



Mr. & Mrs. Lowe with Eddie Tamigawa



1943-The Lowe sisters - L-R: Lois, Arlyn, Marillyn, Mildred, Shirlye



NOW - L-R: Marillyn, Lois, Arlyn, Shirlye, Mildred

Remembering Friends

Ruby and Charles Lowe

On a weekend pass during his training days at Camp McCoy, Sakae "Eddie" Tanigawa and his friends paid a visit to the famed Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Along the way, Eddie met Marilyn Lowe, who invited the soldiers home to meet her family. "Racial discrimination was so strong at the time, I said, 'First, ask your parents if it's OK ...'"

It was more than OK. Eddie and his friends were welcomed with open arms by Ruby and Charles Lowe and their five daughters. "I lost my own mother when I was about three, so I told Ruby Lowe, 'I'm going to adopt you as my mother.' Once overseas, I addressed my letters to her as 'Dear Mom.'"

Lois Harvey, the Lowes' youngest daughter, remembered the warmth shared among her family members, Eddie and his buddies. "They were the only Japanese in town," said Lois, in an interview with the LaCross Tribune. "Some people were really upset with my parents." However, the enlightening bonds of affection and understanding proved priceless, and prevailed through time. "Eddie was small in stature, but oh, so big with his kindness, gentleness, thoughtfulness and loving ways," wrote Lois in her Winona hometown newspaper.

Lois was 10 when Eddie visited the Lowes for the last time before heading for Europe. Some family members feared Eddie would not return, but Ruby believed she'd see him again. And she did.

Letters and reunions nourished the relationship through the years, with new generations of Lowes and Tanigawas affirming the bonds. In 1964, when Ruby was dying of cancer, she boarded a plane for Hawaii, determined to see Eddie once more. Their moments together were unforgettable, said Lois. "Eddie and his family returned the love mom

had so willingly given years before."

Eddie and his wife Stella raised four children in Hawaii, including a daughter named after Lois Harvey. When Lois' daughter, Loni, married Kevin Yungerberg, the marriage took place in Waikiki. Lois Tanigawa and her family were the attendants, with three generations of Tanigawas present. The Tanigawas have made it possible for their special family from Winona to be here on this, the historic commemoration of the 100th's 50th anniversary."

Two families will also cherish feelings born and nurtured during a dark period in human history. Out of the pain and devastation of war emerged love.

Percy and Vera Manz

Fifty years ago, a young soldier from Hawaii met a family in Winona, Minnesota, during his training days at Camp McCoy. Something clicked, and a friendship was born. "That soldier was James Kiyoshi Kubokawa of Headquarters Company, the brother of Jane, my wife," explained Albert Oki. "And the family was that of Percy and Vera Manz, who had two children – Diane and Donald. The Manzes treated James with affection and maintained a close friendship, even while James was overseas. James never came back – he died in Bruyeres, France. They were crushed to learn of James' death."

Even death, however, did not dim the memories nor the warm ties of friendship. Through the years, the Okis and the Manzes have nourished the ties through each other and through their children. "Interestingly, my daughter and her family live in Minneapolis, where the son, Donald Manz, also lives," said Oki.

The 100th's 50th anniversary seemed the perfect time for a reunion of another kind, and therein lies an occasion with ever deeper meaning for the





Albert Y. Oki, 1943



Vera Manzy, 1984

Oki and Manz families. Thanks to the generosity of the Oki family, including Lillian Muraoka (James' younger sister), four Manz family members – Vera (Percy died several years ago), Diane, Donald and his wife, Judy – are here for the commemoration of the 100th and to renew special bonds. "On behalf of James, and in his memory, we thank the Manzes for the friendships," said Oki.

Postscript

The full impact of the Winona-Honolulu connection wasn't fully realized until two Hawaii veterans met for lunch one day at a Liliha restaurant, March 1992. "Albert told me about his good friends in Winona, so I told him I would get in touch with Lois Harvey," recalled Eddie Tanigawa. "After the lunch, I wrote to

Lois and told her about Albert's friends. Lois called Vera Manz. Lois had previously been trying to get in touch with the Manz family. She finally did."

We believe the Okis and Tanigawas are not alone in their experiences. There are probably many similar episodes within the 100th community – touching stories of enduring relationships formed during World War II. Such information was not available to us at the time of publication. As more stories come to light, we hope the 100th members will make them known to the world.

Thelma Chang



Jane & Albert Oki



Judy & Donald Manz

