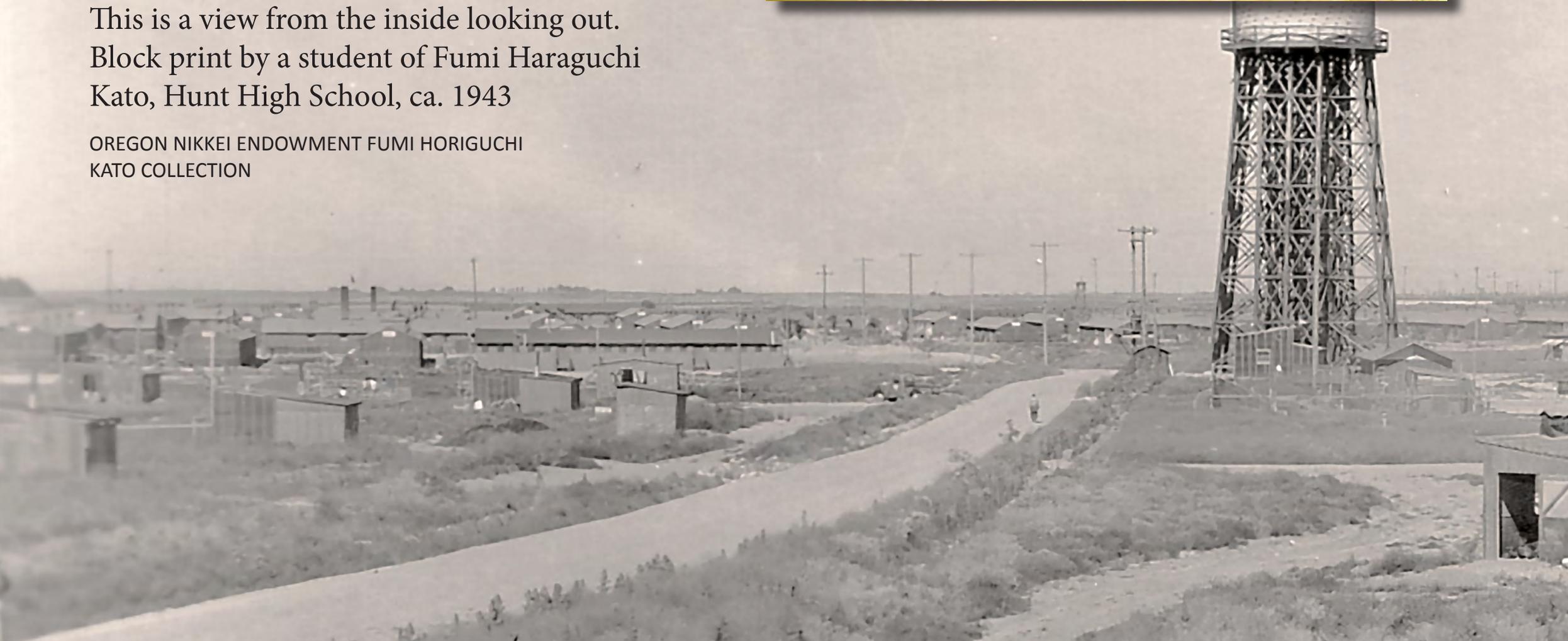
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION/  
FRANCIS STEWART



The bridge over the Northside Canal signaled the entrance to the camp. When it first opened in 1942, the guard towers, entry post, and barbed wire fence had yet to be built. For many months, there were no physical obstacles to keep the people in other than the canal on one side.

The bridge and entrance to the Minidoka camp. This is a view from the inside looking out. Block print by a student of Fumi Haraguchi Kato, Hunt High School, ca. 1943

OREGON NIKKEI ENDOWMENT FUMI HORIGUCHI  
KATO COLLECTION





By 1943, all traffic entered and exited through this gate and checkpoint, which was built by incarcerated. This view is from inside Minidoka facing out to the rest of the world.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

“...it’s not like the assembly center where you had barbed wires and guards. You just came to the main gate, and that was about it. In fact...my dad...will go out to sagebrush to get the sagebrush wood. Some would go after rattlesnakes...So it was pretty wide open, so I don’t think anybody thought of like the illegal[s] coming over, crossing a desert or anything, ‘cause there’s no place to go.”

Victor Ikeda

1942

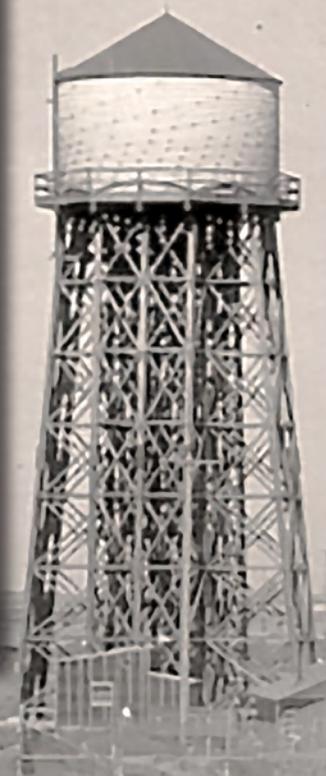
DENSHŌ/VICTOR IKEDA COLLECTION





Work crews picked up the baggage at Eden and unloaded it at the Administrative area as new incarcerated arrived on buses.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



Registration, medical exams, and apartment assignment took place in the Administration building. Pictured are new incarcerated women who have arrived from Puyallup Assembly Center, August 17, 1942.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



When the first incarcerated arrive in the fall of 1942, only half the block units were constructed, the sewer and water system had not been installed, and there are no support facilities such as schools. The barbed wire fence and guard towers have yet to be built when the camp opened.

OREGON NIKKEI ENDOWMENT

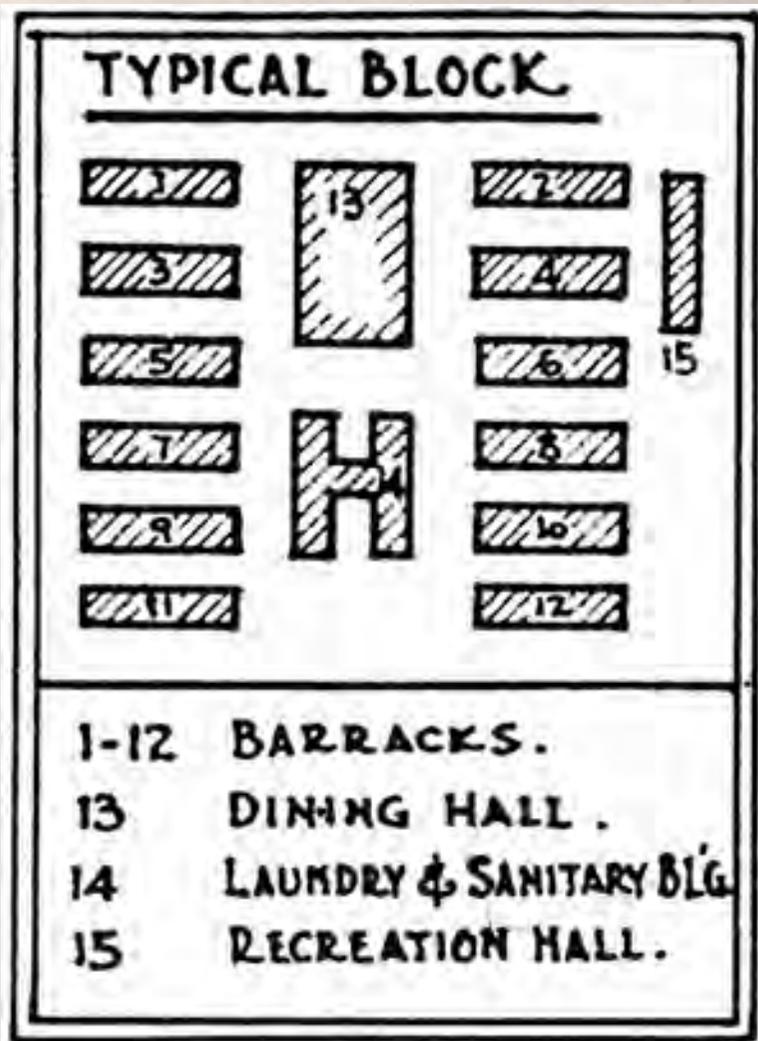


“... inside they were the raw wood and outside they were tarpapered and, you know, it was dusty in the spring in Idaho and the dust just come blowing in the windows and all.”

Don Maeda

1942

DENSHŌ/DON MAEDA COLLECTION



There were a total of 36 residential block units in the camp which held approximately 250 people. Each block had 12 barracks, with a mess hall and a laundry/bathroom in the middle of the block. One recreation hall was located at the periphery of each block. The halls were used as churches, movie theaters, or for other group activities. Some blocks were modified, where half the units were for schools.

“...the barracks were very dusty and unfurnished. And I think there were cots on [in] there, but we still had to get our mattresses and army blankets and all lined up, seven beds all lined up, and a potbelly stove at one end.”

Ruby Inouye

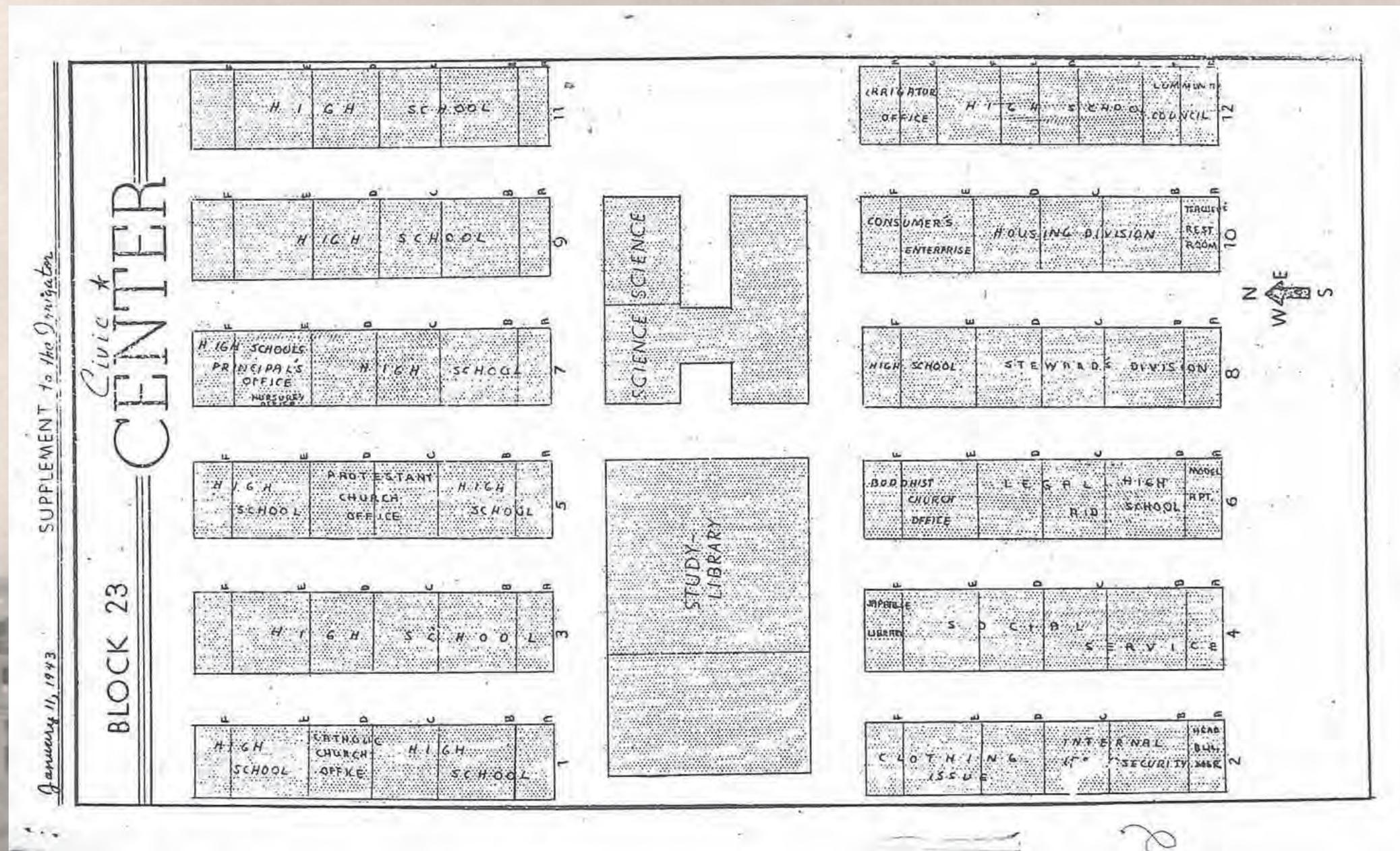
1942

DENSHŌ/RUBY INOUE COLLECTION



This diagram shows the layout of the Civic Center block, which was formerly residential block 23. Families were moved from Block 23 to blocks 3, 4, and 6 in 1942. The Civic Center Block, which included the high school, main library, administrative and church offices, and the Minidoka Irrigator offices, opened in early 1943.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
 FROM THE MINIDOKA IRRIGATOR NEWSPAPER,  
 JANUARY 11, 1943 AND OCTOBER 31, 1942



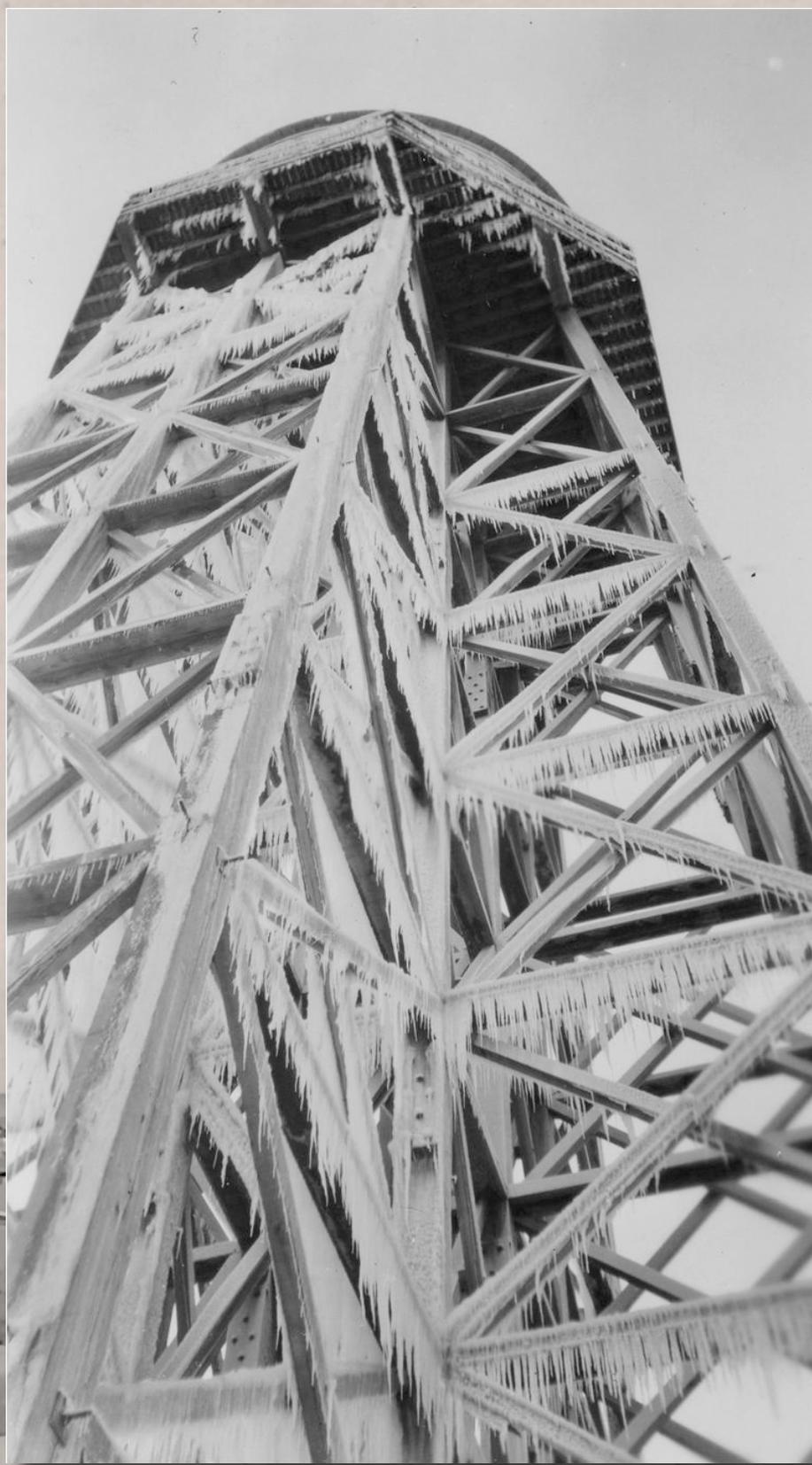
This was photographed by Jack Iwata at Manzanar and was representative of rules posted in the camps. Rules varied by camp.

JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM/ IWATA COLLECTION

1. Show identification cards issued from your block office to check in and out of center.
2. Time: Gates open between 8 A.M. to 6 P.M.  
Warning: 7 P.M. to 7 A.M. (night) closed by Military Police.
3. Restrictions:
  - a. Stay within signs of limited area.
  - b. Do not pick fruit.
  - c. No fishing without license.
  - d. Do not dig flower plants.
  - e. No trespassing on farming area.
  - f. Help prevent fire hazards.
  - g. Do not dig or damage trees.
  - h. No wading or otherwise polluting creek water.
  - i. Do not disturb birds and animals.
  - j. No swimming.
4. Children under 8 years old must be escorted by parent or responsible adult.
5. Sanitation: All rubbish, papers, fruit skins, etc. must be in rubbish cans.
6. Penalty for Non-observance of Rules:
  - a. Warning will be given to Block Managers and residents.
  - b. For Continuous violation . . . blocks or organizations guilty will be denied further privileges for certain periods.

Icicles form on the water tower structure on a cold winter morning.

DENSHŌ



“...all you can see are rows and rows of barracks with tarpaper outside, black tarpaper. And beyond the barbwire fence, you see sagebrush forever, just rolls of hills of sagebrush. And off toward what seemingly was Block 35, you see a water tower which becomes kind of a landmark later on as we were able to go outside the premises of Minidoka Camp.”

George Nakata

1942

DENSHŌ/GEORGE NAKATA 0120 011



Paul Ohtaki of Bainbridge Island was first removed to Manzanar, then was sent to Minidoka. While at Minidoka, he and Dr. Sada Omoto, Tony Koura, and Sachiko Koura Nakata become correspondents who reported camp news to the Bainbridge Review for publication.

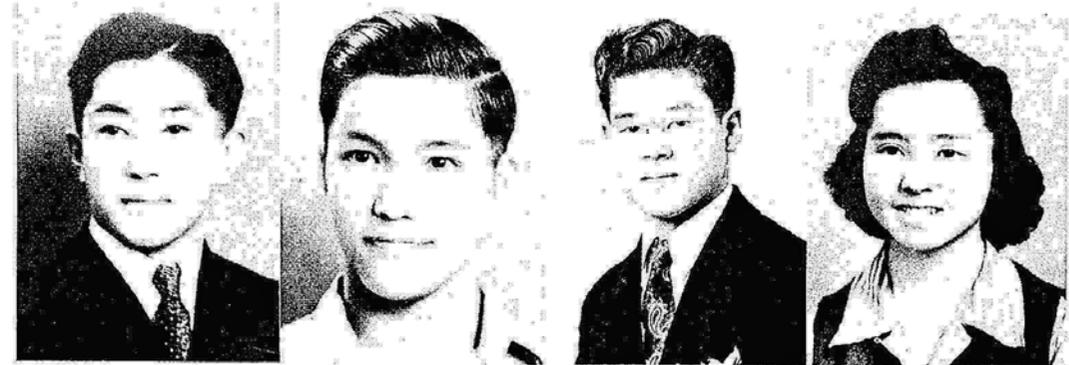
In 2001, Mr. Ohtaki compiled an anthology of all the Bainbridge Review articles related to the forced removal of the Japanese Americans from Bainbridge Island. His compilation was entitled "It was the Right Thing to Do."

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



## Paul Ohtaki on Bainbridge Island, 1940.

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY



PAUL T. OHTAKI  
Approximate Tenure  
3-30-42 to 4-29-43

DR. SADA OMOTO  
Approximate Tenure  
10-8-42 to 11-27-42

TONY KOURA  
Approximate Tenure  
5-15-43 to 3-17-44

SACHIKO KOURA NAKATA  
Approximate Tenure  
4-7-44 to 7-9-45

### ABOUT THE FOUR CAMP CORRESPONDENTS

I was a senior at Bainbridge High School and had been working part time at The Bainbridge Review for approximately one year. My work was primarily to clean up the shop the next day after press night (Wednesday nights). The shop could become a mess with pieces of ink-spotted pieces of paper all over the place. While printing the paper they would have jam-ups due to bad paper or when the humidity and moisture could affect the feeding of the paper in the press. They had a deadline to meet to have the newspaper at the Post Office early the next morning. A jam-up could mean printing delays or cleaning the press again. They were always in a rush so they only had time to throw the papers that caused the trouble on the floor.

On my last day of work at The Review before we were to be evacuated, I remember Walt Woodward coming back to the shop and his saying "We would like to have you be a reporter for us. We would like to have you report everything that is happening in the Bainbridge Island Japanese American community after you arrive at your destination. Tell us all the gossip each week. Tell us what you are doing, are you asked to work, if so what kind and all the details, the number of hours, do you get paid, how much?, etc. See if you can find out what the people are thinking, what they are planning to do with their farms next season. Tell us if anyone gets sick, injured or passes away. Tell us everything, stuff that we can run in a special column in The Bainbridge Review each week. I hesitated and wanted to refuse--- my vocabulary was limited and my English was bad. But Walt Woodward was persistent, he said just write us everything as you are talking to me right now. After my few reports, I started to try to act and report the news as a reporter (they would correct and rewrite my articles).

"For the first issue we have something more important" Walt said, "we want you to send us a telegram by AP (Associated Press) wire telling us everything about your trip down. What did you do, how did the soldiers treat you, how did the older folks make out, anyone got sick on the way down, etc. Hand your telegram to Private so-and-so (I don't remember his name) he will send it to us by AP wires. Earlier Walt had made arrangements with this Army sentry who escorted us down to Manzanar Relocation Center to take care of the telegram after that. Everything went according to plan, the wire was received before the last press run and as result, The Bainbridge Review wrote on the front page of their Thursday, April 2, 1942 issue that the Island evacuees arrived cheerful and well at 12:30 p.m. on April 1, 1942.

I was never a journalist and discovered finding the news each week was not as easy as I thought. So after several weeks, I missed several of newspaper deadlines and for one week I sent copies of the "Manzanar Free Press", the official camp newspaper instead. This is when I received Walt Woodward's scathing letter (shown elsewhere). This was the first time that I learned really why he wanted to run these columns each week. It is hard to believe the foresight Walt and Mildred Woodward had in coming up with a plan, that early. While we were making our plans for the evacuation and leaving for camps, the Woodwards were also thinking and making plans for smooth our return home. The Woodwards wanted to continually remind the Island resident that they had neighbors who were temporarily away, and to remind the evacuees that Bainbridge Island was their home. It was after this that I took this responsibility matter of reporting the news more seriously.

