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Analysts' at Japanese Camps Called Informers

by Steve Jordon

World-Herald Staff Writer

Some of the 120,000 Japanese-Americans held in camps in the United States during World War II were informed upon by social scientists who were supposed to be helping them, a University of Nebraska at Omaha professor has charged.

"The information to me is so overwhelming," said Peter T. Suzuki, 52, former resident of one of the internment camps who said he has spent years researching records in the National Archives.

Suzuki published results of his research in an anthropology journal and testified in Chicago recently before a congressional commission investigating the camps.

By year's end, the commission is expected to have heard thousands of witnesses and gathered hundreds of reports. Recommendations — including possible reparations — could come by mid-1982. A commission spokesman said Suzuki's comments were "an important piece of testimony, no doubt about it."

Suzuki said the 20 anthropologists and seven sociologists who acted as "community analysts" were supposed to use their scientific training to promote cooperation and understanding between the impounded people and those who ran the camps. Instead, Suzuki charges that the social scientists:



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—Passed the names of Japanese-Americans suspected of being disloyal to camp security people, the FBI and military intelligence officials.

—Prepared maps showing where Japanese-Americans of different political ideologies lived in the camps. A June 8, 1943, memo Suzuki cites says the maps were "possibly useful" in identifying "concentrations of special groups . . . which are potential trouble makers as individuals or as gangs."

—Recommended that some of those interned be sent to isolation camps.

Suzuki said his research into letters, memoranda and other documents in the archives shows a "fairly consistent pattern" among the scientists of providing information on the loyalty or disloyalty of camp residents.

Edward H. Spicer, former head of the Community Analysis Section during the war, later president of the American Anthropological Association and now retired in Tucson, Ariz., said one analyst became involved in loyalty-disloyalty issues in violation of the section's stated policy.

That analyst, John Rademaker, who worked in a camp in Granada, Colo., became involved in such matters and was removed from the job early in the war because of it, Spicer said. Rademaker could not be reached for comment.

Pressure From Administrators

But Spicer disputed Suzuki's allegation that such violations were the rule. "There is quite a large mass of community analyst reports," Spicer said, and Suzuki "has come up with a few odds and ends that probably look damaging."

Spicer said community analysts were under pressure from camp administrators to provide information on individuals, and many of the administrators did not accept or understand why the analysts would not share that information.

Spicer said he was at a loss to explain a Dec. 7, 1941, memorandum by one of his supervisors. The memo said that Spicer's check of an analyst's report at Tule Lake, Calif., had resulted in 30 names of camp residents "who might be selected for internment or other separation."

Spicer called the memo "a damning reference."

Former community analysts now living in Minnesota, Oklahoma, Connecticut and North Carolina and interviewed about their work during the war said they had not informed on

camp residents, and said they did not know of others who had.

"The accusation is really not valid," said Weston LaBarre, who was a community analyst at Topaz, Ariz., and is now professor emeritus at Duke University.

The work was "humanitarian," he said. He said he did not gather or pass information to intelligence agents on who might have been disloyal.

Suzuki praised the work of some of the scientists as courageously truthful under difficult situations.

"I didn't start out with any thesis that they had done anything wrong. I was really looking for the positive things," he said. "I admired these anthropologists because the camp conditions were so tough."

"As I came across more and more information, I thought, 'Gee, this can't be true.' There were those who were helpful, although sadly they were more the exception than the rule."

Suzuki said 20 of the 27 community analysts and most of the unit's administrators were anthropologists. All had done graduate work or received doctoral degrees from the top-ranked departments of anthropology and sociology at the time — California at Berkeley, Chicago, Columbia, Harvard, London, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Radcliffe, Toronto, Washington (Seattle), Wisconsin or Yale.

Suzuki said some community analysts' reports could have resulted in people being sent to the isolation or segregation camps, although he said he knows of only one specific case.

Rosalie H. Wax, now professor emerita at Washington University in St. Louis wrote a book titled, "Doing Fieldwork: Warnings and Advice," which includes her experiences as a graduate student in the camps as part of the University of California at Berkeley study.

4,000 Sent to Japan

She was not a community analyst, but Suzuki's paper cites part of her book in his discussion of intelligence work by anthropologists in the camps.

Suzuki's paper says Dr. Wax helped one Japanese-American avoid confinement, but criticizes her for being instrumental in sending another to an isolation camp and later to Japan, one of about 4,000 sent "home" at the end of the war.

In her book, Dr. Wax called both actions "unprofessional," but in an interview defended them on humanitarian grounds. She said Suzuki quoted her out of context.

The man later sent to Japan was "well-known" as the leader of a gang that had threatened and beaten people, she said.

Suzuki said the people who wanted to return to Japan "were embittered people who lost faith in the system and in America" and fought back by renouncing U.S. ties.

Anthropologist Rachel Sady, who was not criticized by Suzuki, said she was surprised by Suzuki's statements when she went to testify at a congressional commission's hearing in Chicago.

"I did not expect that kind of attack," she said.

Dr. Sady, who teaches anthropology at Pace University in Pleasantville, N.Y., said she saw nothing to indicate intelligence-gathering in the files where she worked at the camp in Jerome, Ark., or in the community analysis section's Washington, D.C., office.

Suzuki has "smeared all of us" with a few examples taken out of context, she said.

Japanese Relocation Program Separated Suzuki From Family

Peter T. Suzuki was 13 when the U.S. government took his family from its home in Seattle, where he was born, to an Army-built camp in Puyallup, Wash.

From there, the family was sent to a "relocation camp" at Minidoka, Idaho.

In September 1944, 15-year-old Suzuki left the Idaho camp with a one-way, second-class train ticket to Michigan and \$25 cash.

Suzuki's brothers, sisters and parents also were relocated. Although the Suzukis maintained contact with one another, "we never lived together as a family," he said.

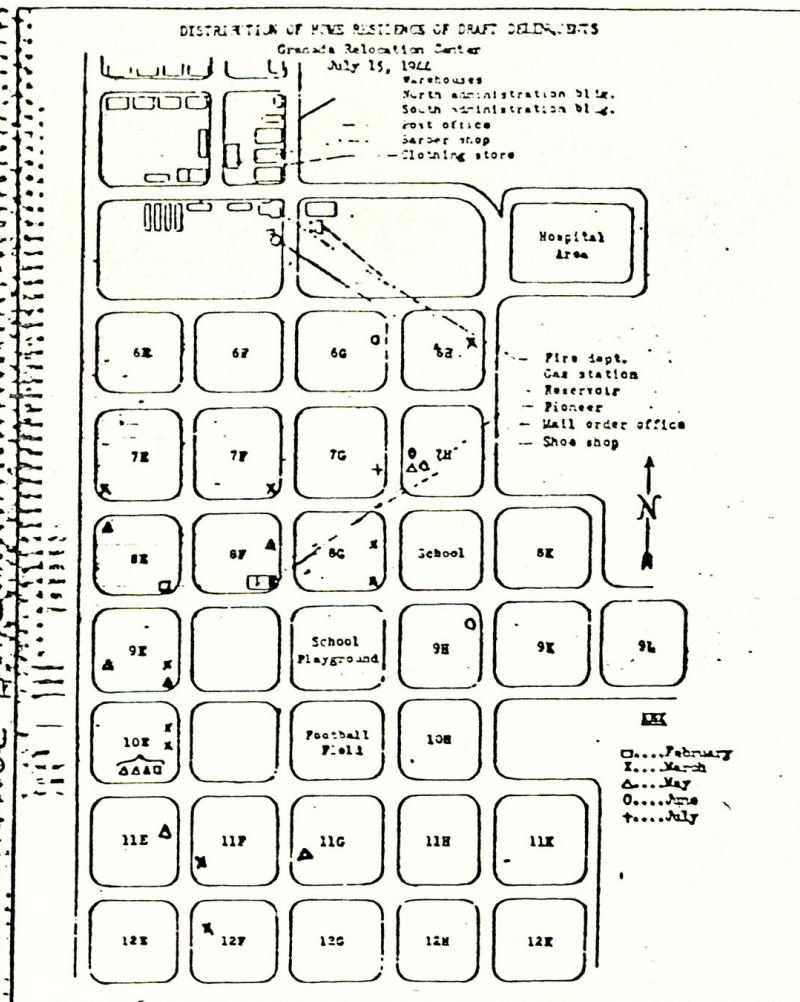
As an undergraduate in anthropology at Columbia University in 1952, Suzuki went to the National Archives in Washington, D.C., to do research for a paper on the camps. He also visited the archives in 1975, 1977, 1978, 1979 and this year.

Suzuki earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in anthropology from Columbia, did graduate work at Yale University, went to Europe on a Fulbright fellowship and earned master's and doctoral degrees from Leiden University in the Netherlands.

He has been a member of the University of Nebraska at Omaha's urban studies department since 1973.

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Source: National Archives

Map attributed to Hoebel. . . Key, at lower right, shows month in which camp residents were delinquent in answering a call by the Selective Service.

Map of Internment Camp Cited As Evidence of Intelligence Work

University of Nebraska at Omaha Professor Peter Suzuki cites a map of the Granada, Colo., internment camp as an example of intelligence work by anthropologists and sociologists who worked in the camps.

In his paper, Suzuki said the map was accompanied by two memoranda from E. Adamson Hoebel, community analyst at Granada, to Walter J. Knodel, relocation officer at Granada.

A check of the National Archives by Mary Kay Quinlan of The World-Herald's Washington Bureau turned up copies of the map and the two memos.

In the first, dated July 17, 1944, Hoebel asks Walter J. Knodel, relocation officer at Granada, "a list of names and addresses of the boys who have failed to answer the Selective Service call, giving the date of the delinquency."

"I thought I would make up a spot distribution map of residences to see if it reveals anything of significance.

It may not, but it is easy enough to do and may turn out worthwhile."

The second memo to Knodel, dated July 27, 1944, says a copy of the map is enclosed, adding:

"Unfortunately, I am not yet well enough acquainted with the social composition of the various blocks to be able to suggest any interpretation of the distribution. It is clear, however, that there are two localized areas of disaffection. At the present state, I regret that I am unable to suggest any program of action for disinfesting these two sore spots. However, it is possible that this map may be suggestive to you, so I am sending it over."

Hoebel, professor emeritus at the University of Minnesota, said in a telephone interview from his home in St. Paul, Minn., that he does not remember making such a map.

"I certainly had nothing to do with it," he said. "If I ever did anything like that, it would be quite a jolt."