

THE

# REBELLIOUS MISS BREED

San Diego Public Library & the

Japanese American Incarceration

## Excerpts of Letters from Tetsuzo Hirasaki to Clara Breed

At 21 Tetsuzo Hirasaki was the oldest of the incarcerated young adults who wrote to Miss Breed. His father was being held in a federal prison. He wanted to join the army. He wrote over 35 letters to Miss Breed, well-crafted and often humorous, expressing his disappointment towards conditions in the camps.

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Arcadia, California, April 13, 1942](#)

*"Little did I think that I would see Santa Anita, where once trod the millions of pleasure seeking fans of the sport of kings--horse-racing. Why I'm actually treading the ground where the mighty Seabiscuit won his great duels on the track."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Arcadia, California, April 22, 1942](#)

*"...they decided to bring in postal employees from Arcadia to work in the Camp Santa Anita Postoffice. The Japanese boys were released, and boy did those poor Arcadia men take a beating!!! We did too. They did not know one Japanese name from another and we had to stand in line for hours before we could get our mail. Finally the postal authorities "got wise" and placed the Japanese boys back on the job."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Poston, Arizona, May 26, 1942](#)

*"What a difference time makes. The cry was "Go West" (young man) now it is "Go East" (young nisei) The outlook for a family to relocate outside is not very encouraging. Many families came into camp with only two to three suitcases per member."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Arcadia, California, August 3, 1942](#)

*"Ten men came into Japanita from North Dakota. Four of them were former San Diegans. They told me dad is getting along all right and that he is barbering in camp. He has had his trial but as yet does not know the verdict."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Arcadia, California, August 10, 1942](#)

*"What a sad surprise I received when mail was resumed. I had a letter from dad saying that he had received notice of internment for the duration. There is a chance of reopening his case. In order to do so he requires an affidavit of conduct."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Poston, Arizona, October 3, 1942](#)

*"We're having quite a "labor shortage" here now that many of the able-bodied fellows are going out to relieve the beet sugar workers' shortage in Idaho, Colorado, Nebraska. It's certainly lonely here after the young fellows left."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Poston, Arizona, November 16, 1942](#)

*"God forgive us for the thoughts that are beginning to run amok in our brains. Last week a very good friend of mine got to thinking - and he went crazy. He tried to commit suicide by slashing his wrists. He is still alive, but his face is like that of a wild ape caged for the first time in his life."*

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### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Poston, Arizona, December 1, 1942](#)

*"You have probably read by now in the paper about the strike that was held in Camp I because two men were held on suspicion of beating up an informer. (Sounds like Santa Anita) One man was released but the other was held to face charges at a Phoenix Superior Court."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Poston, Arizona, December 22, 1942](#)

*"Last night went to listen to the mass choir made up of the choirs of all three camps. Under the full moon the program was truly impressive."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Poston, Arizona, February 19, 1943](#)

*"When the Army came here to Camp III to register the men under selective service and also to take volunteers for the Japanese American Combat Unit, it was the best piece of news we nisei have had in a long time. We nisei were despairing in ever becoming recognized. But now we have the chance to prove our loyalty, because after the evacuation, nisei were classed as aliens ineligible for military service."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Poston, Arizona, June 17, 1943](#)

*"Well, I'm the "last of the Mohicans" now. Early this morning the next to the last of our old gang left for Colorado via Salt Lake. Just about all of the volunteers have gone outside to wait for the Army call."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Poston, Arizona, August 27, 1943](#)

*"Well, this makes one year that I've been in Poston.--almost a year too much. it is hard to believe that a year could pass so quickly. The only part that dragged was the waiting for Army induction which for me never came, otherwise the days passed swiftly."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Stockton, California, October 30, 1943](#)

*"I still can't quite believe it but I am now in California. Of course I am not "free to wander anywhere I please," but I am in California. Volunteers were called to save the W.R.A. vegetable crop at Tule Lake."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Newell, California, December 3, 1943](#)

*"We saw the Tule Lake. It is beautiful. Made me homesick for S.D. It looked as if we were looking out toward the sea."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Poston, Arizona, December 29, 1943](#)

*"It rained Christmas night and I couldn't help but to think back to that Christmas two short and yet long years ago when we were all together--now there are hundreds of miles separating us."*

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### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Poston, Arizona, June 10, 1944](#)

*"I received quite a jolt when I realized that it won't be long before 1944 is half over. The days are getting very hot now. The winds blow much more this year than last. They help to keep the days bearable. How did San Diego take the news of the invasion? I didn't know about it for two days--at that I thought it was a rumor around camp."*

### [Letter to Clara Breed from Tetsuzo Hirasaki, Poston, Arizona, December 20, 1944](#)

*"Christmas here in Poston will be one of Thanksgiving. However there are many who look with misgiving toward the new year with the prospect of the closing of the centers next year. They have nothing to start anew on the outside."*