

TERMINAL ISLAND HISTORY

FORWARD:

During the Covid 19 quarantine of 2020/2021, I spent some time helping my sister, Grace and brother, Glenn take care of our mother at their home in Mission Viejo. My mom was 99 years old and had lived an amazing life. At 99, her short term memory wasn't the best. She often asked where she was and we had to reassure her that she was in her bedroom, at her home and not in some strange hospital or rest home. She wanted to be home. She would be confused about who visited her or what time it was, but her long term memory was amazing. Showing her old family photographs, she could easily explain who was in the picture and the background story of the photo. She remembered the address of the Ryono family home in Philadelphia. We checked it out on Google Maps and sure enough, it was the house. There were a few modifications from the old photos but it was clearly the right house.

After my mom's 98th birthday party when we held a large Ryono style family reunion with over 100 people, her health deteriorated quickly and by her 99th birthday party it was just a small family get together with mom limited to her wheelchair. In her last days, she couldn't do much. Cooking, knitting, reading or even watching her favorite Judge Judy on TV was difficult. So we spent hours looking at old photos and talking about her life. She didn't say much about Manzanar; I think it was a sad time for her. Instead, she talked a lot about Terminal Island and good times. I took a few notes and thought it would be worthwhile putting them on paper.

This is mostly about my mom's Ryono family history. I don't know much about my dad's Enomoto side. I did not get a chance to talk to my step-dad, Henry Enomoto before his passing. He was not much into talking about his family history but maybe one day, I will research and start putting that onto paper. The Enomoto side may be interesting as well.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Aside from the notes I took while talking to my mom, there are many other sources of information in this paper.

Photos are from our own family albums or from other members of the Ryono clan, especially my cousins, Jim Ryono and Lisa Shibuya. Jim seems to be the holder of many pictures taken by his mom (my Auntie Mari) and Lisa seems to have quite a large collection of her own.

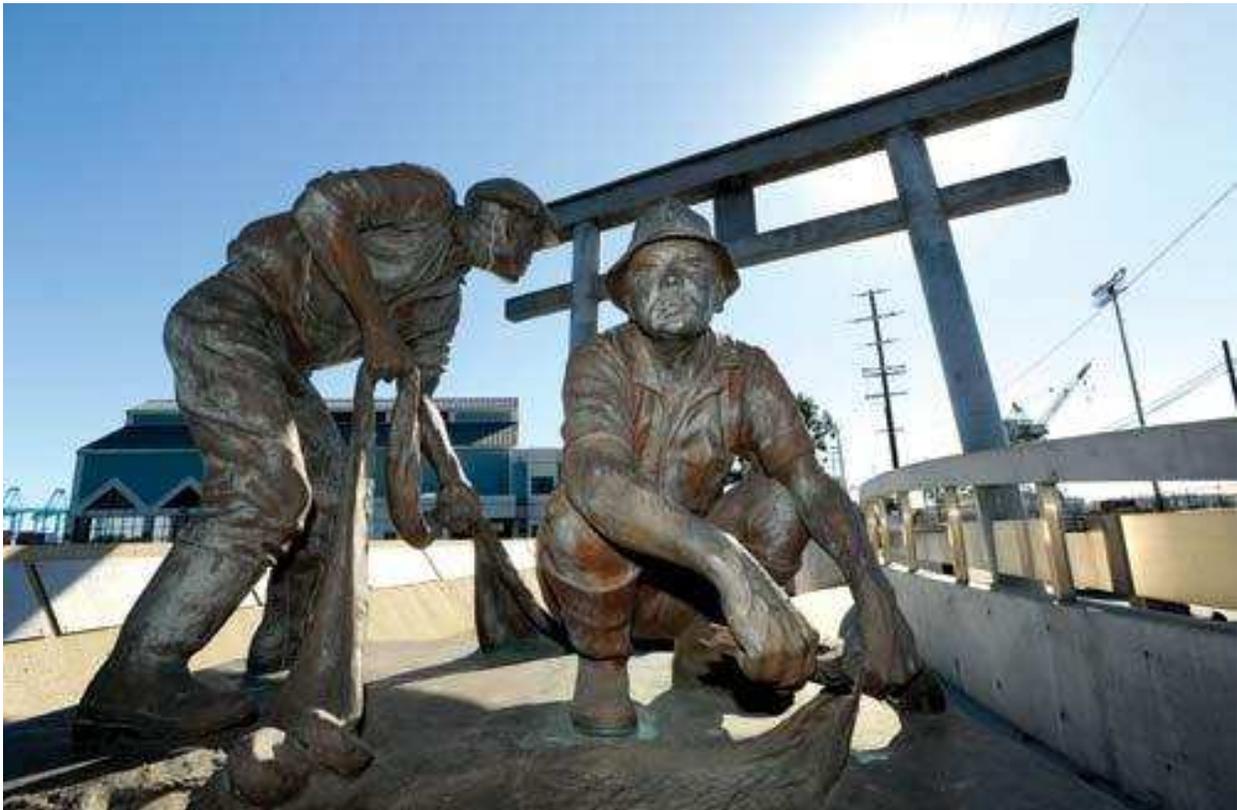
The origin of the Japanese people and specifically the unique Japanese language comes from a good friend and colleague, Donal Hanley. Donal is an Irishman and probably the most intelligent person I have met in my career. He is a lawyer by profession but has a PhD in linguistic history as a hobby. He speaks fluent Japanese, Chinese (both Mandarin and Cantonese), Russian, German, Spanish, French, and Greek along with his native Irish-English. He lives in Japan with his Chinese wife.

I am a bit of a history buff so the quick American and Japanese history lessons are from my own knowledge as is the concept that Terminal Island was a "Clan" society. Lastly, I need to thank

the internet and a booklet published by my Uncle Bob for some old photos and information about the history of old Terminal Island.

INTRODUCTION

In a remote section of Los Angeles harbor, there is a bronze statue of an old commercial fisherman looking longingly at the harbor and on to the blue ocean beyond. This statue and surrounding memorial was erected in 2003 through the efforts of the surviving members of the Terminal Island Club. The Terminal Island Club was formed in 1971 by the residents who lived, worked and played in the Japanese village of Terminal Island before World War II. By the late 1990's most members of the Terminal Island Club were in their 60's and 70's and it was clear to the members that within the next decade or so, their membership would decline through aging and death. They wanted to build a monument in memory of and in honor of the ethnic enclave of Terminal Island, where they had been born and raised.



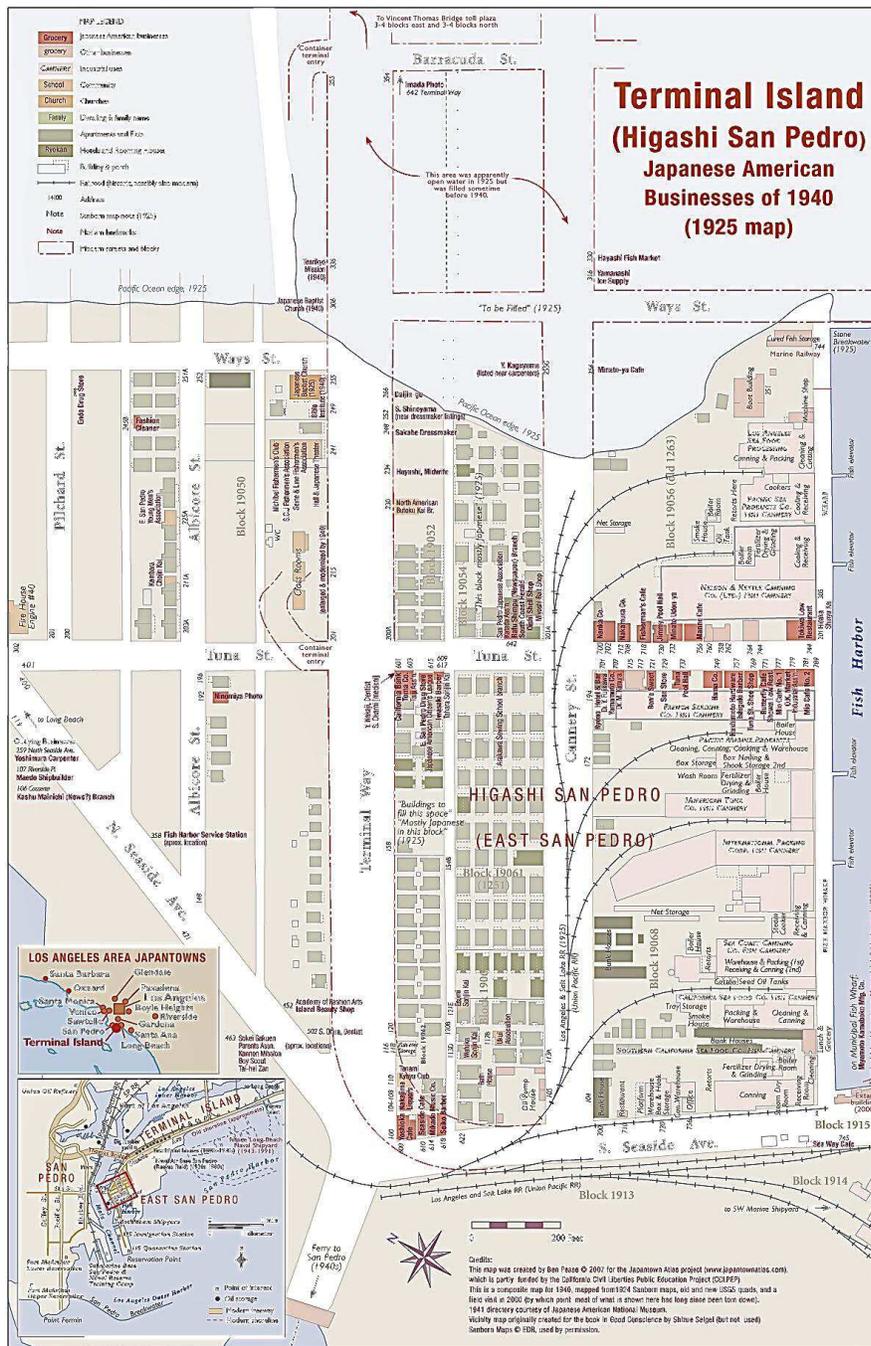
The Terminal Island Memorial

So what was Terminal Island and what is its history? Most American know about Manzanar and the story of Japanese internment during World War II, but where did the Japanese that populated Manzanar (and other internment camps throughout the U.S.) come from. This is the

story of one group of Japanese immigrants and their Japanese-American off-spring before World War II and their lives prior to the upheaval of internment during the war.

THE VILLAGE OF TERMINAL ISLAND:

Even among the other ethnic enclaves that populated the United States during the early 20th century, Terminal Island was unique. Terminal Island as the name implies is a small island in the middle of Los Angeles harbor and is isolated from the rest of the city of Los Angeles by water. One had to take a ferry or a drawbridge to get to or from Terminal Island (today, one can take the Vincent Thomas bridge but this bridge was built in 1990). There was little reason for the general populace of Los Angeles to visit Terminal Island. The Japanese village that evolved in Terminal Island was isolated and generally a replica of a typical fishing village in their home islands of Japan. The Terminal Island Village population was virtually all Japanese, the spoken language was the Japanese dialect of their home villages (interspersed with a few slang and mispronounced English words similar in concept to "Pidgin English" spoken in Hawaii). The local shops and stores in Terminal Island were owned and operated by the Japanese. The town had a pool hall, a communal hot tub, a judo hall, Fisherman's Hall, grocery and hardware stores, banks and eateries. There were Shinto shrines, and Buddhist temples for residents to practice and worship the religions of Japan; also a Baptist church for those who worship a more American religion. There was an elementary/middle school on the island with white teachers teaching in English for the young Nisei (second generation) students but the language spoken at home and in town was Japanese. The Nisei were virtually all bi-lingual. It was not until high school at San Pedro High that the Nisei needed to take the ferry and venture onto the outside world and encounter the local white population and the prejudices that existed at that time. For the first generation Issei, they could comfortably live in their uprooted Japanese village of Terminal Island as if still in Japan. Except for occasional trips to the Japanese populated area of Los Angeles known as "Little Tokyo" near city hall, they rarely left their little village.



Village of Terminal Island Map - 1925

Note: The canneries are on Wharf Street next to Fish Harbor where boats unloaded their catch and the businesses are along Tuna Street, the main commercial street. The light green shaded buildings in the center of the map are the cannery company houses where the Japanese families lived. This map, drawn in 1940, shows Terminal Island in 1925. Barracuda Street where the Ryono family later resided is still underwater in 1925. This area was later filled in from harbor dredgings to increase the island's size.

U.S. HISTORY OF THE TIME:

At the end of the 19th century, America was still recovering from the Civil War, which had ended in 1865. In the Northeast and Midwest, the great industrialization of the U.S. was in full swing. The Great Plains, west of the Mississippi River, was producing great amounts of food with the recent advent of mechanized farming. The South was gradually rebuilding its shattered economy from the devastation of the Civil War. The West was proving to be a great source of natural resources such as gold, silver, timber, oil, iron, copper and other minerals. The Northeast and Midwest were becoming the homes of great industrial factories such as Carnegie Steel (later U.S. Steel), Ford Motors, General Motors, Edison Electric (later General Electric).

Transportation in the form of railroads and shipping was booming. The transcontinental railroad had been completed in 1869 and now thousands of miles of new railways were spawning both east/west and north/south. The Panama Canal had been completed in 1914 and new steam power ships were transporting vast amounts of goods from east coast to west coast via the new canal. The U.S. was transforming itself from an agricultural society before the Civil War to a great industrial nation by the beginning of the 20th Century. These new industries in the U.S. needed cheap, unskilled labor to keep their manufacturing lines going. The industrial barons of the time steered the government to ease U.S. immigration laws to allow a great influx of new immigrants. And the immigrants came!

New Immigrants from Europe (especially from Southern and Eastern Europe) came to the East Coast, immigrants from Latin America (especially from Mexico) moved to the Southwest, but the West had immigrants coming from Asia. They flocked to the U.S. in great numbers to take advantage of the economic opportunities offered in the U.S. For the industrialists, this was great; cheap labor for their growing industries, and potential consumers for their manufactured goods. Certainly the Midwest was producing enough food to keep everyone fed. These new immigrants were generally a poor unskilled labor force and they moved into the ethnic ghettos of the big cities. Here in the big cities, jobs were available, housing was cheap and they could live among their own kind and speak the language of their homeland. This generation of immigrants were not the pre-Civil War, western Europeans farmers from England, France, Germany, and Scandinavia.

The existing White population of the U.S. generally did not take well to the new immigrants. The new immigrants posed a threat to their "American Way" of life. Immigrants were competitors for jobs, they spoke strange foreign languages, worshipped different religions, ate unwholesome food (like raw fish) and had strange customs. They looked and dressed differently. They were not "Real Americans". Racial and ethnic prejudices flourished and was the general social makeup of White America during this time. Remember that many adult "Americans" of this era had grown up where racial slavery was socially acceptable in the South and although the North fought against slavery, certainly the majority of Northerners still felt that Christian Whites were superior to other races and religions.

Into this background, certain immigrants of Japanese ancestry came to Los Angeles and settled onto Terminal Island.

JAPANESE HISTORY:

Above we looked into the history and background of U.S. society during the turn of the 19th century to the 20th century. We need to look at Japan and its history to understand the Japanese, who immigrated to Terminal Island.

Japan is a group of 4 major islands and many smaller islands off the east coast of Asia. These islands are much further north of China than most people think and the closest Asian landmass to Japan is the Korean Peninsula some 125 miles away. Japan's location relative to Asia is similar to Great Britain and Europe, except Britain is only 25 miles from the cultural and economic influences of Europe, whereas the islands of Japan are a five times greater distance to Asia.

Two-thirds of Japan is mountainous and this archipelago has few natural resources. It lacks the iron, oil, coal, precious metals and food sources sought by potential invaders. As an island nation, much of its food source comes from the sea. Rice and other plant based foods are painstakingly grown on terraced fields on Japan's mountainous hillsides or on the few flat plains such as the Edo Plains around Tokyo.

Based on the unique Japanese language, historians believe the current Japanese peoples migrated to these islands from northern Asia (Siberia) through the Korean Peninsula rather than from Southern Asia and China. The written Japanese language borrows from Chinese "Kanji" (Chinese picture-grams), but the spoken multi-syllabic Japanese language and sentence construction is more similar to Korean and Siberian Inuit (Eskimo) rather than the mono-syllabic Chinese tree of languages spoken in Southern Asia. Spoken Japanese sounds more like American Indian (Eskimo influence) than spoken Chinese.

Japan is isolated from mainland Asia by its 125 miles of ocean, and though mainland cultural influences migrated to Japan, these islands generally stayed clear of the political and military turmoil happening in mainland Asia. Other than two attempts by the Mongol Empire of Genghis Khan (which failed without military action), Japan faced no military action in Asia until the start of the 20th century..

Isolated Japan developed into a well documented feudal society with Emperors, Shoguns and Samurais that lasted well into the 19th century. The Emperors were typically figureheads and the country was actually run by one or more Shoguns and their families. Shoguns were the equivalent of the rich and powerful dukes of Europe. During Japan's long feudal history, various Shogunates would rise to power followed by civil wars between competing Shoguns to see who would next rise to power. The last of these great Shogun families was the Tokugawa Shogunate who ruled Japan from 1600 to 1868. This Tokugawa Shogunate was a long period

of peace and prosperity for Japan. The Tokugawas kept Japan isolated from the Western world and the colonization problems as in China for some 250 years. Things started to fall apart for the Tokugawas when Admiral Perry and America forced the opening of Tokyo Harbor in 1853 and the Boshin War of 1868. With the help of Western firearms and military aid, the titular Emperor was returned to power and the Tokugawa Shogunate ended. This Emperor ruling period was called the Meiji Period of Japan but realistically Japan was still controlled by the warrior class. Warrior samurais and their hierarchy quickly evolved into a Japanese military during the Meiji period. This military saw the benefits of Western military technology and wanted to turn Japan into a great Asian military power and colonizer following the Western model. The military spent the treasury of Japan into building a great military and had little concern about the plight of the common people and their economic problems. Eventually this military path led Japan into the invasion of Korea, and China and ended with Pearl Harbor and World War II.

Politically and militarily, Japan transitioned from a medieval feudal government into a modern Western country in a quick 50 years. However, the culture of the Japanese people and its society did not evolve as quickly. Japanese society retained the ethics, tradition and culture of a feudal world. Whereas the Western world spent 500 years transitioning from feudal thoughts and customs to a more free thinking “enlightened” society, Japan society did not make this transition in a mere 50 years.

JAPANESE RELIGION AND SOCIETY:

To understand how Terminal Islanders lived and worked, one needs to have a basic understanding of the religion and social attitudes of homeland Japan.

In many human societies that live close to nature, the people believe in natural spirits. Siberian Inuits, Alaskan Eskimos and American Indians beliefs share this trait. Assuming that the Japanese people evolved from the same branch of the human tree as these people, it is not surprising that the ancient Japanese also believed in natural spirits. The sun, the earth, the seas all had their spirits as did all humans, animals and trees. The bounties of nature could be harvested for the good of the people but their spirits were to be honored for providing to the people.

Shintoism is the ancient “religion” of Japan. It is not a religion as in the Western sense of religion but more a way of life; to live in harmony with this earth and with its many spirits of nature. There is no monolithic supreme deity as in the Christian religions nor a collection of deities interacting with each other as in ancient Greek or Roman religions. Shintoism believes in living in harmony and harmony is the core concept of Japanese society even today. Shintoism encourages purity, cleanliness, sincerity, helpfulness and cheerfulness, all for the purpose of living in harmony.

Buddhism, the other main religion of Japan, started in India and came to Japan around 500 BC via China. While evolving and migrating through China, the Japanese versions of Buddhism picked up many of the teachings of Confucius, a Chinese philosopher. Confucius believed that humans are fundamentally good, teachable, improvable, and perfectable through personal and communal efforts.

The 5 major teachings of Confucius are:

- 1) Jen: Goodwill, empathy and generosity.
- 2) Yi: Rightness and duty as guardians of nature and humanity.
- 3) Li: Proper conduct and expression (etiquette and filial piety).
- 4) Chih: Wisdom and education.
- 5) Hsin: Faithfulness (loyalty) and trustworthiness (honesty).

Japanese sense of honor and ethics evolved from the above Confucius teachings. Filial piety was the duty of the lower rank members of a family to be obedient to higher rank members of the family. Children should obey parents, older siblings, and females should obey male. This code of obedience went outside the family into the business world, the military and government where junior members were expected to obey senior officials unconditionally.

The reciprocal to piety and obedience, was the duty of the higher rank members to treat the lower rank with honor, support, and guidance. Subordinate members were to be cared for, taught and not to be mistreated.

Buddhism is very much like Shintoism. Both are more a philosophy of how to live a good life rather than a worship of a deity or deities. Buddhism does teach the concept of reincarnation and an after-life, but it is easy to see that these two religions could coexist without conflict as to which religion is the “right” religion. The concept of a Shinto shrine next to a Buddhist church was not a problem for the Japanese who could bow and honor both. Christianity arrived in Japan via Portuguese traders but it was a minor religion within Japan at the start of the 20th century.

Understanding Japanese history and religious background, one can start to understand how Japanese society worked at the start of the 20th century (1900).

From the feudal military history came the Bushido, the strict samurai code of conduct. It documents the concept of honor, loyalty, courage and self control among the samurai and in interaction with the common people. It is much like the code of honor among the knights of medieval Europe. Japanese society entered the modern Western world without going through the “enlightenment” period of the European Renaissance, where the common people were encouraged to think for themselves. In a feudal world, everyone has a rank and place in their society and everyone is expected to follow the authority of the higher rank.

From their religions, came the concept of cleanliness, empathy, humility, proper conduct, honesty and duty to community. One can see some of the customs and traits of ancient Japan even today. Japanese personal hygiene and cleanliness is legendary. Public spaces such as railway stations, airports, stadiums, parks and streets in Japan are spotlessly clean. Private homes, hotels and cars are kept up and clean. Shoes are left outside and indoor slippers are expected to be used indoors. Trash in public spaces are expected to be pick-up and disposed of properly, No such thing as wrappers and peanut shells being left behind at the end of sporting events. The fans pick-up and properly dispose of their trash as they leave the stadium.

There is a very strict hierarchy by age and rank. Everyone is expected to know their place in their household, their business and in society. Seating in cars and at tables, entry through doors/elevators, and even the spoken language dialects are by rank. Women speak using different words and phrases when talking to men. Bowing shows respect for superiors but superiors are expected to treat the lower rank properly.

Everyone is expected to be polite, to work hard, and a job should be done well. Customers are treated as guests and they should be served with honor. There is no tipping since a guest should not be expected to tip in order to receive proper service. Honor, integrity and honesty are paramount. Things found should be returned with all haste and effort. The concept of honor to the family is taken to the n-th degree. Members of the family are expected not to dishonor the family by their actions. Everyone is to be treated with respect. Help, charity and assistance should be provided without embarrassing the receiving party. "Trash Talk" and purposely embarrassing anyone is unheard of. These were the morales of the society from which the Issei's immigrated to the United States.

Here are some unique Japanese customs that still exists today:

Omiyage: When visiting a household, the visitor is expected to bring a little food or snack type gift called an Omiyage. A household is expected to serve some food to their guests during a visit (very similar to the U.S.) but in olden days when many households were poor, such extra food to serve may not exist. The Omiyage allowed the household and guests to partake in food during the visit without embarrassing anyone.

"Enjo (sp?)": It is a Japanese custom to first refuse any offering of food or any other such gift. Japanese families are always expected to offer food and gifts to guests. However, in olden days, some families did not have or could not afford the food being offered. By first refusing any offer, it allows the offering party to not provide the food or gift without embarrassment. After several offers and refusals, the guest and host can get a general understanding of whether the host truly has the means to provide the food/gift.

Koden: It is a Japanese custom to give monetary support in the form of cash money to the family who has lost a loved one. This money, called a Koden, is expected to help the family pay for funeral expenses. The amount of money is kept confidential but is based on the wealth of

the providing party. Again this is to be done without embarrassment to the receiving family. It is like a “go fund me” page of ancient times.

As a guest, you are not to take the last piece of food on a serving plate. Taking the last piece of food would indicate that you are still hungry and the host would be embarrassed by not having enough food to provide to the guest. Conversely, the host would try never to be down to the last piece of food on a serving plate. More food is always put on the serving plate before down to the last piece.

CLAN SOCIETY AND ECONOMICS::

Before getting into the history of Terminal Island, we need to understand the basics of a “Clan” society because the Japanese village on Terminal Island certainly was a Clan society.

In early human history, before large cities, and great civilizations, our ancestors lived in small family groups, hunting and gathering what was available for food. If food was readily available, these family groups grew larger into what sociologists call “Clans”. Members of the Clan were closely related, spoke the same language, and had the same social customs and religion. The size of the Clan and the living arrangement had to be small enough that everyone knows everyone. Farmers would have a difficult time developing a Clan society because their farms were far enough apart that people didn’t know each other that well and could not cooperate for community projects. Large cities certainly have tight living conditions but it is difficult to know your neighbors in cities with millions of people. Small towns in remote rural areas provide the best opportunity to develop a Clan society.

The evolutionary benefit of being a Clan member is that the Clan will take care of you during hard times. Food and shelter were shared among the Clan members. In return, everyone is expected to do their part in providing for the Clan. Everyone knows their place in the Clan hierarchy and what duties they are suppose to provide to the Clan. Adult males typically do the hunting and physical hard work, while women do the gathering and preparation of food for family and Clan meals. Children are expected to do whatever they can to help the adults. Clan members are diligent in providing for the safety of Clan members. Everyone works together for the benefit of the Clan. Elderly members are taken care of for their past contributions and are expected to pass on their knowledge to children and adults alike. In this manner mothers and grandmothers teach girls how to cook and sew. Fathers and uncles teach boys how to hunt, fish and build. Because everyone knows each other, those who don’t pull their fair share of the work are looked down upon and can be socially ostracized. Those, who work the hardest, are looked up to and honored as leaders of the Clan. Economically, there is little need for a monetary system, all food and most resources are shared among the Clan members. Building and constructing are a Clan event. Government is by consensus of the Clan leaders and members. Honor is of great importance to Clan members and individual Clan families. Since everyone knows everyone and their social affairs, doing something of dishonor brings shame to the individual and also to their family.

TERMINAL ISLAND HISTORY - THE EARLY DAYS:

The Issei's (first generation) who first immigrated to the U.S., were born and raised in Japan in the late 1800's and brought with them the mores and customs of their homeland.

In the early 1900s, a few dozen Japanese fishermen settled on a small island in Los Angeles Harbor. It was then known as Rattlesnake Island but was renamed for marketing purposes by the new owners, Los Angeles Terminal Railways, hence the new name Terminal Island. Many of these early Issei's were from nearby White Point (Point Fermin), where there was an early Japanese encampment harvesting local abalone along the rocky shores of what is currently Palos Verdes peninsula. In 1905, the state of California passed a new law prohibiting the Japanese from harvesting abalone and these Issei's needed a new source of work and income.

In 1903, the California Fish Company perfected a method of canning tuna. Canned tuna could be kept preserved for many months while shipped to food markets for nationwide consumption. No longer was tuna just a local seafood limited to keeping fresh on ice for a few days. Canned tuna (and other canned fish, like sardines) was tasty, inexpensive and a good source of protein. California Fish Company was the first to open a tuna cannery on Terminal Island but others like Van Camp, Franco-American, White Star and others soon followed.

The canneries on Terminal Island needed tuna to feed their canneries and the Japanese immigrants with their expertise in fishing from their homeland proved to be excellent commercial fishermen. There were also fishermen from Europe, especially Italians, Yugoslavians, and Croatians but the village of Terminal Island was all Japanese. The canneries were doing well. Tuna in the early 1900's, were plentiful off the coast of Southern California and the Japanese Issei's on Terminal Island did well. Word of these early Issei's' economic success soon spread back to their fishing villages in Japan. Most were from fishing villages such as Kushimoto and Taiji in Wakayama prefecture (state). The early 1900 were hard economic times in Japan. The military government's efforts to become a world power meant most government resources and money were spent on building the military. Taxes and inflation were high, commercial goods were not being produced and food was in short supply. Relatives and friends of the early Issei's on Terminal Island were encouraged to migrate to Los Angeles for better economic opportunities and many came. By 1907 an estimated 600 Japanese fishermen lived on Terminal Island. They had built small jig boats called lamparas to catch tuna on long line feathered jigs and they provided the tuna for the fledgling canneries. Wives and children of the Issei fishermen worked at the canneries to process the fish their husbands and fathers had caught that day.



Terminal Islanders

Early Days at Terminal Island - Wharf Street at Fish Harbor

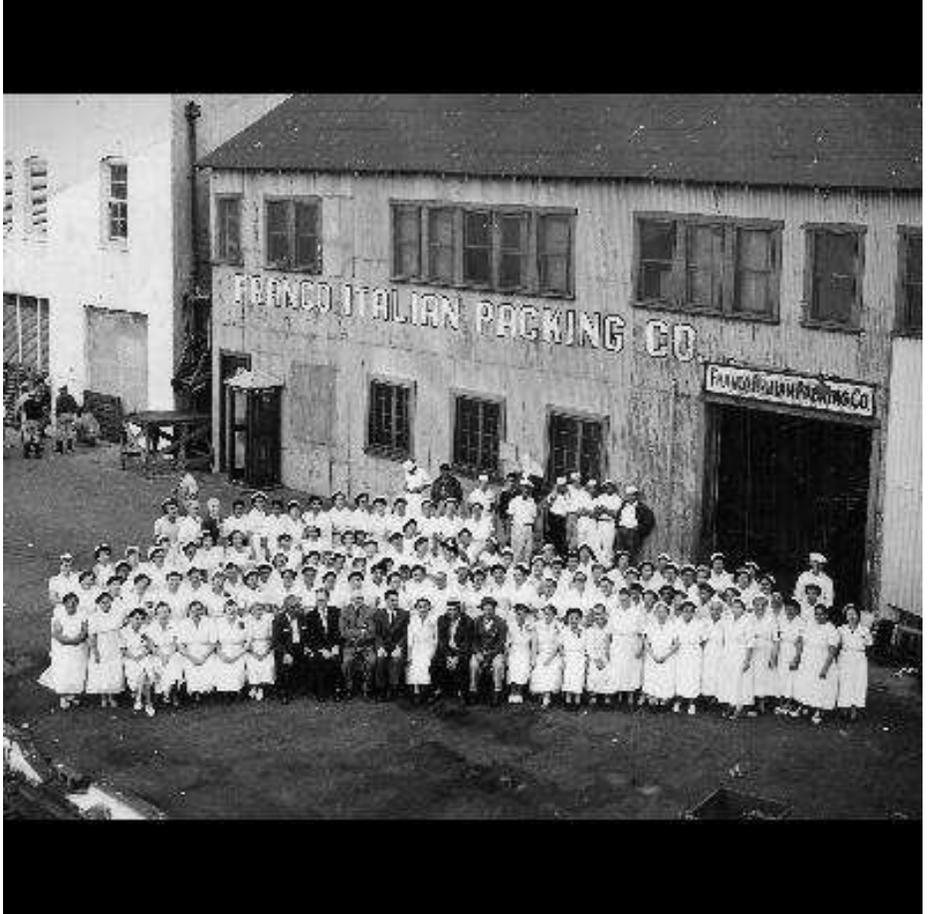
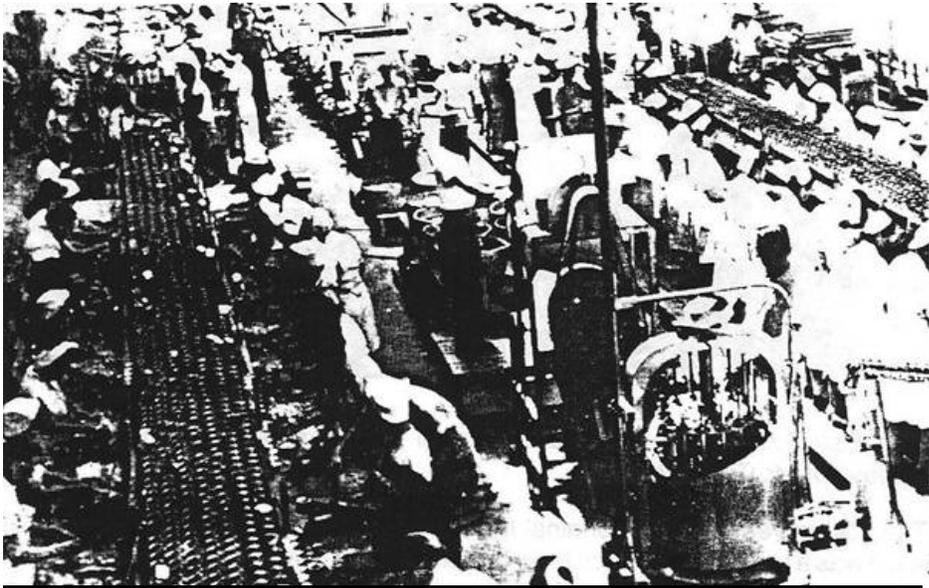
Note: See the smaller lampera style (Ken-Ken Bure) jig boats and the canneries in the background.

The local canneries built company housing on Terminal Island and rented them to their Japanese fisherman and families so they could be close to the canneries. The company homes were barrack style buildings with thin walls and closely spaced (typically 10 feet from the next home). They were built on compacted beach sand along narrow unpaved streets and alleys. Since there were very few cars, the streets served more as a walkway. There were no front or back yards. The front of the house was right on the street. Children played on the street or nearby beaches.



Barrack Style Housing Rented by the Canneries

Cannery workers were expected to respond day or night to the sound of a siren (a unique siren for each cannery) and walk to the cannery to clean and process tuna day or night, whenever a boat arrived with a fresh catch of fish. It was a 24/7 standby, then work at the cannery until all the fish was processed for that boatload of fish.



Cannery Process Line and Cannery Workers

By 1917, the village of Terminal Island was a company town populated by some 2000 Japanese. Virtually everyone that lived on Terminal island was Japanese and in this transplanted Japanese village, the new immigrants could live and work comfortably les without speaking a word of English or encountering the racial prejudices of the outside world.

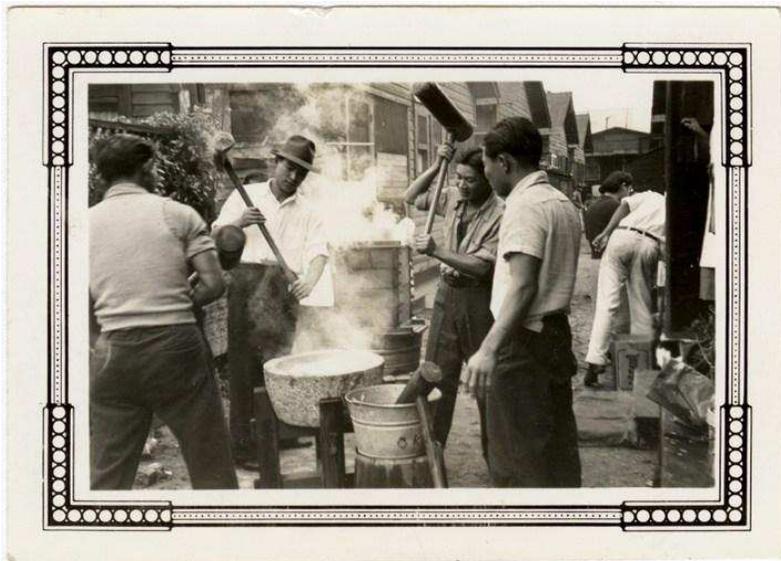
The lifestyle, customs and etiquette within Terminal Island was Japanese. It was a classic “Clan” type society.. Everyone in town knew everyone. People took care of each other. There was not a homeless problem. People knew their place within their own society. There was not a formal elected government in Terminal Island but community leaders by general consensus among the populist. The well off assisted the less fortunate. As typical of clan societies, community work was distributed among the population and resources were shared. Providing firewood for the communal bath was everyone’s responsibility. The few cars owned by wealthier families and businesses were often borrowed by people of the village. Streets were kept clean by the people of the neighborhood. Any extra food was given to relatives, neighbors and friends. Neighbors helped each other, community work projects had plenty of volunteers. Not contributing to the benefit of the village was to dishonor the family. Everyone was expected to be polite, treat each other with respect and to be clean and honest. The residents practiced the teachings of Confucius without knowing who Confucius was). The village was not fancy but the streets were clean and safe. Local kids would roam and play throughout the town under the watchful eye of relatives and neighbors. For the Terminal Islanders, this was a good life. The Islanders called the village “Furusato” meaning hometown in Japanese.



Early Japanese Fishermen on Lampara Type Jig Boat

The 1920's were a prosperous decade for the Terminal Islanders. The Issei's seemed to have made a good decision to immigrate to the U.S. The aftermath of World War I brought a boom time to the U.S.economy. U.S. factories were working full time to produce goods for export to much of the world as European factories rebuilt after the devastation of the war. The ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles were busy shipping record quantities of U.S. manufactured goods to Asia and South America. The movie industry started in Hollywood to take advantage of the good weather in Southern California as did the fledgling US. aircraft industry (Douglas Aircraft, Convair Aviation, Northrop Corporation and North American Aviation). Terminal Island was the beneficiary of the "Roaring Twenties".

On Terminal Island, the transplanted Japanese fishing village, life continued to be happy. The fish were plentiful, work was steady, young immigrant families were having and raising kids. It was a safe town where everyone watched out for each other. Home doors typically were not locked and kids could play on the streets or nearby beaches without concern. Within town, there were no racial prejudices since everyone was Japanese. Both Japanese and American holidays were celebrated with a leaning towards the Japanese holidays. Christmas and Thanksgiving were minor holidays compared to the Japanese New Years. New Years meant traditional "mochi-tsuki", the pounding of rice with wooden mallets into rice paste to make mochi. It was an annual event of family members, relatives and friends gathering to make mochi for New Years. The week before New Years, the streets of the village were filled with moch-tsuki events being held by various families. They were big social events where everyone met and worked together from morning to night to make the most and best mochi. Men drank and sang, teenage boys tried to impress the girls and the women gossiped. On New Year's Day, all the households held a big open house with wonderful spreads of food. Neighbors visited each other to partake in food and drink. By evening, everyone was singing their favorite song long before the days of electronic Karaoke machines.



A New Years Mochi-Tsuki

Note: The big wooden mallets are used to pound the cooked rice into rice paste for mochi.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION:

Then came “Black Friday”, the fall of Wall Street in 1929 and the worldwide Great Depression. Factories closed, shipping collapsed, unemployment was rampant. Terminal Island was not immune to the effects of economic depression but it fared much better than most regions of the U.S.

Terminal Island, at the time of the Great Depression, was basically a transplanted Japanese fishing village living a “Clan” way of life superimposed with Japanese customs and culture. “Clan Societies” are set-up and organized for the survival of the Clan during hard times such as the Depression. Certainly the Islanders had to tighten their belts but their clan way of life protected them from the worst of the Great Depression.

The island’s chief source of income was associated with the harvesting and production of an inexpensive, protein rich food. Canned tuna may have switched to cheaper canned sardines but fishing off of Southern California was still good and canned fish for the general U.S. population was much cheaper than fresh beef, lamb or poultry. These were the days before refrigeration and frozen foods. Canned fish could be easily transported, and stay on local market shelves and in household pantries without concern for spoilage. It was a much less expensive meal source than a trip to the butcher to buy fresh meats and poultry that had to be kept on ice. Family meals based on canned fish were much more prevalent than it is today.

For themselves, the Terminal Islanders had plenty of food for their seafood rich diet. Fresh fish from the Pacific Ocean along with crabs, lobsters, shrimp, and crustaceans collected along Los Angeles harbor were plentiful. Even Nori (seaweed) could be harvested locally. Some purchased rice from Little Tokyo and vegetables traded in exchange for fresh fish with local Japanese farmers in San Pedro and Torrance made for good and inexpensive meals. No one was going hungry.

Everyone worked together. The better-off were expected to assist the less fortunate. Local business owners extended credit to their customers whenever possible. Delayed repayment and forbearance was common. Food and resources were still shared. Anything extra within a household was expected to be given to less fortunate relatives, friends and neighbors. Hand-me-down clothing was common and there was no shame given or expected when wearing such clothing. As long as you were a member of the Clan (and sometimes even outside the Clan), you were taken care of. Shelter and food was always somehow available. There were no homeless or hungry. The less fortunate were expected to honor those who helped them and to repay in kind if and when the opportunity presented itself. Loans and credits were expected to be repaid as soon as possible. Terminal Island was not a Capitalistic, “everyman for himself” or a Socialist, “the government should take care of it” society that we see so much of today. The “Clan” community took care of itself.

As the depression gradually subsided, Terminal Island entered a golden age. Fishing was still good and although boats were now venturing further off-shore (North to Monterey and south to Mexican waters), bigger boats and newer fishing technology (such as iced/refrigerated fish holds, motorized booms and electronics) kept the canneries booming. The residents of Terminal Island were doing well and the better-off were becoming wealthy. People were buying family cars and events such as weddings were becoming extravagant.

The Golden Decade:

The period generally from 1931 to the end of 1941 can be considered to be a Golden Decade for Terminal Island and its residents. The U.S. was gradually working its way out of the Depression and Terminal Island was ahead of the curve. The fishing industry was becoming wealthy, many new, bigger, and better fishing boats were built and joined the Terminal Island fleet. Long line jig boats typically 40-50 feet long with small gas engines that caught single fish at a time were being replaced by much larger 65-85 feet "purse seiner" boats which netted schools of fish by the ton. Boat owners and their crews were making good money. The demand for canned fish remained high as the rest of the U.S. was still recovering from the Depression. Fishing in Southern California remained good. The canneries on Terminal Island were working full time. The families of the fisherman who caught fish and worked at the canneries had steady income and were excellent employees.



Terminal Island Docks in late 1930's

Note: The boats are now bigger "Purse Seiner" boats, typically 65 to 85 feet long with powered booms to haul in the fish nets.

Terminal Island society was blooming. There was extra spending money for entertainment and shopping. The neighborhood was safe and friendly. Friends and family were everywhere. Weekly movies were shown at community halls, and local sports teams were doing well. Classes in Japanese culture such as flower arrangement for the girls and martial arts for boys were flourishing. Festivals and celebrations such as New Years, Hanamatsuri (Buddha's birthday), Boy's day and Girl's day were becoming more elaborate. The Japanese speaking residents of Terminal Island were living the good life while shielded from the worst of the racial prejudices of the mainland. This is the Terminal Island that the members of the Terminal Island Club lovingly remember and cherish.



Tuna Street - the Main Commercial Street on Terminal Island

Note: This photo must be from the late 1930s from the number of cars and their vintage.

Even within the larger Japanese community outside of Terminal Island, the Islander's were unique and clannish. Divided by mountainous terrain and seas for thousands of years, the spoken Japanese language evolved and separated into many local and unique dialects; much more so than Irish brogue, Scottish slang or Southern U.S. draw. Before the advent of modern radio and TV broadcast, a villager from Southern Shikoku Island would have a difficult time conversing with someone from cosmopolitan Tokyo. The basic Japanese spoken on Terminal Island was the dialect from their home prefecture of Wakayama and nearby Shizuoka. Interspersed within their Japanese dialect were some English words especially among the Nisei

who were bilingual. There developed a local Terminal Island slang. The English “are” is difficult to pronounce for Japanese speakers so it quickly became “ra” (as in ra-men) which is a common Japanese sound. Therefore, “you are” was pronounced “you’ra”. The concept of “I” versus “me”, and “am” versus “are” was a useless English language complication for the Terminal Islanders, so “I am” became “me’ra” (it helps that the Japanese word for “is” is pronounced “wa” which sounds very much like “ra”). Terminal was pronounced “Tami-na-ru”. “Me’wa Tami-na-ru wa” meant “I am from Terminal Island”. This and many other slang words and mispronunciations was the everyday language on the streets of Terminal Island. Even among other Japanese living in the U.S. and in Japan, the Terminal Island language was a rough and unsophisticated speech. For the Terminal Islanders, their unique spoken dialect was a sign that they were members of the clan.

THE END:

The history of what happened to this successful Japanese enclave is eerily similar to the plot of the Broadway musical “Fiddler on the Roof”. There is a hit song from this show called “Tradition”. In the play, the song asks the audience, who are these Russian Jews living together in a foreign country. The answer is that their society is defined by their traditions; their way of life and how they lived together. And so it was for this society that was Terminal Island.

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the U.S. Naval fleet at Pearl Harbor killing thousands of Americans. The next day, the U.S. entered World War II and declared war with Japan. Things happened quickly on Terminal Island after that December 7.

There were some legitimate concerns of the U.S. military about the village of Terminal Island. In the middle of the West Coast’s most important harbor and in close proximity to a major U.S. naval base, lived 3,000 Japanese speaking residents with some 250 ocean going boats equipped with long range radio communication and navigation capability. The Japanese seamen of Terminal Island were intimately familiar with Los Angeles harbor and had local knowledge of the whole West Coast from Seattle to the Mexican border. There was little thought or effort to identify the foreign national Issei’s from the U.S. born and U.S. citizen Niseis. Everyone was racially grouped as “Japs” and were therefore enemies of the U.S. There were many rumors of the Terminal Islanders already spying for Japan to assist in attacking the West Coast.

Because of the potential dangers of this Japanese village, Terminal Island and their inhabitants were the first to experience the efforts of the U.S. to deal with the “Japanese problem”. Immediately after Pearl Harbor, the FBI raided private homes in Terminal Island and arrested “foreign national” boat owners and other significant community leaders. The term “foreign national” was broadly used. Most were Isseis and they were arrested and immediately taken to various prison facilities. Their families had no idea where their arrested husbands and fathers had been taken. There was no way to communicate with them.

Terminal Island quickly became a military controlled island. The Japanese owned boats were patrolled by the military and the boats were not permitted to depart from the docks. The bridge and ferry to the mainland was strictly guarded and all Japanese were not permitted to leave or enter Terminal Island. The Islanders became virtual prisoners in their own village with no idea of what was to become of them. Boats were tied to the docks and no fish was being caught to provide food and income. Japanese cannery workers were immediately fired. Supplies normally provided by the local Japanese shops were running short of inventory. Community leaders and many heads of household had been arrested and gone to places unknown. It was a very stressful time for the remaining residents of Terminal Island. They had no idea of what was to happen to them; were families to be further separated; were they to be jailed as prisoners of war; or even be executed for various reasons. Deportation back to Japan seemed to be a good alternative.

Finally, after two months of anxiety, on 19 February 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 to remove all Japanese (including Japanese-American of U.S. citizenry) from the West Coast of the U.S. They were to be relocated and placed in Japanese Internment camps being hastily built in remote areas of the U.S. In the internment camps with barbed wire fences, the Japanese could be closely watched and controlled by the U.S. military.

Terminal Island, because of its strategic location, was the first to experience the effect of E.O. 9066. On 25 February, 6 days after the signing of E.O. 9066, the military posted notices throughout Terminal Island that all Japanese had to permanently leave their homes on Terminal Island. There was no explanation as to where they should go, what they could bring with them or how transportation could be arranged. The notice only said that everyone had to leave the island within 48 hours or they would be arrested after midnight on 27 February 1942. No information if they could ever return.

NOTICE

By an order dated February 21, 1942, the United States District Court at Los Angeles has granted the United States, through the Navy Department, the right to immediate, exclusive possession of all privately owned interests within the areas on Terminal Island, Los Angeles County, bounded as follows:

AREA 1

(BETWEEN SEASIDE AND OCEAN AVENUES NORTH OF REEVES FIELD)

Lots 8-12 and east thirteen feet, more or less, of Lot 7, Lot 1, all of blocks 2-10, inclusive, East San Pedro, Los Angeles County, California, together with the intermediate streets and alleys separating said blocks, said property being bounded on the north by Ocean Avenue, on the east by Eighteenth Street, on the south by Seaside Avenue, and on the west by the property of the Crescent Warehouse Corporation, in the cities of Los Angeles and Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California.

AREA 2

(FISH HARBOR)

The area bounded on the west by South Seaside Avenue, on the north by Seaside Avenue to its intersection with the south line of the Union Pacific Railroad's owned or leased lands, thence along such south line to a point where such line would intersect the west line of Barracuda Street if it were extended northerly; on the east by Barracuda Street and a line extended northerly along its west boundary to its intersection with the south line of the Union Pacific Railroad's owned or leased lands; on the south by Bass Street, westerly to Berth 267, thence following the shore line north to Berth 264, thence west to Berth 261, thence west to the west line of South Seaside Avenue.

Pursuant to such authority and upon direction of the Secretary of the Navy you, all members of your family and all other occupants of the premises hereinafter described being located within such areas, are officially notified that all of you MUST VACATE, LEAVE AND REMOVE FROM such premises and the whole of such above described areas not later than midnight, Friday, February 27, 1942, Pacific War Time.

You are further notified that if you are not gone from such areas within the time stated you will be forcibly removed and will likewise face such penalties as the civil law provides for failure to obey lawful orders of its court.

(over)

Letter from U.S. Government that all Japanese Must Vacate Terminal Island

Note: This letter is dated February 21, but posted on February 25, 1942. It specifically does not mention Japanese but the area described is the total of the Japanese village on Terminal Island. Net effect is that all Japanese must vacate Terminal Island by midnight Friday, February 27, 1942.

Imagine being told you have to evacuate your home of decades for places unknown in 2 days. Most Islanders made arrangements to temporarily move in with relatives or friends who lived outside Terminal Island, some found hotel rooms but had difficulty with payments because their bank accounts had been frozen. Transportation was difficult. Most people in this era still did not own nor drive cars. But with help from friends and neighbors and some borrowed trucks from local farmers, everyone moved out. Some sympathetic outside church groups and charitable organizations also assisted the best they could. Despite the difficulties, the village of Terminal Island was a ghost town by midnight 27 February.

The forced evacuation was not without casualties. Furniture, household goods, prized possessions, much clothing were just too much to move and fit into their temporary residents. Most pets just had to be left behind to fend for themselves. Boat owners and shop owners had their boats, shops, equipment and inventory to contend with. Expensive radios and navigation equipment, fishing nets, skiffs, store shelving and inventory, etc. were simply sold for pennies on the dollar or left abandoned. Many Whites came to take advantage of the situation and buy dirt cheap goods under emergency sale or just wait until the 28 February to loot whatever what had been abandoned. However, there were also many local Whites who tried to help the Japanese as best they could. This included the owners and operators of the Terminal Island canneries including Wilber White, who started the VanCamp cannery (now the famous Chicken of the Sea brand). Wilber White and others who had worked with the Terminal Islanders helped Japanese boat owners store their boats and fishing equipment during these tragic times.

Midnight on 27 February was the final scene from Fiddler on the Roof in real life. The once prosperous and bustling village of Terminal Island was now a ghost town patrolled by the U.S. military police to help control some of the pillaging going on in the village businesses and homes. The Islanders were scattered throughout greater Los Angeles and Southern California with no idea if they would ever be able to return home or simply what was to happen to them next.

RELOCATION:

Within two months, the whole Japanese population on the West Coast (ironically, not including the then territory of Hawaii, where Pearl Harbor had occurred) were told they were to be relocated by the U.S. military to internment camps hastily built in remote areas of the U.S. Starting on 5 April 1942, some 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry, U.S. citizens or not, were to report to specific collection points throughout the West Coast for military transport by trains, buses and trucks for relocation to these internment camps. The most famous was Manzanar, located in the high desert area to the east of the Sierra Nevada mountains. Most Terminal Islanders went to Manzanar but those the U.S. military considered more potentially dangerous were relocated to Tule Lake in Northern California near the Oregon/Nevada/California border where security was tighter. Neither of these internment

camps were anything like Terminal Islander's seaside village. The desert locations were extremely hot during the summer (typically over 100 degrees every day of summer) and frozen cold in the winter. There was no air conditioning and only a small wood/coal burning stove for winter heat. The Western staple diet of coffee, bread, cheese, and sausages provided at the camps were strange to the Japanese. They were more accustomed to tea, rice, nori (seaweed) and fish. For 2.5 years between April 1942 and into late 1944, all West Coast Japanese lived in these camps. Those not living in a West Coast state were not affected but few Japanese lived in the mountain states, midwest or eastern states. A more detailed explanation of Manzanar and other relocation camps can be found in the many books and articles on the subject.



Basic Housing at Manzanar



Arriving at Collection Points at Various Locations and Departing by Train to Relocation Camps

Note: See how little the Japanese could take with them. Basically just what they could carry.

THE RETURN:

Starting in late 1944, residents of the internment camps were gradually permitted to leave. The war was coming to an end and it was obvious that there was no longer any threat that Japan was going to invade the West Coast of the U.S. There certainly remained hostility against the Japanese by the general U.S. population but the people of the internment camps wanted to leave as soon as possible. Some wanted to return to Japan but most Terminal Islanders wanted to start their lives again in their former village.

What they found was a shock. During the war, the U.S. Navy had completely bulldozed over the village of Terminal Island and built a naval shipping facility. Commercial Tuna Street with all the Japanese owned businesses was now warehouses and military establishments. The canneries were still there but the nearby residences were all physically gone. The village of Terminal Island simply no longer existed. Furusato was physically gone. Some returning Japanese fishermen returned to their lives catching fish but they now had to move to dispersed homes in nearby San Pedro, Long Beach and Wilmington areas and find transportation to their boats. Their neighbors were not Japanese and racial prejudices spurred by hatred of the war's enemy was rampant. The close knit Terminal Island clan way of life was no longer possible. The fond memories of the idealistic life during the Golden Age of Terminal Island was all that remained.

The former residents formed the Terminal Island club and kept in contact with their friends and neighbors. They held their annual Terminal Island picnic as an event where everyone could get together and talk about the good times. For many years the picnic was a huge event attended by most Island residents but as age and deaths depleted their membership, the membership and picnic attendance dwindled. The last hurrah for the Terminal Island club was the erection and dedication of the Terminal Island Memorial.

ON A PERSONAL NOTE:

My heritage is closely tied to Terminal Island. As a kid, my mother and her Ryono family were always talking warmly about Terminal Island. I always attended the annual Terminal Island picnic along with the rest of the Ryono family and had a great time with kid's races, raffle prizes, and the famous mochi toss. Any time we went to little Tokyo, my mom always ran into one or more friends from Terminal Island, and she would stop to talk for hours on the street while we kids would wait impatiently.

It all started with my maternal grandfather, Chiyomatsu Ryono. Family lore is that as a teenager, he took a job working on a Japanese whaling boat from his home village of Teiji. One day, when the whaling boat docked in Seattle, he simply left the boat and just stayed in Seattle. He took a job as a laborer at a local lumber mill. Again as part of the family lore, he took the opportunity to take pieces of lumber from his job and gradually build himself a small skiff. Being

a fisherman back in his home village, he took his homemade skiff to catch and sell salmon. In the early 1900's, salmon were plentiful in Puget Sound and my grandfather made good money. While in Seattle, he heard that some Teiji immigrants were doing well in a place called Terminal Island in Los Angeles so he decided to move south.

I don't know exactly when he moved to Terminal Island but he did very well, first as a crewman on other people's boats then owning(?) a small jig boat called a Ken-Ken Bune by the Japanese. Ken-Ken is a Japanese word for a fishing lure and Bune means boat. These boats were "Lampera" style boats used by the local Portuguese fisherman. Narrow, from 35 to 50 feet long, tapered both in the bow and stern, these sea-worthy Lampera's were powered by small 5-10 hp. gasoline engines. Albacore tuna was the primary catch for these boats, the albacore were caught individually on jig lines trolled behind the boat.

During the summer season, the migratory albacore were plentiful off the Southern California coast and on a good day, a boat could catch hundreds of albacore. During the off-season, the boats switched to catching less glamorous and less valuable sardines and mackerel by net. These smaller fish are not migratory but were plentiful all year. Albacores are difficult to catch in nets because they tend to swim in loose groups as they rapidly chase bait fish like anchovies and sardines. They will not ball into tight compact schools as required for netting. However, the albacore are voracious hunters that will readily attack a jig or live bait whenever bait is around. The Japanese would catch albacore with individual trolled jigs or using "Jack Poles". Jack Poles are stiff bamboo rods about 6 feet in length with a feathered jig tied to a heavy fishing line attached to one end of the bamboo pole. There is no reel. Whenever a school of albacore came around the boat, the fisherman would take the Jack Poles and simply flip the feathered jig into the water and pull the jig toward the boat, the aggressive albacore would bite the jig and the fisherman would jerk (jack) the 20-30 pound fish onto the boat. The hook on the jig was barbless so the albacore would simply unhook himself while flopping on deck and the fisherman would again flip the jig back into the water for the next albacore. Often, there would be a crew member throwing fresh or dead anchovies into the water as chum to keep the school of albacore close to the boat.



Jack-Poling for Albacore Tuna



Purse-Seining (netting) Sardines

My grandfather was a good fisherman and did well. He arranged for my grandmother to immigrate from Japan and eventually raised a family of 3 boys and 3 girls. Soon, he had accumulated enough wealth to build his own big boat. The 85 foot purse seiner the "Patriotic" was launched in 1928. His timing was bad, the Great Depression started in 1929 and the next few years were tough times for the whole Ryono family. He did survive the worst of the Depression and by the mid 1930's he was making good money with his own boat. The Patriotic was one of the most successful boats in the Terminal Island fleet. He became a leader in the Terminal Island community and, for a Japanese immigrant, became quite wealthy. Family lore does not say if my grandfather ever became a U.S. citizen or stayed a foreign national, legal or illegal.



The Ryono Family at my Mother's Wedding

Note: From left to right my Uncle John, Uncle Kats, Uncle Bob, Oji-San (grandfather-Ryono), Aunt Chiz, Oba-Chan (grandmother-Ryono), Aunt Mitsuko, and my Mom (Kay)



My Grandfather's boat, The Patriotic

Eitherway, immediately after Pearl Harbor, the FBI came to the Ryono family home in Terminal Island and arrested my grandfather. He was taken away that evening and the family did not know where he had been taken. Eventually, he ended up at Tule Lake Internment camp whereas the rest of the Ryono family were sent to Manzanar. Somehow, I don't know how, but he managed to reunite with his family by 1944. He died of a heart attack while at Manzanar during his internment. He was 50 years old.

My mother, Kachiyo (Kay) was born on Terminal Island but at age two, she was sent along with her oldest brother, (my Uncle John) to Taiji, Japan and raised by her great-aunt. I was told that this was customary in those days for children to be sent to Japan for proper Japanese education but I'm not quite sure because I don't know of other Japanese families that did the same. It may be the economic difficulties of raising a young family in a foreign land. Anyway, it was not until she was 14 or 15 when she and her oldest brother returned to the U.S. that she met her two younger brothers and two younger sisters. She did not speak a word of English and came to live with her own family but one she did not really know. She remembers how awful Terminal Island smelled with all the canneries and racks of dried fish and squid being cured into "himono" (a type of Japanese fish jerky) on the roof-tops by the residents.

She went to San Pedro High School without being able to speak English but did well with help from her friends. Immediately after high school, she was married to Harry Enomoto (my biological father) and moved to Venice, California in 1940, where the Enomoto family had a small family grocery store (Centinela Market). She was living in Venice when Pearl Harbor and World War II happened, so what happened during the forceful removal of the Japanese from Terminal Island in February of 1942 was told to her by her Ryono family members and friends still living on Terminal Island.

She and the rest of the Enomoto family were affected by the April 1942 relocation of Japanese to internment camps. She remembers being told to go to Santa Anita horse racing track and spending one night in the stables before being bussed to Manzanar. My sister Grace was born in Manzanar in February of 1943, but unfortunately, our father, Harry Enomoto died of colon cancer while in camp. In 1944 as people were being allowed to leave the internment camps, my mother at age 23 found herself widowed with two young children and no prospects in the U.S. She was concerned about what would happen to her next. With some convincing from her brother (Uncle Bob), she decided to move to Philadelphia with the rest of the Ryono family. My Uncle Bob was going to dental school at Temple University in Philadelphia during World War II. Not being on the West coast, Uncle Bob was not sent to internment camp. My Uncle Bob was familiar with Philadelphia so he was instrumental in getting the Ryono family to move to Germantown, a suburb of Philadelphia rather than moving immediately back to Los Angeles.

By 1946/1947(?), my Uncle John managed to regain ownership of my grandfather's boat, the Patriotic and the Ryono family returned to the fishing industry in Southern California. The village of Terminal Island no longer existed, so the Ryono family moved to 540 Santa Cruz Street in San Pedro, overlooking the harbor. I remember the long drive with my Uncle John's family (Uncle John, Aunt Mary, Eddie and Karen, my mom, me and my sister, Grace) from Philadelphia to San Pedro by car. Don't know how we squeezed 7 people into one car for such a long ride.

About 1947, my mom remarried into the Enomoto family, when she married Henry Enomoto, (Henry was the younger brother of my father Harry Enomoto). Such arranged brother marriages were common in those days. Henry is the father of my step-brothers, Mike and Glenn, whereas Harry Enomoto is the father of both Grace and I. Neither Grace nor I can remember our biological father and consider Henry to be "Dad" unless we are asked the difference. We moved back to Venice, first to the Venice Japanese Center then our own home on Beach Avenue in Venice. On January 8, 1949, my parents opened Henry's Market, a neighborhood grocery store in Culver City, California and our Enomoto family lived behind the small store for many years while we kids grew-up. Mike was born in 1949 and Glenn born in 1952. It is strange that I remember the exact date when Henry's opened but somehow it has always stuck in my mind. I also remember both Uncle Bob and Uncle Kats working inside the still unfinished store to personally build the shelves for the store. It must have been late 1948.

The decade of the 1940's had been a turbulent time for my mom. She had married while still in her teens, moved in with her new husband's family in Venice, then was forced to relocate to Manzanar in 1942. By 1943, she had two young babies, but she had lost her first husband to cancer. Around 1944, she was relocated to Tule Lake relocation camp along with the Enomoto family because of the Enomoto family's refusal to agree to the infamous "Yes-Yes" declaration. Should she return to Japan after the war (many of her friends did) or should she stay in the U.S.? My Uncle Bob convinced her that post war Japan held no opportunity and with his assistance, she managed to return to Manzanar in May of 1945. She had decided to stay in the U.S. with her mother and father and the Ryono family. Unfortunately, upon her return to

Manzanar, she found that her father had just died of a heart attack. Still she decided to stay in the U.S. and in late 1945, she moved back with the Ryono family to Philadelphia. By 1947 she had remarried and within two years, started a new grocery store with her second husband. I don't know how she did it but somehow she and my dad (Henry) managed to put together enough money to start Henry's from scratch by 1949.

"Ganbatte or Ganbare" (pronounced Gan-ba-rey) is a Japanese word. A simple translation is "endure". It is used when something unfortunate has happened and more fully means "the situation can't be helped so endure, hang in there, do your best and work your hardest to recover". In Japanese culture, complaining about your situation is considered useless and a sign of weakness, so "Ganbatte" and you can do it. I think my Mom certainly honored this Japanese word and tradition; as did most all the Terminal Islanders. During the worst days of being forced out of their island village, to enduring the hardships of relocation camps for years, and to the racial bigotry they faced as the World War II enemy, the Terminal Islanders and their Japanese associates practiced "Ganbatte". There were no mass protests or rioting. I am sure there were grumbling about the actions of the government and there were some protests especially at the Tule Lake internment camp but for the most part, the Japanese community followed their "Ganbatte" tradition. With groups such as the Terminal Island club, they helped each other out and rebuilt their lives.

My Uncle Bob was very active in the Terminal Island Club and became involved in the club's efforts to erect a memorial. He enlisted the help of my brother Mike. Mike is an architect and the managing-director of the world-renowned architectural firm, Gruen Associates. Mike and his firm were instrumental in the design and construction of the Terminal Island Memorial. I understand that an old photo of my grandfather Ryono is the basis for the bronze statue of the fisherman looking out to sea.