Inventory of the Siberius Y. Saito drawings

Finding aid prepared by Siberius Y. Saito and Hoover Institution Archives Staff.
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Title: Siberius Y. Saito drawings
Date: 1942
Collection Number: 79026
Contributing Institution: Hoover Institution Archives
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 1 envelope (0.1 linear feet)
Abstract: Photographic copies of sketches depicting the physical facilities at the Tanforan Assembly Center.
Physical Location: Hoover Institution Archives
Creator: Saito, Siberius Y.
Access
Collection is open for research.
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Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Siberius Y. Saito drawings, [Box number], Hoover Institution Archives.
Acquisition Information
Acquired by the Hoover Institution Archives in 1979.
Accruals
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Biographical/Historical Note
Japanese-American architect and evacuee at Tanforan Assembly Center, California, 1942.
Scope and Content of Collection
In February 1942 President Roosevelt issued Executive Order #9066 which enabled the military to evacuate all Americans of Japanese descent from California, Oregon and Washington. Internment camps were planned in the remote areas of Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, Arkansas and California to receive the evacuees.
The implementation of the order was started in March and evacuation started in April. Since the construction of the permanent camps was just underway, the evacuees were temporarily placed in race tracks, county fair grounds, and livestock exhibition halls hastily converted into detention camps with barbed wire fences, search lights, and guard towers. Tanforan Assembly Center was located at the Tanforan Race Track in San Bruno about ten miles south of San Francisco. It was home to 5000 San Franciscans for about 6 months until the permanent camp in the desert area of Utah was completed, the Central Utah Relocation Center, better known as the Topaz War Relocation Center.
San Francisco was divided into evacuation districts and notices of the departure dates were posted in prominent places. On the appointed day, the evacuees reported to the district depot with bed rolls and hand baggage. No other possessions were allowed. Cameras, radios and weapons (including kitchen knives) had been confiscated previously. Transportation to Tanforan was by means of Army commandeered buses.
The content of the collection is 24 photographic copies of sketches depicting the physical facilities at the Tanforan Assembly Center. Titles and descriptions from paperwork included with images.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
United States. Tanforan Assembly Center (San Bruno, California)--Pictorial works.
Drawings.
Japanese Americans--Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945--Pictorial works.
World War, 1939-1945--Pictorial works.
World War, 1939-1945--United States.

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**Horse Stalls used as apartments**

Scope and Contents note

Composed of a front and rear compartment--some with no door between. Exterior doors were rough woods planks and the windows were mostly fixed in place. There were no windows in the rear compartments. Flood was either existing asphalt or new wood planks over earth. Partitions between apartments stopped at the top horizontal plate and the space above was open. The least sound traveled from one end of the building to the other. There were neither plumbing nor heating and one single light bulb on a pull chain per compartment. Reminder of the former occupants was quite strong.

**Buildings with stairs**

Scope and Contents note

The buildings with stairs were mess halls and the two small buildings on the right were toilets. Other buildings shown were barrack apartments built to supplement the horse stalls. They were flimsily constructed with tar paper on the outside walls held in place by batens. Roof was thing roll roofing. The single wood plank floor on the inside shrank leaving gaps of 1/2" or more through which the wind whistled. As in the horse stalls, the partition between apartment units were partial. Here again, no plumbing, no heating and a single light bulb on pull chain. Size of a typical apartment was 16 x 20 ft. with an average occupancy of 6. Privacy within the apartment was achieved by stringing up blankets etc. The camp was divided into blocks of barracks housing about 300. Each block had its own mess hall, toilets and showers. One laundry building served two blocks.

**Grandstand**

Scope and Contents note

The grandstand dominated the entire complex. It was the center of activities and housed the camp administration, visitors hall, canteen, scrip book office and one huge bachelors dormitory.

**View from the top seats of the grandstand**

Scope and Contents note

View looking north on El Camino Real at that time the main highway between San Francisco and San Jose. Some barracks appear on the right.

**View from lower seats of the grandstand**

Scope and Contents note

View looking north. The racetrack is on the right and the South San Francisco hills are in the background.

**From the box seats of the grandstand looking down on people waiting in line to get their scrip book**

Scope and Contents note

View of

**From the box seats of the grandstand looking down on people in line to get into the canteen**

Scope and Contents note

Scrip coupons were exchanged there for sundries. There was only one canteena nd choices of items were limited.

**View of the guard tower**

**View of the barracks being built when the evacuees started to stream in**
View of gardens
Scope and Contents note
There were many skilled landscape gardeners. They converted a dried up pond in the infield into a beauty spot complete with Japanese garden, bridges, trees, walks, etc.

The hospital group
Scope and Contents note
Facilities and equipment were inadequate and supplies meager. It was staffed by evacuee doctors, dentists and nurses. The care and dedication were first rate. (2 images)

Horse stall area (4 images)
Horse stall and Barrack apartments (2 images)
Barrack apartments in the infield
Barrack apartments at race track curve
Barrack apartments
View of the grandstand (3 images)