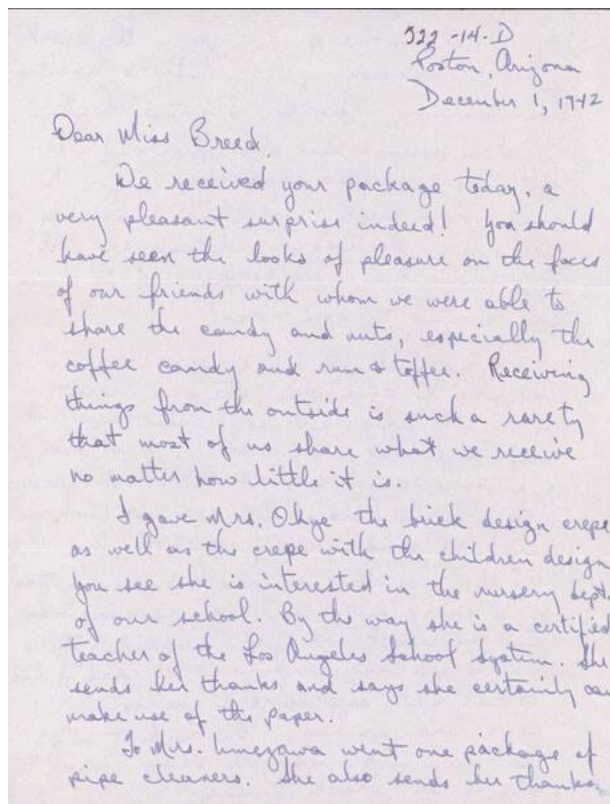


Basic Detail Report



[Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo (Ted) Hirasaki, Poston, Arizona, December 1, 1942]

Date

1942

Primary Maker

Hirasaki, Tetsuzo

Medium

paper, ink

Description

Transcription: 322-14-D / Poston, Arizona / December 1, 1942 / Dear Miss Breed, / We received your package today, a very pleasant surprise indeed! You should have seen the looks of pleasure on the faces of our friends with whom we were able to share the candy and nuts, especially the coffee candy and rum & toffee. Receiving things from the outside is such a rarity that most of us share what we receive no matter how little it is. / I gave Mrs. Ohye the brick design crepe as well as the crepe with the children design you see she is interested in the nursery dept. of our school. By the way she is a certified teacher of the Los Angeles School System. She sends her thanks and says she certainly can make use of the paper.

To Mrs. Umezawa went one package of pipe cleaners. She also sends her thanks. certainly can make use of the paper. / To Mrs. Umezawa went one package of pipe cleaners. She also sends her thanks. Yes, she is the one of whom your mother speaks of as "the missionary lady." She is teaching flower-making under the Industries Dept. / Mrs. Kushino and Mrs. Hirai and also little Jane Kushino send thanks for the candy and crepe paper that I was able to share. So does Mrs. Nakamura. No, this Mrs. Nakamura was from Santa Maria before coming to San Diego. / I am glad you liked what little I was able to send you. The pins weren't too hard to make, perhaps because there isn't much size to it. They were my first pins and took several days to make. The nameplate was the hardest to make. It took me about 14 solid hours of work to finish it. My choice of wood was bad because instead of a sharp division between the sap wood and the heart wood of the mesquite there was a gradual darkening, so that I had to cut quite deep before a contrasting color was reached. On the knot pin the name was burned after being carved to give it that black finish. / As to the tools I used, there weren't many. Most of the work was done with a pocket knife, but for the fine work I used a cutter fashioned from a discarded dentist's drill. (By the way if you know any dentists who have old tools of any sort, drills, chisels, etc. that are ready for the scrap heap, could you have him send them here?) In making your nameplate I took an old bedspring and made an 1/8 inch chisel so that it would be easier to carve around the letters. So many people want pins and nameplates made that I am swamped. It may be several weeks before I can work on new requests. However send in the names and also a pin for each as I am out of pins. The W.R.A. wage scale is approximately 8 1/2 c. per hour for me when and if we're paid. On the average a five-letter pin takes about five hours of actual working time. Sometimes a letter cracks off so the pin is made all over again. It happens quite often in names that have a dot and also "E". So for the first five letters 40 c. - 5 c. for each letter thereafter. / I haven't decided what to charge for the nameplates. I doubt if I'll make very many as it takes too much time and that means not enough time to make pins. / By the way you haven't sent me your mother's name. / I was interested to hear that Howard Pease is in S.D. I certainly wish I were there to meet him. His books used to give me many a thrill. I can still remember Tod Moran and many of his adventures on the high seas and at foreign ports. Yessiree Howard Pease's characters really lived. / Here in Poston we have a Dept. of Sociological Research whose job it is to record the effects of the evacuation. Every now and then I have a "bull session" with one of the fellows who work in the dept. We discuss why we don't get along with people from other areas, juvenile delinquency, church attendance, schools, gossipers and their effect on the community, human behavior in general, nisei vs. issei (first generation) and so on into the night. Thus far we haven't gotten very far with definite conclusions, but the Research Dept. has made quite a number of surveys which have brought out interesting sidelights. I haven't talked with my friend for almost a month now so I don't know what new developments the Research has uncovered. As soon as I am able to get some information I'll let you know. / The following are my own rather hasty observations. I shouldn't say "hasty" because what I mean is that I haven't made a thorough check but have noticed only that which is on the surface. As yet I am unable to say which sex is able to stand the evacuation better. As a whole everyone is now more or less accustomed to

camp life. Proving that the human being is capable of adapting himself to new environments. I think the biggest problem in camp is in keeping the male youth occupied. Those in the late teens and early 20's. This group I think was hit the hardest and this is the group giving the most trouble. Just out of high school or in the last year of high school after being taught democracy, learning how to have fun at dances, parties, their life ahead of them--then suddenly finding themselves behind barbed wire fences. Their attitude is one of cynicism. Ready to do anything lawfully or unlawfully just to have some fun--to blow off excess steam. Recreational facilities inadequate--administrators beginning to wake up. Boys clubs are being formed. Football league formed, Basketball Courts being set up. Track being laid out. Situation is well on its way toward peaceful ending. / The little tots are having lots of fun. They get to play every day. But once in awhile quite frequently especially from 4 to 8 year olds you hear "When are we going home to San Diego?" "Why do we have to stay here?" However they quickly forget and are off to play. Oh, to be young again to forget the cares of the world!! / I think the oldsters are the ones that in a way benefited by the evacuation. By oldsters I mean those from 50 on. With the exception of those who work, these people for the first time in their life they have had a vacation. They have time on their hands. They are having the time of their lives, going to the river to fish, going to the mountains to look for petrified wood, pretty looking stumps, rocks, etc., just sitting in the sun, puttering around the house. Looking after their grandsons and granddaughters. The men carve, play Japanese chess, or just sit around. Yessiree, life is good to them after years of hard work. / One thing I haven't seen as yet (I'm pretty sure there must be some) and that is the moaner. I'll admit lot of people cry about the good season they were anticipating but doggonnit they're doing something to keep occupied. I hope I never see one in this camp - a fellow who has the "what's the use?" attitude and just sits around and does nothing but moan. / That's about all I can think of at the moment. / You have probably read by now in the paper about the strike that was held in Camp I because two men were held on suspicion of beating up an informer. (Sounds like Santa Anita) One man was released but the other was held to face charges at a Phoenix Superior Court. Because a Jap wouldn't have a Chinaman's chance in an Arizona court, the people of Camp I did not want the prisoner to be taken out, therefore the strike. After 5 days a compromise was reached and the man is to be tried here in Poston II with Jap judge & jury. Camps II & III did not get mixed up with the mess and we are glad of it. Most of the trouble was caused by misunderstanding between the people and the Chief of Police who is anti-Jap, a big blustery fellow who likes to push a small fellow around--a kind of guy who makes criminals so that he can pin something on them. / Wade Head, director of all Poston is a fine man. As yet I have not had the pleasure of meeting him. He was in Salt Lake when this mess occurred. When he came back his efforts resulted in the compromise. / We are now rationed on meat with butter & eggs to be discontinued without notice. We get milk as yet. About a quart for 10-12 people per meal is max. Usually it is a quart for about 16 people. We in the mess hall make sure that the children get it and if any is left over it is given to the grown-ups. Starting next year I think we are to go on powdered milk. However that is speculation of the Stewards Office. Fuel oil is becoming scarce here in camp. We are now forced to turn off the laundry and shower boilers except for 4 hours per day so that we have enough fuel for the mess hall kitchens. We are just getting stoves (oil burners I think) in some of the barracks. Boy oh boy it's cold. 3 out of the past 5 morns has been 29. For the past two weeks it's been no warmer than 34. / More later. / Sincerely, / Tetsuzo; 1 letter and envelope from Tetsuzo (Ted) Hirasaki to Clara Breed.

Dimensions

H: 10.5 in, W: 8 in (sheet); H: 4.125 in, W: 9.5 in (envelope)