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## **INVENTORY OF THE OWEN M. SYLVESTER TULE LAKE PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, 1942-1943**

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URL: <http://www4.csudh.edu/libarchives/index>  
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## **Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Sylvester (Owen M.) Tule Lake Photograph Collection

**Dates:** 1942-1943

**Collection Number:** Consult repository.

**Creator:** Sylvester, Owen M.

**Extent:** 1 box.25 linear feet

**Repository:** California State University, Dominguez Hills Archives and Special Collections

Archives & Special Collection

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1000 E. Victoria Street

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**Abstract:** This collection contains one box of photographic images taken by Captain Owen M. Sylvester while at Tule Lake Segregation Center during a military occupation as a member of the 772 Military Police Battalion in 1943. Materials include: 32 black-and-white photographs.

**Language:** Collection material is in English

### **Access**

There are no access restrictions on this collection.

### **Publication Rights**

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### **Preferred Citation**

[Title of item], Owen M. Sylvester Tule Lake Collection, Courtesy of the Department of Archives and Special Collections. University Library. California State University, Dominguez Hills

### **Acquisition Information**

Library acquisition

### **Biography**

Captain Owen M. Sylvester (1895-unknown) began his military career as a private in Company A, 161st Infantry Regiment of the Washington National Guard, serving in the Mexican Border War from 1915-1917. In 1918, Sylvester transferred to the 2nd Infantry Division and served in the Army of Occupation in France until 1919. Following World War I, Sylvester was promoted to the rank of Captain and commanded the 2nd Battalion, 148th Field Artillery in the Washington National Guard from 1941-1942. Following his training at the Los Angeles Police Academy in 1942, Sylvester was appointed to the 772nd Military Police Battalion as Commander of Company C, where his battalion was assigned to the Boeing bomber plant in Renton Washington from 1942-1943, Tule Lake Segregation Center in 1943, and Fort Washington in 1944. At the end of World War II, Sylvester became a company commander and Provost Marshal at the Naval Air Station in Pasco, Washington. After the War, Sylvester went to Greece as part of the European Recovery Program (ERP) to assist in the rehabilitation of western and southern European economies.

### **Tule Lake History**

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which gave the military the authority to exclude any citizen who posed a threat to national security. As a result, approximately 120,000 Japanese-Americans living on the West Coast were removed and incarcerated in concentration camps. The Tule Lake Incarceration Center was the largest of the ten concentration camps with approximately 18,000 prisoners, and was located close to the California-Oregon border near the town of Newell, California and 10 miles south of the town of Tulelake. On February 8, 1943, the War Department and War Relocation Authority (WRA) distributed a questionnaire in order to assess the loyalty of those housed in concentration camps. The questionnaire was difficult and complex, which led to uncertainty and confusion. Failure to complete the questionnaire, as well as questions answered in an unsatisfactory manner caused a great number of incarcerated to be deemed "disloyal" and sent to Tule Lake Segregation Center- the designated location "disloyal" incarcerated.

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In October 1943, following an agricultural truck accident that resulted in one incarcerated death and also left five injured, incarcerated- upset by the events that had transpired, demanded improvement of safety and better compensation for work-related injuries. This ultimately resulted in a workers strike, and a negotiating committee- Daihyo Sha Kai was formed so that they could meet with the center's Director, Raymond Best to outline their grievances and attempt to resolve issues. The response from administration was to fire workers and bring in strikebreakers- "loyal" inmates who were willing to work. Due to growing tension within the camp, Best and WRA National Director Dillion Myer met with the Daihyo Sha Kai on November 1, 1943, but there was no resolution. On November 4th, after noticing large crowds of incarcerated gathering around administrative buildings, Best responded by calling in the Army. When incarcerated attempted to go to work the following day, they were met with vehicles armed with machine guns and tear gas was dispersed. On November 14th 1943, Best declared martial law and Tule Lake became an armed camp with a curfew for incarcerated and barrack-to-barrack searches. Over 200 incarcerated including members of the Daihyo Sha Kai were apprehended and detained in a makeshift stockade. The stockade was isolated from the rest of the center and was surrounded by fences and four guard towers within a 250 by 350 foot area. The arrests continued until over 350 incarcerated were imprisoned in the stockade. In early January 1944, Tule Lake incarcerated voted to end the protest and on January 15, 1944 Best lifted martial law, ending military control of Tule Lake.

#### **Scope and Content**

The Owen M. Sylvester Tule Lake Photograph Collection (1942-1943) contains 32 black-and-white photographs taken by Sylvester at Tule Lake. The majority of the photographs were taken inside the Tule Lake Segregation Center in Newell, California in November 1943 and feature scenes containing housing quarters, the stockade area, the interior of army vehicles, imprisoned Japanese-Americans, members of the 772nd Military Police Battalion, and soldiers with guns. Also included are photographs depicting scenery from directly outside of the camp, Sylvester's battalion, soldiers in route to Tule Lake, and soldier stations in the hills adjacent to the Tule Lake Segregation Center. A few photographs were taken in 1942 mostly in Oregon and document the Battalion before they traveled to Tule Lake, and also include some of the names of the members of the Battalion. Photographs contain captions possibly written by Sylvester.

#### **Arrangement**

Arranged in 1 box.

#### **Subjects**

Concentration camps--United States

Japanese Americans--Pacific States--History--20th century

Japanese Americans

Japanese Americans--California

Tule Lake Relocation Center (Calif.)--1940-1950

Japanese Americans -- Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945

World War, 1939-1945 - California

Martial law--United States.

#### **Geographic Areas**

Newell(Calif.)

Tulelake (Calif.)

#### **Related Material**

This collection is part of the California State University Japanese American Digitization Project. For related materials please consult: <http://csujad.com>

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1 Box **Owen M. Sylvester Tule Lake Photograph Collection**

**Physical Description:** .25 linear ft, 1 box

**Scope and Content Note**

The Owen M. Sylvester Tule Lake Photograph Collection (1942-1943, undated) contains 32 black-and-white photographs taken by Sylvester at Tule Lake. The majority of the photographs were taken inside the Tule Lake Segregation Center in Newell, California in November 1943 and feature scenes containing housing quarters, the stockade area, the interior of army vehicles, imprisoned Japanese-Americans, members of the 772nd Military Police Battalion, and soldiers with guns. Also included are photographs depicting scenery from directly outside of the camp, Sylvester's battalion, soldiers in route to Tule Lake, and soldier stations in the hills adjacent to the Tule Lake Segregation Center. A few photographs were taken in 1942 mostly in Oregon and document the Battalion before they traveled to Tule Lake, and also include some of the names of the members of the Battalion. Photographs contain captions possibly written by Sylvester.

Photograph 1 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Jap girl fleeing when about to snap picture. Took [some] anyway. Other girl got out of sight in time"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7053>

Photograph 2 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Major \_\_\_\_\_ + social worker during disturbance in Jap area. \_\_\_2 armed E.M.E. \_\_\_standing by for possible difficulty"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7054>

Photograph 3 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Evacuating loyal Japs (500 \_\_\_ of 16,000) whose lives were in danger. They were originally brought in when disloyal refused to harvest crop at Tulelake Nov. 43"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7055>

Photograph 4 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "H.J.W. Manning 30 caliber gun on mounted car (armored) patrolling Jap streets during disturbance during Nov 43 at Tulelake Calif Capt. \_\_\_\_\_ sitting in background"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7056>

Photograph 5 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "View from hill tops and surrounding Tulelake Camp in Calif. (43)"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7057>

Photograph 6 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Jap inmates [sifting] to collect stones to make necklaces. Tulelake Calif (Nov 43)"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7025>

Photograph 7 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Cross erected by Christian Japs at highest peak in Nov 43 E camp in foreground"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7026>

Photograph 8 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Inscription at top of highest peak by Japs during Christian gathering in Aug 43. Japs inscription is only date of gathering"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7023>

Photograph 9 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Another inscription by Japs at peak overlooking camp Tulelake made by Christian Japs stationed there"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7028>

Photograph 10 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Japs walking on their streets during disturbance. Nov 43. Tulelake Calif"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7027>

Photograph 11 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "All the Japs that quickly gathered as soon as family difficulty took place. They were quickly dispersed"**

**Note**

For full record:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7029>

Photograph 12 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "H.J.W. lying in cave of highest peak overlooking Camp Tulelake glancing [through] glasses pointed toward Jap camp"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7030>

Photograph 13 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "H.J.W. viewing surrounding area [with] field glasses overlooking Tulelake Jap internment camp in California"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7031>

Photograph 14 **Caption on front of photograph reads, "Jap Trouble- Tulelake"**

**Note**

For full record:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7034>

Photograph 15 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Cruising along streets of Camp Tulelake during Jap disturbance in Nov. 43"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7032>

Photograph 16 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Japs just about to enter stockade under guard"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7035>

Photograph 17 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Disloyal Japs who were [cuffed] up when they first refused to answer inquires of [army] questioning. Leaving [them back] to stockade under guard"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7033>

Photograph 18 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Tulelake Calif. E.M.E. \_\_\_ gun guarding Jap (disloyal) who threatened loyal family (his) \_\_\_ they left him"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7024>

Photograph 19 **Caption on front of photograph reads, "Jap quarters- Tullelake"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7036>

Photograph 20 **Caption on front of photograph reads, "On way to Tullelake Nov. 43"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7037>

Photograph 21 **Caption on front of photograph reads, "On way to Tullelake Nov 43"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7038>

Photograph 22 **Caption on front of photograph reads, "Parked for Lunch Nov 43"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7039>

Photograph 23 **Caption on front of photograph reads, "Tullelake"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7043>

Photograph 24 **Caption on front of photograph reads, "Town Patrol"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7044>

Photograph 25 **No inscription**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7045>

Photograph 26 **Caption on front of photograph reads, "11/15/42 Cresent Lake Oregon Conklin"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7046>

Photograph 27 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Rogers Beeson Ford"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7049>

Photograph 28 **Caption on front of photograph reads, "Sontag"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7047>

Photograph 29 **Caption on front of photograph reads, "Beer Bust - Nov 43"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7048>

Photograph 30 **Caption on front of photograph reads, "January 1943" Caption on back of photograph reads, "Sgt. Mallman 2/1/43"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7050>

Photograph 31 **Caption on back of photograph reads, "Cpt. Seitz 2/1/43"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7051>

Photograph 32 **Caption on front of photograph reads, "Cover the Doorway" Caption on back of photograph reads, "Pte Babbs 2/1/43"**

**Note**

For full record see:

<http://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16855coll4/id/7052>