Surviving and Striving for Normalcy: The Endurance of the Americans of Baguio Interned by the Japanese in the Philippines During World War II

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SURVIVING AND STRIVING FOR NORMALCY:
THE ENDURANCE OF THE AMERICANS OF BAGUIO INTERNED BY THE JAPANESE IN THE
PHILIPPINES DURING WORLD WAR II

By

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“I feel very sorry that our friendship has existed under such conditions and I hope that it will be renewed under far different ones when peace comes.”

Commandant Rokuro Tomibe
Camp Holmes, Baguio, Philippine Islands
September 15, 1944

A reporter at the 1977 Baguio Internee Reunion asked:
“Reunion after thirty years…Commemorating the day of liberation—that I can understand, but why did you people invite the hated commander of the camp? Not only that but welcomed him and came from all over the country to greet him and each other with tears of joy. No such thing has happened in the history of the United States or of the world. Just what went on in that internment camp?”

On Rokuro Tomibe, Guest of Honor
Baguio Internee Reunion, San Francisco, USA
1977

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Introduction
How the Baguio Internees Survived and Strived for Normalcy

On the morning of December 29, 1941, a ten-year-old American girl named Dorothy “Dot” Douglas feared she would never see her parents again. The Douglas family lived in Baguio, a city on Luzon, the largest island in the Philippines. The Japanese Army had invaded their city, rounded up the American and Allied civilians, and split them into groups of men, women, and children. With her four-year-old brother, Hugh, on her back, Dot marched with over a hundred other American children, repeating in her head the address of her aunt’s house in Wisconsin—her mother, Evangeline, told her to get there if possible, unsure of their future. Dot was especially scared that her father, Clayton, would die because he could no longer access his insulin medication to control his diabetes. The separation was a Japanese scare tactic, and Dot and Hugh soon reunited with their mother, and later saw their father during family commingling time in Camp John Hay.3

First-grader Curtis Tong experienced similar emotions to Dot Douglas while marching with his sisters, Eloise and Annarae. However, his fear persisted even after they reunited with their mother, Margaret, because their father, Walter, remained in Davao on the southern island of Mindanao. They had not heard from him since the Japanese invasion began. Over two long years later, the Japanese transferred Walter Tong from Davao to Baguio, and the Tong family experienced a joyful and emotional reunion at Camp Holmes in March 1944.4 Robert McKay was an eighteen-year-old senior boarding student at the Episcopalian Brent School when the Japanese attacked the Philippines. The war began so suddenly that he was unable to reunite with his parents and sister who lived elsewhere in the Philippines—he did not even hear from his family until they had escaped the Philippines and


repatriated to the United States via Australia in 1943. Robert McKay was essentially orphaned for the duration of World War II.⁵

Natalie Crouter, married to Jerry Crouter and mother to June and Frederick “Bedie” Crouter, rode in a Japanese car. She had a permanent limp in her left leg due to complications from polio as a child, and was weak from hunger and could not march to Camp John Hay. She documented her experience—and nearly every day afterwards until their liberation—in a secret diary.⁶ Helen Angeny, wife of Edward “Ed” Angeny, also rode in a Japanese vehicle. While Helen—who was eight months pregnant—sat in a Japanese truck bed with the others too old, ill, or pregnant to march, Margaret Moule—who was also eight months pregnant—was trekking through the surrounding mountains with her husband, William, and two young children, William, Jr. and Eileen. The Moules were one of many groups who anticipated only a short conflict, and decided evasion from the Japanese was preferable to internment. Linda Moule was born January 15, 1942, in the mountains.⁷ Carol Angeny was born on January 19, 1942, at Notre Dame Hospital in Baguio.⁸ Both were three years old when American forces liberated Old Bilibid Prison in Manila, freeing them from the only life they had ever known.

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These were the initial experiences of only some of the over five hundred American and Allied civilians of Baguio interned for the duration of World War II in the Philippines. Those who were captured by the Japanese on December 28, 1941, endured exactly three years, one month, and one week of internment—or 1,134 days—first in Camp John Hay, then

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⁵ The Robert McKay Collection, The Institute on World War II and the Human Experience, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida.


⁸ The Helen Frances Buehl-Angeny Collection, The Institute on World War II and the Human Experience, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida.
Camp Holmes, and finally Old Bilibid Prison. Although the Japanese captured the Baguio internees under different circumstances and at different times, they all experienced liberation on February 4, 1945, in Manila. These miners, missionaries, doctors, nurses, teachers, and children alike not only survived Japanese internment, but they also strived for normalcy given the circumstances.

Internment and imprisonment during World War II was widespread and well documented. Soldiers remained imprisoned by their enemies worldwide, some, but not all, under the protections of the Geneva Conventions. The United States government infamously interned thousands of Japanese American civilians through the duration of the war. Imprisonment and internment are well-known aspects of studying World War II, but awareness about civilian internment outside of the United States is minimal. This thesis draws attention to civilian internment during World War II by focusing specifically on the internment of the American civilians of Baguio by the Japanese Army in the Philippines.

The interned Baguio community was itself unique compared to the other internment camps in the Philippines, like Santo Tomas and Los Baños of Manila. Baguio’s community was smaller, more homogenous, and had a greater percentage of college-educated adults than the camps in Manila. The diversity of the population in Santo Tomas ranged anywhere from corporate presidents to street vendors and prostitutes, whereas the Baguio community was mainly missionaries, miners, and businessmen. Baguio internee James “Jim” Halsema attributed the differences in internment experiences between Manila and Baguio to their locations in different military zones under different commanding officers. He believed that the Baguio community’s size and homogeneity contributed to their “communal spirit,” and expressed he was grateful to have experienced internment in Baguio rather than Manila—a sentiment most Baguio internees shared.9 Internee William Moule

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9 Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in Forgotten Heroes, 68.
reflected, “If I had to be in prison, this was the ideal spot.”\textsuperscript{10} The Baguio internees’ location and population were advantages that contributed to the internees’ ability to develop a functioning community. Their successes demonstrated the human ability to persevere in the face adversity, however, the advantageous conditions of their internment definitely influenced those successes. Had their population been far larger, or had they had to deal with a harsh tropical climate and malaria—like the Manila camps—their outcome would have differed. Nevertheless, the Baguio internees did have more advantageous conditions, and those conditions helped them succeed as a community and survive internment.

The experience of these American civilians of Baguio interned throughout the war is unique and important to study because it represents a microcosm of American culture and patriotism of that era. It offers the perspective of not only men, but also of women and children. Men and women worked to support one another, and everyone came together to help the children maintain as normal of a childhood as was possible. The American internees of Baguio survived and cultivated normalcy because they established a functioning and supportive community. Normalcy was the continuation of necessities and supplemental activities that the internees enjoyed in their lives prior to internment; they replicated these during internment as best they could. The internees governed themselves autonomously and democratically through established camp leadership and men and women’s committees. They created camp chore systems to maintain a clean and functioning environment and to ensure that internees remained fed. They created a working hospital that saved countless lives, and they used religion, sports, and theatre to preserve their mental health. They made the best of their situation, even when some times were more difficult than others to endure.

The perspective of the women and children interned in Baguio is unique given that men endured the majority of imprisonment during World War II as POWs, and it is important

\textsuperscript{10} William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 312.
to highlight how women and children’s experiences differed from their adult male counterparts because of gender and age. Pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood was already a considerable and sometimes challenging undertaking for women in their civilian lives in Baguio, let alone while interned. Internment posed greater risks for the health and welfare of pregnant women, infants, and children, yet almost every baby born in the Baguio internment camps survived, and the welfare of children remained an internee community priority, even when adults had to sacrifice some of their own shares of food. The mentality of “it takes a village” applied in the ways that the adults collectively parented camp children and also established a school to keep their educations on track. Children grew somewhat independent due to the lack of a traditional family environment—gender separation placed further emphasis on motherhood as a majority of young children lived in the women’s section of camp as opposed to the men’s. The implementation of the Family Unit Plan later during internment began the slow transition back into family life and a feeling of normalcy that continued after liberation.

While the Baguio internees developed a supportive and enduring community, their ability to do so depended almost entirely upon the discretion of their Japanese captors. Husbands and wives could visit with one another during commingling times, children could attend the camp-constructed school, and severely ill patients or women in labor could go to the hospital in town—but only so far as their Japanese commandant allowed it. The camp’s commandant had complete power over the comfort and survival of his internees, and he influenced the severity of their suffering. Although earlier commandants enforced stricter camp regulations, including closing the camp school and severely limiting commingling opportunities, no camp commandant contributed more positively to the lives of the internees than Rokuro Tomibe. Commandant Tomibe was arguably the most influential Japanese in progressive camp community development, and would go out of his way to understand and
improve the lives of his internees. He forged genuine and lifelong friendships with the Americans of Baguio. Tomibe helped the internees survive while enabling them to help themselves to persevere.

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Dot Douglas’s fear that her father would die because of his diabetes never came to fruition. Clayton Douglas not only survived internment, but also no longer had diabetes, and never developed it again for the rest of his life. Dot joked, “Daddy always said that the cure for diabetes is starvation and rice.”\(^\text{11}\) The Tong family had reunited during internment, and Robert McKay reunited with his family on the docks of San Francisco in April 1945. He was quickly able to transition into college despite having graduated from a makeshift high school in an internment camp.\(^\text{12}\) Natalie Crouter and her family survived internment, as did her extensive secret diary, written on approximately 4,000 scraps of paper. Upon repatriation, the Federal Bureau of Investigations confiscated Natalie’s diary to search for sensitive materials and lost it for years. Fortunately, the diary turned up, and she published it, providing invaluable primary perspective on life in Baguio’s internment camps.\(^\text{13}\) Helen and Ed Angeny started their family in internment, and by the time they were liberated, Carol was no longer a newborn, but rather a toddler, as was Linda Moule.\(^\text{14}\) When General Douglas MacArthur visited the recently liberated Old Bilibid Prison, he gave Linda a kiss on the head. Her father, Bill Moule, told her, “Linda, this is the fellow we have been waiting for.”\(^\text{15}\)

For over three years, the internees of Baguio waited for freedom, but in the meantime, life went on. Internees experienced births, deaths, graduations, and marriage. They prayed

\(^\text{11}\) The Dorothy “Dot” Douglas Whittle Collection.
\(^\text{12}\) The Robert McKay Collection.
\(^\text{13}\) Natalie Crouter, Forbidden Diary.
\(^\text{14}\) The Helen Frances Buehl-Angeny Collection.
\(^\text{15}\) William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 375.
together and starved together, commiserated and celebrated. Some internees never forgave their Japanese captors, while others became friends with one of them for life. They experienced World War II completely differently than most American civilians, because for them, the war was on their doorsteps, and they lost nearly everything but their own lives and one another. Yet they survived. After World War II, some former internees made new lives stateside, while others stayed and helped rebuild the Philippines. Life went on.

Existing Scholarship

The most extensive research on the topic of civilian internment in the Philippines during World War II was published in 2000. Prisoners in Paradise: American Women in the Wartime Pacific, written by Theresa Kaminski, focuses on the social aspect of internment for women by following the experiences of multiple women throughout internment, and analyzing their different experiences under similar circumstances. Captured: The Japanese Internment of American Civilians in the Philippines, 1941-1945, written by Frances Cogan, highlights the average experience of civilian internees within the larger context of internment. Each publication is valuable in its own right; Kaminski’s analysis provides personal perspective, while Cogan’s analysis provides contextual understanding of internment.

The central argument of Kaminski’s Prisoners in Paradise is that women survived internment by changing their perceptions of prewar life and adapting to their new situation using their “womanhood and national identity as their primary weapons in the struggle to survive.”¹⁶ She demonstrates her thesis by following multiple women throughout their internment including Grace C. Nash, Natalie Crouter, and Margaret Sherk Sams, and how each woman adapted differently given the circumstances. Kaminski describes the nature of these women’s internment by the Japanese as “laissez-faire,” or relatively hands-off in

comparison to other internment during World War II, including prisoner of war internment, and Japanese-American internment in the United States. In this way, Kaminski puts the topic of civilian internment during World War II into its larger context.

Kaminski stresses the importance of writing about this topic by highlighting the lack of research on the subject of civilian internment in the South Pacific during World War II. Although the 1980s and 1990s demonstrated an increased interest in research about women’s history and women’s studies programs, at the time of *Prisoners in Paradise*’s publication, the topics of women during World War II, and even United States and Philippines relations were hardly studied. For this reason, Kaminski turned toward the only abundant source of information on the subject: memoirs and diaries, in addition to interviews with the internees themselves. She addresses the inherent biases of using memoirs and diaries as a majority of her sources, as they focus heavily on the middle-class white woman’s perspective. Additionally, Kaminski focuses on those women who had the ability to write about their experiences after internment as opposed to those impacted too greatly to reflect on their experiences. Essentially, the women who published memoirs had a generally positive outlook on their experience and were more likely to be considered “patriotic,” “hard workers,” “good mothers,” and “faithful wives.” The drawback of only using these sources is that it does not offer the perspective of those greatly affected by their internment. Overall, however, Kaminski provides an in-depth and personal narrative of women’s experiences during internment, and their adaptations to survive.

Cogan’s goal in writing *Captured*, was to highlight a topic she considers forgotten and to provide useful contextual information about internment to create a synthesis of the average

18 Ibid, 9.
19 Ibid.
experience of internees. She considers her work a “narrative social history” that provides a “representative idea of what life was like for an average American civilian captured and interned in the Philippines.”\(^{20}\) While Kaminski focuses on the experiences of specific women internees, Cogan focuses less on the specific experiences or camps, and more on the greater context and experience of internment. Though her approach is different, the information she synthesizes is valuable for understanding internment overall. Like Kaminski, Cogan references the lack of awareness and research on the topic of civilian internment during World War II, stating that she was “appalled to discover such a piece of American history had apparently been forgotten.”\(^{21}\) She references the existing writing about the topic of internment at the time of Captured’s publication but considers them “not particularly comprehensive” because they focus on individual experiences, as they are mostly memoirs and published diaries.\(^{22}\) Given the limited availability of resources for her research, Cogan still produced a comprehensive synthesis of the average experience of internment for ordinary Americans.

As both women highlight, the majority of sources available to research this topic are published memoirs and diaries of individual experiences of internment. Though provided with the same pool of resources, both women published unique and valuable perspectives on American civilian internment. While Cogan provides contextual information, Kaminski provides personal narrative. Together, these works provide thorough context to the Japanese internment of American civilians in the Philippines during World War II.

In addition to Kaminski’s and Cogan’s publications, there are broader as well as more specific publications on the topic of the Japanese internment of Allied civilians. Bernice

\(^{21}\) Ibid, 1-2.
\(^{22}\) Ibid, 3.
Archer’s book, *The Internment of Western Civilians under the Japanese 1941-1945: A Patchwork of Internment*, provides a much broader context that she describes as an “[un]conventional concentration camp narrative.”23 Rather than focusing on internment in the Philippines or women internees, Archer examines the experiences of the men, women, and children interned by the Japanese throughout the Pacific. The goal of her book is to explain how internees were not passive about their experience, but rather were active and resourceful in their own survival. Elizabeth Vaughan’s book, *Community Under Stress: An Internment Camp Culture*, offers a very specific narrative based on her daily recordings and observations about community development in Santo Tomas internment camp. Vaughan, a sociologist who was interned in Bacolod City and later transferred to Santo Tomas in Manila, describes her book as a “sociological study of a Japanese concentration camp in the Philippine Islands,” and as “a study of a social experiment unplanned by the author.”24 Archer’s and Vaughan’s publications differ from Kaminski’s and Cogan’s, but still provide valuable insight into the various experiences of civilian internees in the Pacific during World War II.

These existing publications provide valuable research synthesis on the topic of American civilian internment by the Japanese during World War II, however, none focus specifically on the civilian internment community in Baguio. This thesis focuses on the experiences of the American civilians of Baguio, whom the Japanese interned first in Camp John Hay, then in Camp Holmes, and finally in Old Bilibid Prison. The internees of Baguio believed their experiences to be unique and preferable in the greater context of civilian internment in the Philippines, and this thesis highlights why the internees believed that. This thesis also underlines the important role that Commandant Rokuro Tomibe played in the lives of the internees.

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of the Baguio internees, and why their lasting cross-cultural friendship was completely reasonable, despite the contradictory nature of their relationship. Although Cogan briefly mentions Tomibe in Captured, hardly any of the existing scholarship makes extensive mention of Tomibe, let alone his influence and unusual relationship with his internees. To not acknowledge his profound impact on the internees of Baguio would be an injustice to their friendship and his memory. The popular history of World War II in the Philippines highlights the extreme brutality of the Japanese, but the friendship between Tomibe and his American internees offers a glimpse of the endurance of compassion and humanity during war.

**Research Methodology**

This thesis draws research primarily from published memoirs and oral histories of Baguio’s internees. These sources create inherent bias, as those who published memoirs or participated in interviews were more likely to have had a more positive experience than those negatively impacted by internment. However, these sources do include perspectives on the detrimental aspects of internment, including starvation and torture. Research for this thesis also draws from the Japanese perspective in the form of translated Japanese military wartime documents, interrogations of Japanese POWs by American forces, and a translated essay by Rokuro Tomibe himself. Research on the historical context of the Philippines during World War II draws primarily from U.S. military publications, including *The Wainwright Papers* and *The Military Review*. Contextual information about internment and imprisonment globally throughout World War II comes from *Prisoner of War Bulletins* published by the American Red Cross. The Institute on World War II and the Human Experience at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida, provided multiple internee collections and memoirs related to the primary focus of this thesis. The U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, provided U.S. military documents, translated Japanese military documents, and American Red Cross Bulletins related to the historical context of this thesis.
Historical Context: 1941-1944

After the Spanish-American War, the United States acquired the Philippines from Spain through the 1898 Treaty of Paris. Americans established the city of Baguio on the Philippines’ northernmost island, Luzon, in 1900. Located in the mountains approximately two hundred miles from the capital, Manila, and one mile above sea level, Baguio was the ideal location for a summer capital to escape the heat and humidity of the lowlands. Over the next twenty-five years, Baguio developed into a vacation destination for Manila Americans, wealthy Filipinos, and the government during the sweltering summers. American companies established gold mines in the surrounding mountains that attracted American miners and businessmen to the area; World War I Veteran Herbert Heald established a lumber business to provide timber to the mining companies, and made Elmer Herold its Chief Mechanical Engineer.\(^1\) The American military helped establish The Philippine Military Academy at Camp John Hay—the Filipino equivalent to the United States Military Academy at West Point.\(^2\) In addition to American government workers, miners, engineers, and businessmen, Baguio attracted missionary families, especially because of the Episcopal Brent School.

Charles Henry Brent, the first Protestant Episcopal Bishop in the Philippine Islands, founded Brent School in 1909, and it quickly became the preferred school for American children in the Philippines because of its location in Baguio’s cooler climate.\(^3\) The all-white school served as both a day school to the American children of Baguio, and a boarding school to the American children whose families lived elsewhere in the Philippines and the Pacific. This included the children of missionaries and servicemen, such as John Eisenhower, the son of then Major Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was serving as the chief military aide to Army

\(^1\) Betsy Herold Heimke, *Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon*, (Laguna Vista: River Road Press, 2008), 10.
\(^2\) Michael P. Onorato, *Forgotten Heroes*.
\(^3\) Ibid.
Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur. Prior to the beginning of World War II, the American children of Baguio led relatively normal childhoods participating in after school activities like sports and scouting, going to the movies, and playing with their Filipino neighbors.

Tensions in the Pacific grew considerably in the years leading up to World War II. American missionary involvement in China continued during this time, despite the Japanese occupation since 1937. One group of American missionaries attended a Chinese language school (CLS) in Peking until the State Department advised their evacuation from China due to increased strain in U.S.-Japanese relations. The CLS relocated to the Philippines, and that group of missionaries transferred to Baguio in Spring of 1941. Many of these missionaries were young couples, who upon settling into Baguio and feeling relatively safe, decided to start their families. What resulted was multiple pregnancies that ended in birth during the early months of internment, including the first Baguio internment birth merely four days after the Japanese capture.

At the same time that the CLS missionaries were settling into Baguio, American military dependents were leaving the Philippines. In December 1940, the Philippine Department Headquarters ordered the evacuation of American dependents and families of the Harbor Defenses troops, but strongly encouraged American civilians to remain in the Philippines so as not to dishearten the Filipinos. The U.S. government halted the evacuations in July 1941 in an attempt to show the Japanese that Americans were not afraid of them. At this point, the U.S. military in the Philippines had launched new specific preparatory

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4 The Robert McKay Collection. John Eisenhower left Brent School during the evacuation of American military families in the first half of 1941.

5 The Helen Frances Buehl-Angeny Collection.


measures because of the increasing probability of war with Japan, and had fortified the defenses of Manila Bay on the islands of Corregidor, Caballo Island, El Fraile Island, Carabao Island, and Grande Island in Subic Bay. Fortifications included military training exercises, stockpiling supplies and ammunition, and bringing in more personnel.\(^8\)

As diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Japan declined, each military established war preparations. On November 15, 1941, the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters Army Department released Order No. 564, which stated that Japan planned to occupy strategic territories in the Pacific, including the Philippines.\(^9\) According to captured Japanese officers interrogated by the U.S. Military Historical Division, the primary objective was for Japan to secure the oil-producing regions in Borneo and Java, south of the Philippines. In order to properly secure these oil-producing regions, occupation of the Philippines was necessary for its strategic location, and as a way to establish communication routes between Japan and the southern region of the Pacific, as well as deprive the American Far East Forces of its use.\(^10\)

By the evening of November 28, 1941, Major General George F. Moore, who was commanding the Philippine Coast Artillery and Harbor Defenses of Manila and Subic Bays, received a message from General MacArthur in Manila that U.S. negotiations with Japan had deteriorated. General Moore took immediate action to ensure the readiness of his command, and claimed that “by daylight [on November 29] the command was as ready for war as was possible with the means available.”\(^11\) Two days later, on December 1, the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters Army Department released Order No. 569, which stated that “Japan

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has decided to wage war against the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands,” and “the Southern Army will launch offensive [invasion] operations on X day in December.”

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor began the morning of December 7, 1941, at 0748 Hawaiian Time; in the Philippines it was 0148 on the morning of December 8. By 0340, General Moore received two messages from the Naval-Commander-in-Chief Admiral Husband E. Kimmel which stated that “hostilities commenced with air raids on Pearl” and “Air Raids on Pearl Harbor. This is not a drill.” General Moore immediately issued orders for Harbor Defense preparedness in anticipation of a Japanese attack on the Philippines. By 0602, General Moore received a message from the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) stating: “A state of war exists between the United States and Japan. Govern yourself accordingly.” The Japanese invasion of the Philippines had officially begun with air raid attacks launched out of Formosa bombing targets throughout Luzon, including Manila and Baguio.

The Japanese air raid attack on Baguio began shortly after 0800 and primarily targeted the American and Filipino forces at John Hay Air Station, however the bombing was felt throughout the city. The students at Brent School hid under their desks as parts of the ceiling fell in before teachers evacuated them into the surrounding pine forest. From there, the children watched as multiple Japanese bombing formations passed overhead on their way to bomb Camp John Hay. Some of the CLS missionary men climbed atop Mt. Santo Tomas and counted approximately twenty-five Japanese twin-engine bombers during the initial attacks. The mayor of Baguio, Eusebius Julius “E.J.” Halsema, ordered men to act as lookouts atop Mt. Santo Tomas, because it offered a clear view from the mountain down to

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14 Ibid.
15 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 23.
the coast at Lingayen Gulf. After the initial two days of bombing, however, Baguio settled down and the Japanese only sent an occasional scout plane.\textsuperscript{16}

In the interim between the initial attacks on Baguio and the eventual arrival of the Japanese forces, some Americans began making preparations. One CLS missionary woman, Helen Angeny, was approximately eight months pregnant when the Japanese attacked Baguio. She made a few last shopping trips to stockpile baby supplies in anticipation for giving birth in January.\textsuperscript{17} With the Brent School closed, parents tried to keep their children occupied to distract them from constant radio broadcasts about the ongoing Japanese attacks. Margaret “Peg” Tong frequently took her three young children, Curtis, Eloise, and Annarae on picnics or to the park to keep them busy. Her husband, Walter Tong, worked down in Davao on the southern island of Mindanao, and she had not heard from him since the Japanese attacks had begun.\textsuperscript{18} Ethel Herold, the wife of lumber engineer Elmer Herold, taught Red Cross First Aid classes in preparation for the war. Her classes had tripled in size since the bombing had begun, and among her students were her teenage children Elizabeth “Betsy” Herold and William “Billy” Herold.\textsuperscript{19} Elsewhere in Baguio, American families celebrated their last Christmas season in freedom, unaware that they would spend the next three Christmases in a Japanese internment camp.

On December 22, 1941, the scouts atop Mt. Santo Tomas, including Jim Halsema, a reporter and the mayor’s son, witnessed the Japanese landing at Lingayen Gulf near Baguio, and the retreat of the 71\textsuperscript{st} Philippine Division. Later that day, Baguio was declared an open city.\textsuperscript{20} Robert McKay had also been on watch duty and counted approximately 110 Japanese

\textsuperscript{17} The Helen Frances Buehl-Angeny Collection.
\textsuperscript{18} Curtis Tong, \textit{Child of War}, 24. Walter Tong was originally interned by the Japanese in Davao, but was later transferred to Camp Holmes to be interned with his family on March 13, 1944.
\textsuperscript{19} Betsy Herold Heimke, \textit{Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon}, 18.
\textsuperscript{20} Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in \textit{Forgotten Heroes}. 16
ships; no matter how quickly the American and Filipino forces fought them off, the Japanese continued to unload. On December 24, Lt. Colonel John P. Horan, the commanding officer at Camp John Hay, instructed E.J. Halsema to organize a government to “reorganize the City Utilities, telephone services and arrange for reopening the stores,” and that “in case of a Military evacuation you will arrange for the peaceable occupation by the Japanese and continue in charge under their jurisdiction.” Among the assistants named in Horan’s orders was Elmer Herold, who ordered his truck drivers to deliver dynamite to the U.S. Forces to destroy bridges and roads to prevent the Japanese from reaching Baguio. Despite American and Filipino efforts, the Japanese arrived in Baguio on December 27, 1941, and were met by J.J. Keith, who had been Baguio’s Chief of Police since 1915. What many Americans believed would not happen had finally happened, and they awaited further instruction.

In anticipation of the Japanese invasion of Baguio, most Americans felt the safest option was to congregate together as a group, rather than be rounded up by the Japanese military individually. While some Americans went to the Pines Hotel, approximately three hundred of them gathered at Brent School to surrender to the Japanese. Japanese soldiers escorted the Americans who had remained in their homes to Brent for official registration; internees later surmised that several of their Japanese coworkers had been plants for the Japanese military, which explained how easily they found Americans in their homes. Japanese officer Major Musa Mukaibo conducted questioning and official registration for internment on December 28, 1941. Mukaibo had earned a Doctor of Divinity at Harvard University, and worked as a spy for the Japanese during this period. He spoke fluent English.

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21 The Robert McKay Collection.
22 Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 24.
23 Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in Forgotten Heroes.
24 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 65.
25 Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 37.
was completed, and then gathered everyone on the tennis courts outside on December 29. It was then that Mukaibo separated the men, women, and children, and threatened the group harshly, “You are now prisoners of the Imperial Japanese Army. If you have a gun, you will be killed. If you try to escape, you will be killed.”  

After sufficiently terrifying the internees, he ordered them to immediately grab their belongings and begin marching.

Internment for the Allied civilians had begun, and it was within the Japanese government’s legal rights to detain enemy alien civilians within the territories that they occupied. At the Fifteenth International Red Cross Convention, hosted in Tokyo in 1934, attendees determined a plan on the protection of “civilians of enemy nationality in the territory of a belligerent or in a territory occupied by him.” 

Under the Red Cross proposal, confinement of civilian enemies to a specific region was preferable to internment, however, internment was legal for persons who “were liable to mobilization, or if the safety of the detaining State should demand it, or if the position of the enemy civilians is such as to make it necessary.” 

The Japanese delegation assented to the Red Cross proposal and claimed that they would “apply the articles of the 1929 Prisoners of War Convention to noncombatant internees of enemy countries.” The Japanese military could legally detain the Allied civilians of Baguio to prevent the men from mobilizing or joining guerrilla forces. Keeping the internee civilians in a central location allowed the Japanese to maintain control over and account for the enemy aliens.

When the U.S. government detained Japanese-American civilians in internment camps, the Japanese claimed they would reciprocate the provisions afforded to Japanese-American civilians in the U.S. to their detained American civilian internees, “provided that

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26 Betsy Herold Heimke, *Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon*, 37.
28 Ibid, 35.
29 Ibid, 39.
the American Government did not make use of the provisions of the Convention to compel Japanese civilians in its hands to work against their will.\textsuperscript{30} In February of 1944, Commandant Tomibe confirmed to his internees that they were to be treated equally to how the U.S. government was treating its Japanese-American citizens stateside.\textsuperscript{31} Overall, international law did not detail the standard for civilian internee treatment as much as it did for military prisoners. The improvement of civilian internee conditions was considered a humanitarian effort rather than a legal effort. The purpose of the international law on the subject matter, regarding both civilian internees and military prisoners, was to establish “a system of permissive restraint without unnecessary cruelty or reprisals.”\textsuperscript{32} The Japanese military failed in multiple instances to uphold these standards, particularly in regard to unnecessary cruelty. An instance of unnecessary cruelty followed immediately after registration at Brent School, when the Japanese purposely separated families from each other.

The Japanese intended to scare the Americans by separating families, and to humiliate them by marching them past their Filipino friends in Baguio. They believed the Filipinos would mock the Americans, however, they were mistaken—most Filipinos remained indoors to mitigate the humiliation of their friends. Those Filipinos present during the march were there in support of the Americans, some even openly crying, and secretly handed off supplies when they could. The Herold family’s servants snuck them food, and informed Elmer Herold that the Japanese had raped one of them after the Herolds were forced out of their home to Brent.\textsuperscript{33} From the beginning, Filipino collaboration with the Americans to help them survive was evident, despite Filipinos taking the brunt of Japanese violence in the Philippines.

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\textsuperscript{30} Robert R. Wilson, "Treatment of Civilian Alien Enemies," 40.
\textsuperscript{31} Natalie Crouter, “February 3, 1944” in Forbidden Diary, 286.
\textsuperscript{32} Robert R. Wilson, "Treatment of Civilian Alien Enemies," 45.
\textsuperscript{33} Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 38.
\end{flushright}
Eventually, the internees arrived at the gates of Camp John Hay, where they would remain until April 23, 1942.

Camp John Hay was the U.S. Army’s Rest and Rehabilitation Center in Baguio. The Japanese targeted it during their initial bombing campaign to eliminate its military capabilities. In the meantime, American forces rounded up Japanese civilian men and held them in the barracks at Camp John Hay in squalor conditions—they did not provide food or water to the men for several days. When Elmer Herold became aware of these conditions, he demanded that the men be fed. Herold was a World War I veteran, and he firmly believed in how the Geneva Convention demanded for the humane treatment of prisoners, including feeding the enemy.\(^{34}\) When the American civilians became interned at Camp John Hay, the Japanese guards treated them harshly because of the initial treatment of Japanese civilians—Elmer Herold’s actions saved the Americans from more severe punishment, though their living conditions remained just as squalor.

The Japanese guards were particularly mean to internees during the beginning of internment because they were veterans of battles against American forces, during which they had lost many comrades; they took their anger out on the internees. Internees described their initial internment as a “starvation period” during which they had little food; eventually, Japanese guards allowed some internees outside of camp to gather food, and women put together SPAM sandwiches to feed everyone.\(^{35}\) In addition to having little food, the camp did not have running water or functioning toilet facilities, and the septic system soon became backed up. Although Dr. Dana Nance took the initiative to fix the septic issue by submerging himself into the tank itself, the consequence of the unsanitary camp conditions had already

\(^{34}\) The Ethel Thomas Herold Papers (M1991), “War Memories of Ethel Thomas Herold as told for Charles Vial and Recorded by William Herold,” Box 1 Folder 1, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, California, 21.

\(^{35}\) The Robert McKay Collection.
The combination of unsanitary waste facilities and lack of adequate mosquito netting led to the spread of bacillary dysentery through flies; symptoms of dysentery, such as vomiting and diarrhea, further exacerbated the problem, which was ongoing throughout internment.\textsuperscript{37}

The area of Camp John Hay in which the civilians lived was approximately the size of two football fields. They slept in three wooden barracks—one for men, the other two for women and children. The barracks were white buildings with green trim around the doors and windows, covered by red steel roofs, and approximately thirty-six by one hundred forty-eight feet in area. The internees lived in “cubicles,” which were the small areas of the floor assigned to each person. Some internees increased their floor space by building lofted beds attached to the ceiling. There was a distinct lack of privacy in the living spaces, which the internees learned to cope with over time. In addition to the three barracks, there were six small cottages in the camp; one of them became a temporary hospital where most of the camp’s babies were born during the early months of internment.\textsuperscript{38}

The initial months of internment saw the establishment of daily routines, leadership roles, and general organization. The commandant started a daily roll call during which all able-bodied internees stood at attention while their names were called. Those who were too ill to leave their cubicle, or were in the hospital, were verified separately.\textsuperscript{39} The commandant allowed a weekly commingling hour during which men and women could talk to one another while separated by fences and eight feet of space—again, internees quickly became used to the lack of privacy. The emergence of leadership roles helped with camp organization and eased communication between the internees and the commandant. The Japanese chose Elmer

\textsuperscript{36} The Robert McKay Collection.
\textsuperscript{37} Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in Forgotten Heroes.
\textsuperscript{38} Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 54.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, 49.
Herold to be the internees’ official representative because they appreciated that he employed many Japanese civilians prior to the war, and because of his efforts to feed the Japanese men previously held at Camp John Hay. His wife, Ethel Herold, became the leader of the women. Other important leaders included the Reverend Carl Eschbach, Dr. Dana Nance, and later Nellie McKim, who served as the camp’s interpreter—she was the only internee fluent in Japanese. Although many internees remained hopeful that American forces would soon retake the Philippines and free them from internment, their hope for a short internment deteriorated when the American forces surrendered to the Japanese at Bataan on April 9, 1942. Soon after, the Japanese transferred the internees to Camp Holmes so that their troops could establish a permanent presence in Baguio using the barracks at Camp John Hay. The internees officially moved to Camp Holmes on April 23, 1942. This became their residence for a majority of their internment, and was more spacious and comfortable than their initial internment conditions. Although the Japanese initially interned Chinese civilians in one of the barracks at Camp Holmes, they soon released them back into Baguio, which relieved some of the camp’s congestion. The organization that the internees established in Camp John Hay followed them to Camp Holmes as they established a more permanent community. The concept of permanence was further solidified by the American surrender at Corregidor on May 6, 1942, the report of which Natalie Crouter claimed “depresses us and eats into us like acid.”

Camp Holmes was the Philippine Army Constabulary Camp prior to the war, located in the scenic mountains outside of Baguio. The beauty of the area was noted by several internees; Natalie Crouter wrote that it had “a glorious view,” and Ethel Herold claimed that

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40 The Ethel Thomas Herold Papers (M1991), Box 1 Folder 1, 31.
41 Natalie Crouter, Forbidden Diary, 40.
42 Ibid, 45.
“had I been allowed to select [an internment] camp, I could not possibly have found one with more beautiful scenery.”\textsuperscript{43} Not only was the area beautiful, but the camp was also more spacious, and had more amenities, including a garden, baseball diamond, volleyball court, and various extra buildings. Camp Holmes was built on a hill and divided into the “top-side” and “bottom-side.” The top-side included the barracks, laundry, kitchen, dining rooms, clinics, combination church and school, greenhouse-turned-high school, cemetery, and pine forest. The bottom side included the hospital, housing for the Maryknoll and Episcopal Sisters of Saint Mary, the volleyball court, a grassy-knoll area called “the basin,” and the Baby House, where mothers and infants lived.\textsuperscript{44}

The men, women and children continued to live separately at Camp Holmes. The Herold family was privileged to live together as a family in a private cubicle that was walled off from the rest of the women’s barracks floor space. The Japanese afforded them this privilege because of Elmer Herold’s role as camp liaison. The rest of the families at Camp Holmes lived separately from one another until Commandant Rokuro Tomibe approved the Family Unit Plan in 1944, at which point some families chose to finally live together.\textsuperscript{45}

According to Jim Halsema’s reporting in the Camp Holmes News, the maximum population at Camp Holmes was 532 internees in 1942, with children under ten years of age being the largest age-group, and females outnumbering males.\textsuperscript{46} The population of Camp Holmes shrunk, as older internees were allowed to move back into their homes in Baguio under supervised conditions. These internees remained in Baguio, even after the Japanese moved the internees of Camp Holmes to Bilibid Prison in Manila in December 1944.

\textsuperscript{43} Natalie Crouter, Forbidden Diary, 40. Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 77.
\textsuperscript{44} Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 79-80.
\textsuperscript{45} Natalie Crouter, Forbidden Diary, 334.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, 101.
In the meantime, camp life continued in the new setting. The internees developed governing bodies through the General Camp Committee and the Women’s Committee. They established camp chore systems and assigned chores accordingly to keep the camp clean, fed, and organized. They created a functioning school system for the children, which kept their educations on track, despite their internment. They enjoyed their free time participating in group activities like sports, theater, and voluntary classes. They maintained as much of a sense of normalcy as they possibly could, and they did so as a community.
Part I: Community Development

The shared commonality of the internees going into internment was their status as American and Allied civilians who were members of the greater Baguio community. Though some of them already had relationships with one another, what really bonded the internees to each other for the rest of their lives was their shared experience of internment. The separate groups these internees composed prior to the war—including missionary, mining, medical, and teaching communities—all came together to form one large, functioning, patriotic internment community. The development of the functioning Baguio internee community was a process, and some were reluctant to think of long-term planning due to the expectation that the American forces would soon return and release them from their misery. The surrenders at Bataan and Corregidor, however, caused the internees to realize that they had to “combine [their] wits and energy and make the best of an uncertain future.”¹ Betsy Herold recalled that they “rolled with the punches and accepted [internment] camp life.”² That meant coming together to develop a lasting community.

The internees all agreed that their community developed a camp that was “really most ingenious.”³ The emergence of camp leadership and the organization of a representative committee was vital to the development of a functioning camp environment. Camp leadership bridged the gap between the general internee population and their Japanese captors, and they addressed and mediated internee issues, of which there were always many. The committee established an extensive system of camp chores that helped the internees maintain camp cleanliness and functionality. The sanitation crew kept the camp free of garbage, the wood crew kept the kitchen fires burning, and the kitchen crew kept the camp fed. The ups and

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¹ Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 69.
² Ibid, 79.
³ The Robert McKay Collection, 4.
downs of food supplies was experienced universally, as the internees experienced periods of starvation, sufficiency, and even sometimes excess—or as excessive as food could be in an internment camp setting. The development of a camp hospital saved countless lives given the near constant presence of dysentery and various other ailments. The hospital witnessed births and deaths, and life in between.

In addition to the establishment of infrastructure necessary for camp survival, the internees found ways to preserve normalcy and culture in the form of group activities. Religion played an ongoing role in their lives, particularly because the camp population had so many missionaries. Not only did religion provide a method of self preservation, but it also provided a camp baseball team. Sports, especially baseball, brought people of all backgrounds together for some good old-fashioned American fun. Missionaries versus Miners versus Students played with the bare minimum equipment on the Camp Holmes baseball diamond, providing entertainment for the internees and Japanese guards—some of whom occasionally joined in the sport. The more theatrically inclined produced and performed plays for the internees, including pageants for religious holidays. Parties became the most popular form of individual socializing. All of these group activities provided a semblance of normalcy and contributed to the culture of the camp.

Although the internees were obviously unhappy about their situation, they tended not to dwell on it as a means of endurance. Robert McKay recalled thinking, “here we are on an island, we can't go anywhere, we can't do anything about our situation, so let's enjoy it.”⁴ The internees understood that their conditions could have been worse, as one internee described the concentration camps in Europe, from which she had fled prior to the war.⁵ So, they accepted their reality and generally acknowledged what little privileges they did have,

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⁴ The Robert McKay Collection, 4.
⁵ Natalie Crouter, “February 25, 1942” in Forbidden Diary, 24.
including the beautiful scenery and mild climate that mitigated their risk of malaria. When Bill Moule arrived in Camp Holmes after months of evasion in the mountains followed by a stay in a Japanese prison, he noted that compared to the prison, Camp Holmes “looked like a rest home.” Rarely did the internees rest, however, because they were always busy maintaining camp through their system of chores. The internees survived because they established necessary infrastructure. They successfully strived for normalcy because they did it as a collective community.

Most important was the role of patriotism in internee perseverance. On their first Independence Day in internment, Ethel and Betsy Herold began creating a secret American flag sewn from scraps of cloth. Their goal was to have as many internees add a stitch to the collective and patriotic project as a way to boost morale. One internee, a World War I Veteran, was moved by the project, and said, “you never appreciate your flag, until it has been taken away from you.” The ongoing flag project was a tangible symbol of patriotism in the camp, which was always buzzing with rumors regarding the American war effort. The internees never lost faith in their country, and immediately after their liberation in Bilibid Prison, Ethel Herold proudly displayed the Baguio internees’ American flag. Until then, the internees lived their lives as normally as they possibly could.

Emerging Leadership

Though the ultimate authority during internment always belonged to the Japanese, the internees essentially organized and governed themselves in a democratic fashion. The Japanese initially handpicked an internee liaison, but internees later elected representatives through the General Committee to act as the mediators between themselves and the Japanese.

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6 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 301.
7 The Ethel Thomas Herold Papers (M1991), Box 1 Folder 1, 42.
8 Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 60.
The General Committee was comprised of only men, while the women created their own committee but did not have voting rights. This was a point of contention in camp that was later resolved. In the meantime, the emerging camp leadership contributed to the initial organization of the camp, and continued functionality of the camp through various leaders. Noticeably absent from camp leadership, however, was E.J. Halsema, who had served as the mayor of Baguio from 1919 until 1937. Jim Halsema, his son, noted that his father was so crushed to see his city occupied by the Japanese, that he did not even attempt to assume a position of leadership once they became interned.9

The first recognized leaders in Camp John Hay were Elmer and Ethel Herold. The Japanese specifically selected Elmer Herold to be the camp liaison because of his history of hiring Japanese civilians for his logging company, and because of his instrumental role in finally providing the interned Japanese civilians with food and water in the interim between the Japanese attack on, then occupation of Baguio. Elmer Herold’s first major accomplishment as a leader was restoring running water to Camp John Hay, which prevented the dysentery epidemic from worsening further. This certainly impacted the survival of internees in a significant way, because mortality rates would have been higher without access to clean, running water in camp. Elmer Herold’s primary role as camp liaison was conveying internee complaints and demands to Commandant Nakamura. Betsy Herold recalled that the stress of his job drove him to smoke—a habit her mother detested but tolerated.10

Ethel Herold had served as the president of Baguio’s Monday Afternoon Club prior to the war, and she carried her leadership abilities into internment. Initially, she served as a mediator between women, helping to settle arguments pertaining to cubicle spacing and privacy. She also began organizing the kitchen by determining food supplies. She took on a

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9 Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in Forgotten Heroes.
10 Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 70.
more official leadership role when the Reverend Carl Eschbach, another respected leadership figure, insisted that she lead the camp’s Women’s Committee.\(^\text{11}\) Her demeanor and leadership style earned her the moniker “Bossy Ethel.”\(^\text{12}\) While the Herolds’ leadership significantly helped in the initial organization of camp, and contributed to internees’ physical and mental survival, they were not without criticism.

As the specially chosen camp liaison, Elmer Herold’s family enjoyed the privilege of having a private cubicle for the duration of internment, while every other family remained separated for a majority of their time in camp. This fostered resentment among the internees, including Natalie Crouter, who described them as “the Pampered” and their family cubicle as the “Country Club.”\(^\text{13}\) Some internees teased them over their privileges, about which the Herolds complained, but received little sympathy. The concept of privilege in camp caused friction among internees, particularly when those privileges came directly from the Commandant. In a setting where a mere inch of cubicle floor space was cause for explosive arguments, a private family cubicle displayed utmost privilege. Leadership in camp transitioned to democratic representation, as the internees preferred to decide themselves who should receive certain leadership privileges.

Among the democratically elected leaders throughout internment were Dr. Dana Nance, a respected physician who had worked at Notre Dame Hospital in Baguio, and the Reverend Carl Eschbach, a respected Baguio missionary. As leaders, their ability to establish positive rapport with the Commandant directly impacted their ability to influence significant improvements in the internees’ quality of life. Dr. Dana Nance successfully lobbied for improvements regarding the camp hospital, while Carl Eschbach successfully requested

\(^{11}\) Betsy Herold Heimke, \textit{Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon}, 51.
\(^{12}\) Curtis Tong, \textit{Child of War}, 51.
\(^{13}\) Natalie Crouter, “June 1, 1942” in \textit{Forbidden Diary}, 53.
improvements concerning food supplies, schooling, and religious practices.\textsuperscript{14} Their accomplishments as camp leaders positively impacted the physical survival of internees, and significantly benefitted internees’ mental perseverance. Leadership in smaller capacities also significantly improved communal living. Alex Kaluzhny’s leadership in the camp kitchens kept the internees fed, while Fabian Ream’s leadership concerning construction kept internee living conditions as comfortable as possible. Whether in major or minor roles, leaders strengthened the internment community, contributing significantly to camp survival, normalcy, and culture.

No leader more greatly impacted the Baguio internment community than Nellie McKim. The daughter of John McKim, the Anglican Bishop of Tokyo, she was the only internee fluent in the Japanese language and culture, which she used to the great advantage of the internees. She demonstrated her tact from the moment the Japanese picked up herself and her fellow Sagada missionaries from Northern Luzon in June 1942.\textsuperscript{15} McKim boldly challenged Commandant Nakamura’s decision to intern all of the missionaries, including those who were not legally enemy civilians of Japan. She not only informed him that his actions were illegal, but she also explained that he could be demoted and suffer extreme embarrassment from his superiors for his decision. Nakamura was understandably shocked—culturally, he was not accustomed to a woman boldly challenging a man’s decisions, nor was he accustomed to white women speaking his language fluently, but McKim’s tactful explanation swayed him.\textsuperscript{16} Her arrival to Camp Holmes with the American nuns from Sagada was a gift that kept on giving.

\textsuperscript{14} Curtis Tong, \textit{Child of War}, 51, 130.
\textsuperscript{15} Betsy Herold Heimke, \textit{Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon}, 119.
\textsuperscript{16} Curtis Tong, \textit{Child of War}, 93.
Nellie McKim emerged as the leading interpreter for the Baguio internees, and she developed a reputation for being bold yet respectful when communicating with the Japanese. Her strategy was to “inform not ask” the Commandant when it came to internee developments, and her friendly relationship with the Commandant and his guards often spared the internees from hostile treatment.\(^\text{17}\) Natalie Crouter noted that McKim’s Japanese upbringing influenced her effective diplomacy, and that her “serenity, patience, and enigmatic quality seem part of an Oriental background.”\(^\text{18}\) Although McKim’s knowledge of Japanese and Japanese culture sometimes intimidated her Japanese captors, it had the benefit of eroding prejudice against the internees, as she often explained and demonstrated the foundational cultural similarities shared between the captors and the captured. The Japanese referred to her as “Obasan,” meaning “honorable aunt,” which was indicative of their diplomatic relationship.\(^\text{19}\) Ultimately, McKim proved so effective in representing the camp, that the General Committee voted to get rid of their liaison in favor of only using McKim as camp representative; a wise choice, given her ongoing successes.\(^\text{20}\)

**Camp Chores**

When their situation became more permanent than initially anticipated, the internees established an infrastructure of camp chore crews to maintain a sanitary camp environment to prevent the spread of diseases, and to keep the community fed. Helen Angeny considered committee organization a “favorite pastime of Americans,” and indicative of American culture that the internees sought to maintain an orderly environment.\(^\text{21}\) Every job was important, despite the differences between them, because they were all dependent on one

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\(^{17}\) Curtis Tong, *Child of War*, 153, 100.  
\(^{18}\) Natalie Crouter, “February 23, 1943” in *Forbidden Diary*, 137.  
\(^{19}\) Ibid, “May 27, 1943,” 176.  
\(^{21}\) The Helen Frances Buehl-Angeny Collection, 40.
another to maintain a healthy community. Bill Moule was not present when the internees established chore infrastructure, but as a late newcomer, he noted that “they were faced with the impossible and did it as routine.” Therefore, it was evident that the internees not only succeeded, but also did so in the face of adversity.

Manual labor crews included wood chopping, garbage hauling, construction, gardening, and livestock maintenance. Wood crew and outdoor sanitation—garbage—crew were the most popular because they involved daily excursions outside the confines of the camp, which provided the opportunity for internees to briefly interact with Filipinos and even buy food from them. Men on garbage crew could briefly sneak away to their old houses to gather supplies for the camp to improve their quality of life. Similarly, the younger boys on the wood crew, like Curtis Tong, were called “spies,” and could more easily wander away from the Japanese guard to collect useful materials found on the ground in the woods. Both crews shared a wagon they affectionately named “Carry Me Home” to haul garbage out of the camp, and wood back into it. Fabian Ream’s construction crew helped improve the physical conditions of the barracks, and they invented gadgets to help perform camp chores more efficiently. The gardening crew grew a vital food source for the camp, and the livestock crew maintained the camp chickens, pigs, and goats—whose milk was crucial to the survival of camp infants.

The work performed by manual labor crews in turn contributed to domestic labor, like cooking and cleaning. When permitted by the Japanese, Ray Hale, the camp truck driver, and Chef Alex Kaluzhny would drive into the Baguio market and negotiate with the Filipino vendors to buy rice and other food for camp. The rice prep crew, composed primarily of

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22 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 309.
23 The Robert McKay Collection.
24 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 58, 86.
women and children, painstakingly sorted through the rice to remove gravel and insects, chatting and singing to pass the time. The vegetable prep crew, primarily composed of the Maryknoll Sisters, peeled, cut, and prepped every possible scrap of vegetables until they had “the reddest, sorest fingers with no fingerprints.”25 The cooking crew then cooked the camp food, using wood-burning fires stocked by the wood crew, and served the internees during mealtimes. Dot Douglas was grateful her father was on the cooking crew, because she was able to see him daily, and not just during weekly commingling hours.26 Afterwards, the dish washing and cleaning crew would clean up the camp dining facilities.

Additional chore crews included the sewing crew, to help mend internee clothing as it became worn and tattered; the laundry crew, to wash internee clothing; the toilet guard crew, to hand out equal amounts of the limited toilet paper supply; and the childcare crew, which was an informal crew of women and teenage girls who helped the camp mothers with their infants and young children. When the camp school was in session, students and teachers were still expected to perform their chores before their studies, because the infrastructure necessary for internees’ physical survival took precedent before their educational development. Natalie Crouter acknowledged that one of the best ways to adapt to camp life and not dwell on their situation was to conduct one’s fair share of camp chores. She wrote, “work is the great healer, the strong motive power which keeps us normal.”27 Internees who worked to complete their communal chores were the happiest and best adjusted to internment compared to those who did not, whom Natalie called burdensome. Generally, however, it was a communal effort to complete the necessary chores to preserve the structured camp community.

25 The Robert McKay Collection, 12.
26 The Dorothy “Dot” Douglas Whittle Collection.
27 Natalie Crouter, “June 4, 1942” in Forbidden Diary, 54.
Food

Throughout the duration of three years of internment, internees experienced varying periods of starvation, sufficiency, and occasionally excess. Food was the most vital element to internees’ physical survival besides their health, and it was no surprise that the very first form of camp organization that the Japanese permitted was in regard to food.\textsuperscript{28} This was during their first major period of starvation, and though difficult, their experience prepared them for future periods of starvation, particularly during their final months of internment. Internees quickly adapted and learned the importance of hoarding personal food supplies when possible. The camp’s food supply was heavily dependent on the Japanese, both in their ability to supply it, and in their permission for internees to supplement their own diets. Internees often did so through the generosity of their “magnificent” Filipino friends “who sent in food whenever they could.”\textsuperscript{29} Thus, it was not only the internment community coming together to help one another survive, but also an effort on behalf of the greater Baguio community.

The most notable periods of starvation for the Baguio internees were from early to mid-1942, then from mid-1944 until their liberation in February of 1945. The earlier period was influenced by Japanese reluctance to acquire large quantities of food for the internees themselves—despite an abundance of food in the Philippines, while the later period of starvation was influenced by the climate of the war and widespread shortages of food everywhere throughout the Pacific. During a trip to Manila to retrieve Red Cross Packages in late 1943, Commandant Rokuro Tomibe, Carl Eschbach, and Ray Hale stayed with Japanese soldiers along the way; they noted that the Japanese soldiers had little food themselves, perhaps even less than the internees. Tomibe noted that Eschbach reminded the internees of

\textsuperscript{28} Natalie Crouter, “January 4, 1942” in Forbidden Diary, 15.
\textsuperscript{29} Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in Forgotten Heroes, 68.
this fact whenever they complained of food shortages. It was not the Japanese military’s intention to purposely starve their internees to death, but were it not for the outside resources they acquired, internees would have suffered even more severe malnutrition than they already suffered based solely on the Japanese food supply.

Starvation took its toll on internees both mentally and physically. Natalie Crouter noted that “lack of food changes people generally, makes insidious inroads in many directions of the personality,” in reference to hunger’s ability to bring out hostility and desperation amongst the internees. When their families began starving, many married women pawned their wedding rings to afford to buy their families more food, which was indicative of internee desperation and the importance of physical survival. By the end of internment, the internees were only eating approximately three hundred calories per day, first in the form of rice, and when that ran out, in the form of moldy corn meal with black weevils, which at least provided protein. After liberation, Army medics reported that the average weight of men was only one hundred twenty-five pounds, while nearly all internee women weighed under one hundred pounds; they had narrowly escaped death by starvation. Periods of starvation were an exception to the internees’ tendency to band together as a community; instead, their priority became the survival of themselves and their families.

Periods of sufficiency were more indicative of the communal effort to survive, and 1943 was the longest period during which internees had enough to eat. During this period, the Japanese provided the camp with food, and they allowed supplementary food to enter the camp in the form of purchases from the Baguio food market, and in personal parcels from the

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31 Natalie Crouter, “February 27, 1942” in Forbidden Diary, 24.
32 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 344.
33 The Robert McKay Collection.
34 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 168.
internees’ Filipino friends. Ray Hale and Chef Alex Kaluzhny were permitted to drive to the Baguio market and bargain with the vendors for camp food, and they would pick up personal food bundles to transport back to camp. The camp kitchen would use their two large cauldrons to cook rice and stews for internee meals, and they would give the crusty, burnt edges of the rice to the kids, which they considered a tasty snack.\(^{35}\) A communal spirit was evident in the way that internees who received supplementary food parcels from their Filipino friends and servants would share their goods with those who received none. Most notable was the Herold family, who received a personal food parcel nearly every day and shared it with the seven Brent boarding students who were interned without their parents and had no supplementary food source.\(^{36}\) Additionally, the General Committee established a non-profit camp store from which internees could purchase extra food supplies.

The community always worked to provide sufficient food for camp children and infants. When mothers became concerned about their ability to keep feeding their babies, the Maryknoll Sisters used their money to purchase goats to use for babies’ milk. When a majority of internees had little or no money to buy themselves food, these nuns compassionately bought food sources for the benefit of everyone.\(^{37}\) Fairness in regard to food distribution was important to maintaining a civil camp atmosphere. Something seemingly insignificant, like handing out bananas to internees during mealtimes, could actually have the significant consequence of an internee making a scene, should he or she feel treated unfairly for receiving a small, or unripe, or too ripe banana. Fabian Ream, who was always inventing gadgets to make internment life easier, devised the very popular Banana Machine. The Banana Machine indiscriminately distributed bananas to the awaiting internees, who could

\(^{35}\) The Robert McKay Collection.

\(^{36}\) Betsy Herold Heimke, *Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon*.

\(^{37}\) Curtis Tong, *Child of War*, 95.
either accept their random banana, or chance receiving a better one, or none at all, by going back to the end of the line. The consequence of the ingenious machine was the elimination of accusations of unfairness, as well as a reduction in the spread of communicable diseases, as internees were no longer handling the piles of bananas themselves. Ream’s device demonstrated the ingenuity of the internees regarding matters of food distribution fairness, and it was fondly remembered by many.

Internees enjoyed occasional periods of excess, including the organization of holiday feasts, even during times of normal sufficiency. The community’s love for throwing personal parties was also indicative of times of excess. However, no example of excess was more significant than the arrival of the Red Cross packages for Christmas of 1943. As their new camp commandant, Tomibe was determined to acquire his internees their rightful packages from Manila, and through a communal effort, he succeeded. Upon the conclusion of their Nativity Play, the internees joyously welcomed their much anticipated packages. Fern Harrington thought, “if only a movie camera could have been there to capture on film the look of ecstasy, the rapturous delight, the excitement on each person’s face as he walked up the hill with that forty-seven-pound box of food.” Every man, woman, and child in Camp Holmes received an equal share of food. Natalie Crouter calculated that although each package had only cost the United States $20, because of food shortages and inflation in the Philippines, their precious packages were probably worth $700. More than that, the packages were worth their lives, as the rations inside saved the internees from complete starvation by the end of their internment.

38 Natalie Crouter, “February 27, 1943” in Forbidden Diary, 138.
39 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 116.
40 Natalie Crouter, “January 5, 1944” in Forbidden Diary, 271.
Another success in internment community development was the creation of a camp hospital. Dr. Marshall Welles, a missionary physician from China, initiated medical organization to address rampant diarrhea as a result of dysentery spreading in the early days of internment. When Commandant Nakamura authorized the creation of a camp hospital, one condition was that Dr. Dana Nance, a physician at Notre Dame Hospital who had ignored registration at Brent School, had to surrender to internment—a condition to which Nance complied. The hospital was undoubtedly crucial in the physical survival of the Baguio internees, who in addition to experiencing regular medical ailments while interned, also suffered from chronic malnutrition and dysentery as a direct result of their internment. The positive impact that the medical services in the hospital had on internee health resulted in a surprisingly low internee mortality rate. Over the course of three years, approximately twenty internees died from complications related to malnutrition, heart attack, stroke, cancer, premature birth, and old age.

Dysentery, malnutrition, and childbirth were the most common medical matters that camp doctors and nurses dealt with during the early months at Camp John Hay. Dr. Frank G. Haughwout, a pathologist with a background in tropical diseases, devised the ideal camp diet of soft foods to mitigate stomach and intestinal bleeding from dysentery. He nursed countless internees through both dysentery and dengue fever. Dysentery was such an epidemic amongst the Baguio internees, that it was not until September of 1943—nearly twenty-one months of internment—that the camp hospital reported they had not a single dysentery case to treat. Jim Halsema’s daily bulletin reported in February of 1943 that there

41 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 95.
42 Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 116.
43 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 111.
44 Natalie Crouter, “September 23, 1943” in Forbidden Diary, 220.
had already been a total of two hundred seventy-eight hospitalizations, which was more than half the camp population, yet at that point, only three internees had died.\textsuperscript{45} The hospital was obviously effective at treating internees’ medical ailments and preserving their lives.

Once settled into Camp Holmes, the internees established a hospital in the former Commanding Officer’s two-story four-bedroom house, with eighteen staff members, including doctors and nurses.\textsuperscript{46} Margaret Tong affectionately named the hospital the “Nancetorium.” Dr. Dana Nance oversaw the camp medical operations, and his willingness to treat not only internees, but also Japanese guards, gained him favor with the Japanese when he served as the elected leader of the General Committee.\textsuperscript{47} The hospital could only treat so many patients at once, so Dr. Nance sometimes faced the moral dilemma of deciding who was sicker; his decisions faced internee disapproval, and women, including Dr. Beulah Ream Allen, criticized Nance as being sexist for dismissing women with ailments as “whiners.”\textsuperscript{48} Despite their personal qualms, both Dr. Nance and Dr. Allen demonstrated their professionalism when Allen selected Nance to perform her cesarean section when she gave birth to her son, Henderson, in July 1942. This instance was indicative of the tendency for internees to put differences aside in times of need, and showed the importance of community and camaraderie during internment.

In addition to the recurrence of dysentery, the hospital also treated ailments related to malnutrition, including beriberi. Dr. Augustus Skerl, a geologist, devised a way to grow yeast using old banana peels, eventually producing enough to provide nearly two hundred internees with a daily dose to combat Vitamin B deficiency.\textsuperscript{49} Dr. Richard Walker served as the

\textsuperscript{45} Natalie Crouter, “February 7, 1943” in Forbidden Diary, 131.
\textsuperscript{46} Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 81.
\textsuperscript{47} Curtis Tong, Child of War, 113.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} Natalie Crouter, “January 16, 1943” in Forbidden Diary, 125.
hospital’s dentist, and despite having limited supplies, he successfully conducted routine tooth-fillings. Annarae Tong’s tooth-filling lasted her through adulthood, which was a testament to the professional capabilities of the camp’s seemingly rudimentary hospital.\textsuperscript{50} Bill Moule contracted polio from an ill Filipino man in a Japanese prison just prior to his arrival in Camp Holmes. His ongoing hospital treatment and subsequent physical therapy prevented his death and paralysis, and he was eventually able to walk again.\textsuperscript{51} Additionally, the “Nancetorium” conducted routine blood transfusions, appendectomies, tonsillectomies, intestinal surgeries, amputations, and child births. The development of the communal hospital saved internee lives.

Preventative healthcare, particularly the community’s emphasis on maintaining a sanitary environment, helped mitigate the spread of communicable diseases. Internees developed their own public service announcement posters regarding the importance of washing hands, washing food, cleaning the kitchen and barracks, avoiding dirty water, and avoiding contact with flies. PSA slogans included: “Foil Flies—Fit Lid with CARE,” “Fruit Workers, clean table before and after work,” and, “Catch flies before they catch you!”\textsuperscript{52} Adults emphasized these messages to children, and Curtis Tong attributes preventative healthcare to why he escaped internment as one of only two children to never fall seriously ill.\textsuperscript{53} The Japanese also contributed to preventative healthcare in the form of vaccinations against typhoid, cholera, and small pox, because they also wished to avoid contracting those diseases.\textsuperscript{54} Altogether, internee health was a communal effort that successfully contributed to their physical survival of internment.

\textsuperscript{50} Curtis Tong, \textit{Child of War}, 112.
\textsuperscript{51} William Moule, \textit{God’s Arms Around Us}, 320.
\textsuperscript{52} Natalie Crouter, “February 16, 1943” in \textit{Forbidden Diary}, 134.
\textsuperscript{53} Curtis Tong, \textit{Child of War}, 112.
\textsuperscript{54} Betsy Herold Heimke, \textit{Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon}, 116.
Lastly, the camp hospital was not only witness to the birth of new internees, but also the birth of wartime rumors, and in turn, hope. Dr. Dana Nance had successfully smuggled a radio into camp with other medical supplies when he first arrived at Camp John Hay—he claimed he had a Japanese guard unknowingly carry it in himself. Philip Markert, an electrical engineer, fixed the camp radio, which remained hidden in the hospital wall behind a large stack of bandages.\(^{55}\) Although the possession of a radio was punishable by death, the radio remained, and a select few internees, including Nance, Markert, and Jim Halsema, listened to broadcasts out of Tokyo and San Francisco to piece together the war’s progression. They would confirm or deny the accuracy of the radio’s claims with newspapers, and would never mention anything that had not already been claimed by a newspaper, so as not to make the Japanese suspicious. These wartime rumors created hope and saved internees’ mental health, which was necessary for survival.

**Group Activities**

When the Baguio internees had established the infrastructure necessary for physically surviving internment, they directed their attention towards extracurricular activities. These activities were necessary for the development of normalcy and camp culture given the constant strain that camp chores and hunger brought. It should be unsurprising that the beloved American pastime of sports is what majorly influenced the coming together of internees from different backgrounds. Where they might never have interacted during their peacetime lives, internees—and even Japanese guards—quickly went from competitors to teammates on the volleyball court and baseball diamond. Similarly, these groups were brought together by theatrics, both on stage and in the audience. Religious gatherings were a godsend for missionaries, who used their faith to maintain their strength and inspire others.

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\(^{55}\) Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in *Forgotten Heroes.*
throughout internment. Personal parties became one of the most beloved activities for internees, as they created opportunities to develop neighborly friendships.

Sport was the great unifier and healer among internees. At the beginning of internment, missionaries and miners tended to keep to their own groups, which was evident in their sporting teams. The volleyball and baseball teams were initially composed of missionaries versus miners, or as they called themselves, Devil Chasers versus Groundhogs. Students made up another team, and some of the Japanese guards happily formed a team themselves. The impact was that sports brought these groups together, and they eventually mixed their teams and created new team names. Curtis Tong loved to play baseball, and the involvement of the Japanese guards significantly eased his fear of them, as their participation in the sport humanized them in his eyes. A more extreme example of the healing nature of sport was when missionary Rolland Flory returned from being tortured by the Kenpeitai, as many missionary men were at the beginning of internment. Flory briefly reunited with his wife, Josephine, and their newborn son, James, before immediately joining a game of volleyball. Onlookers considered his actions, despite his physical injuries from torture, to be his conscious decision to immediately begin healing through normalcy, which sport provided.

Theatrics brought internees of all backgrounds and ages together, in addition to the Japanese guards and commandant. The high school students, under the direction of their English teacher, Father Gowen, performed Our Town and Shakespeare. Teenagers Sue Burnett, Billie Dosser, and Norma Ream then performed a parody based on their internment camp life, titled Our Camp. They made fun of their situation and one another, which brought great laughter from the audience, including Commandant Hayakawa. The Japanese guards

56 The Helen Frances Buehl-Angeny Collection, 41.
57 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 92.
58 The Helen Frances Buehl-Angeny Collection, 41.
59 Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon.
enjoyed the performances as much as the internees did, because these entertaining gatherings were the “only bright spots in [their] humdrum lives.”\textsuperscript{60} In return, the guards even put on their own production for the internees, during which they performed a traditional samurai sword dance and sang traditional Japanese songs.\textsuperscript{61} Just as sports had brought them together, theater also united the captured with their captors, which was a unique demonstration of their overarching communal spirit.

Given the presence of hundreds of missionaries in camp, religion was a great source of comfort and morale, and it brought people together. They combined their love for theater with their love for worship and performed religious pageants during major holidays, including a Passion Play at Easter and a Nativity Play at Christmas. The continuation of this traditional American practice even during internment was just one of many ways the internees maintained normalcy. When the Japanese finally lifted restrictions on religious gatherings, the internees enjoyed Sunday worship services led by Reverend Carl Eschbach. Catholic teenagers did not miss out on Confirmation, a religious rite of passage, because internee Robert Franklin Wilner, the Suffragan Bishop of the Philippines, conducted confirmation classes for them. Upon the successful completion of his course, Bishop Wilner confirmed the teenagers, including Betsy Herold, on April 24, 1943, just prior to his transfer to Santo Tomas internment camp in Manila.\textsuperscript{62} Confirmation was a transformative religious event in a teenager’s life in its own right, but even more so given the circumstances, and it brought a sense of pride into Betsy Herold’s life. Bible study groups offered a great sense of comfort in Marian Gray’s life following the death of her husband, Rufus, at the hands of the

\textsuperscript{60} Fern Harrington Miles, \textit{Captive Community}, 103.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{62} Betsy Herold Heimke, \textit{Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon}, 94.
Kenpeita. She was among many internees who used religion as a source of forgiveness. Despite ongoing hardship, the internees maintained faith in God and their country.

Parties were integral to camp’s social culture. In his May 27, 1943 edition of the *Camp Holmes News*, Jim Halsema wrote, “perhaps the principal intramural pleasure here is giving or being invited to parties. Almost any excuse is enough to find an occasion, but one must find the ingredients and place with difficulty…” 1943, the longest period of food sufficiency, had frequent parties; Fern Harrington kept a social calendar to document the numerous parties she attended, detailing the hostess, guests, and food served. The most popular excuses for parties were birthdays and holidays, like Valentine’s Day and Saint Patrick’s Day. Given the shortage of party supplies to offer guests, Betsy Herold recalled the hosts’ frequent request featured on invitations, “bring cup, plate, and spoon,” which inspired the title of her memoir. Marian Gray was known as “the hostess with the mostest” for the elaborate birthday parties she threw in the Baby House for her young son, Billy. Most notable was Billy’s second birthday, when Marian gained permission from the Japanese to bring Billy into Baguio to have a portrait taken. She was then allowed to bring the photographer back into Camp Holmes, where he took a portrait of all the camp babies and their mothers sitting on the hill in front of the Baby House. This became perhaps the most iconic photograph of Baguio internment, and was a portrait of community.

**Conclusion**

The Baguio internees were truly a community dependent on one another. Carl Eschbach frequently reminded internees of the importance of their individual actions, and how they could have significant impacts on the community as a whole. When internees acted

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63 Fern Harrington Miles, *Captive Community*, 82.
64 Natalie Crouter, “May 27, 1943” in *Forbidden Diary*, 176.
65 Betsy Herold Heimke, *Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon*, 97.
66 Fern Harrington Miles, *Captive Community*, 84.
out, he reminded them, “while your behavior may have made you feel better, others may suffer later because of it.”\textsuperscript{67} Consequently, internees made their best efforts to put the needs of the community in the forefront of their minds. Given the pressure to always pull one’s weight, it was unsurprising how often internees accused one another of not doing enough work. Jim Halsema summarized it accordingly: “Every crew on the campus thinks the other crews don’t do any work; the Committee thinks none of them do any work; the rest of the camp thinks the Committee is loafing; actually, they’re all right and wrong.”\textsuperscript{68}

If anything, the occurrences of squabbles and drama only contributed to cultural normalcy. It was natural that not everyone got along with one another, as it was natural that unlikely friendships formed in the face of adversity. Fern Harrington recalled that “since we were helpless to strike back at the Japanese, we directed our hostility toward fellow internees.”\textsuperscript{69} However, the significance of survival won in the end, and grievances were forgiven and forgotten. Through necessary infrastructure developments and the creation of camp culture, internees established a community that not only lasted throughout internment, but also for the rest of their lives. Internees accepted their situation, and Bill Moule recalled that “fortunately, most people made the best of it and prayed it would soon be over.”\textsuperscript{70}

\textsuperscript{67} Curtis Tong, Child of War, 59.
\textsuperscript{68} Natalie Crouter, “May 25, 1942” in Forbidden Diary, 51.
\textsuperscript{69} Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 39.
\textsuperscript{70} William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 313.
Part II: Social Experiences of Women and Children

A particularly unique aspect of civilian internment during World War II was the perspectives and experiences of women and children internees, as a majority of those interned and imprisoned globally during the war were men. The presence of not only women, but especially of children in the Baguio camp community influenced less severe treatment and punishments by the Japanese commandants and guards. Both the internees and the Japanese shared a cultural appreciation for infants and children, and worked as a greater community to ease the impact that internment had on their childhoods. Women and children faced different obstacles than men because of their age and gender, including preserving childhood innocence and avoiding rape. The women and children internees of Baguio faced these obstacles together, in professional settings, like the Women’s Committee and the camp school, and personal settings, like through friendship and motherhood. Of those internees that reflected on internment in personal diaries and memoirs, a majority were women and children, making the topic of their social experiences a rich one.

Issues that women experienced in internment included lack of privacy and a hit to their vanity. Some women used vanity as a method of maintaining normalcy, and would continue to put effort into their hairstyles, makeup, and clothing, with what little belongings they had. While some women supported this practice, other women were judgmental, like Natalie Crouter, who described vanity routines as “absurd.”¹ Women did tend to overcome their pride, and used their ingenuity to fashion clothing for themselves and their children out of any scrap materials available—from curtains looted from the Pines Hotel to mattress covers found in an abandoned hospital.² Women received support not only from their fellow internees, but also from their Filipina friends and servants outside of camp. These women

¹ Natalie Crouter, “Notes jotted in January, 1942” in Forbidden Diary, 17.
² Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 97.
provided the internees with both food and their personal belongings that had been left behind, including much-needed clothing. One of the more prominent examples of Filipinas supporting internee women was when the First Lady of the Philippines, Aurora Quezon, donated her “elegant gowns made of exquisite satins, laces, and velvets” to the women in Camp Holmes.  

This was a symbolic gesture of friendship and support among women.

A more serious issue internee women faced was the fear of being raped by the Japanese. Fortunately, this fear never came to fruition, but the women did avoid a few threatening situations. Toward the beginning of internment, Major Mukaibo approached Ethel Herold demanding she turn over some of the teenage girls to work as “waitresses” for the Japanese officers in the Pines Hotel. She immediately informed her husband and the men of the General Committee of the prostitution situation, who guaranteed that “if they come, we will fight.” She then gathered the vulnerable teenage girls—especially the Brent Boarders who were interned without their parents—and told them to always appear busy taking care of a baby or child, and to “make yourselves look ugly like married women.” Their communal efforts were successful, and Mukaibo never approached the subject again. Fern Harrington recalled another night during which two drunk Japanese guards tried to force themselves into the women’s barracks. It was Commandant Nakamura who barred them from entry and prevented certain rape. The women were fortunate to have protection among themselves and the greater camp community.

Given that they lived separately from and experienced different issues than the men, the women organized their own Women’s Committee to address issues they found important. They felt their committee to be necessary because the General Committee was composed

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3 Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 117.
4 The Ethel Thomas Herold Papers (M1991), Box 1 Folder 1, 37.
5 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 41.
entirely of men and they felt underrepresented in camp. The concept of women’s suffrage became an intense community debate, as the women did not experience voting rights initially, but eventually demanded and later received them. Another form of communal organization was the creation of a camp school for the children to continue their educations while interned. When permitted by the commandants, educating the children became a community priority, and even led to the successful graduation of a few high school classes. The Baguio internee community was ideal for creating a camp school given that the Brent teachers were interned with their students, in addition to the multitude of subjects that various other internees offered to teach. The children benefitted not only from their schooling, but also from learning about the importance of community and cooperation in their daily camp lives.

In addition to these formal organizations, women and children also developed important friendships with one another that got them through their everyday lives. Curtis Tong recalled the formation of friendships between unlikely people, noting that friendships “helped to break down some of the stereotypes people held of each other. Respect followed. Communication became more open.”⁶ Traditional family life was obviously strained by internment conditions, but the women made the best of it. Several women successfully endured pregnancy and childbirth while interned—a challenging process in its own right, but particularly commendable given their strained conditions. The birth of camp babies boosted camp morale, and demonstrated the deep companionship among women, as they helped exhausted new mothers care for their babies. Interestingly, the restoration of traditional family living via the Family Unit Plan was hotly contested and fiercely opposed by many internees, despite Commandant Tomibe’s approval of the plan. Fortunately, the plan did pass and internee parents could finally instill a sense of familial normalcy in their children’s lives.

⁶ Curtis Tong, Child of War, 66.
The Women’s Committee

The purpose of forming a Women’s Committee in addition to the already existing General Committee was to provide women with a representative body that understood the issues they faced that the men simply did not. Women believed the men of the General Committee could not relate to their experience of living in overcrowded barracks with the added responsibility of caring for children and babies. The Women’s Committee developed over time to become more representative of the different women in camp, and it had the benefit of providing women with the opportunity to gain political experience and self-sufficiency apart from the men. The leaders of the Women’s Committee included Ethel Herold and Dr. Beulah Ream Allen. Carl Eschbach had specifically asked Herold to be a leader, convincing her by saying, “if you are a patriot and want to do something for your country, you will accept this role.” She led the committee, in spite of frequent criticism. Dr. Allen was also a natural leader given her role in already caring for the camp’s women and children medically. She sought what was best for the women’s physical and social health.

The purpose of the Women’s Committee was to benefit the community, and their main tasks included mediating arguments between women, making suggestions to the General Committee, and collecting extra materials, including clothing, to distribute to those in need. Ethel Herold was in charge of collecting and distributing excess materials, and had a successful initiative to make single-person mosquito nets out of larger ones. Dr. Allen was a frequent donor to the collective clothing drive, because she regularly received gifts and clothes from her wealthy Spanish friends in Manila. Collective distribution of clothing benefitted the community as women’s clothing became threadbare and children outgrew what

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7 Curtis Tong, *Child of War*, 129.
8 Natalie Crouter, “August 18, 1942” in *Forbidden Diary*, 84.
9 Betsy Herold Heimke, *Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon*, 51.
10 The Ethel Thomas Herold Papers (M1991), Box 1 Folder 1, 49.
little clothing they had. Dr. Allen repeatedly made suggestions to the General Committee for the betterment of the community. She proposed quarantining newcomer internees to mitigate spreading disease, and she wanted the hospital staff to move out of the hospital to create more room for treating patients.\footnote{Fern Harrington Miles, *Captive Community*, 99. Dr. Allen was right to want to quarantine newcomers, given that Bill Moule brought polio into the camp without initial detection.} Unfortunately, Dr. Allen’s suggestions challenged the opinion of Dr. Dana Nance, who was in charge of several committees, including the General Committee and the Hospital Committee, and for this reason, the men of the General Committee did not enact her suggestions. Ironically, the General Committee eventually implemented these suggestions after Dr. Allen had already been transferred to Los Baños internment camp in Manila in 1943. She never saw her suggestions in action, nor received credit for them.\footnote{Ibid.}

The Women’s Committee faced criticism not only from the General Committee, but also from internee women themselves. Natalie Crouter frequently criticized the committee in her daily diary entries, and claimed that women nicknamed Ethel Herold “the Dragon.”\footnote{Natalie Crouter, “February 13, 1942” in *Forbidden Diary*, 20.} Crouter believed that men and women faced similar problems, the difference being that the men actually solved their problems by doing something about them, instead of merely saying they would do something about them. She was particularly not fond of Ethel Herold, at one point writing, “it infuriates me that so many are grateful to Enid [Ethel] personally because she has given them things in here,” claiming that Herold was “making people cringe with her ungraciousness, under that fierce personal touch which makes those in need of charity bow humbly in thanks.”\footnote{Ibid, “January 6, 1943,” 122. Crouter frequently referred to Ethel and Elmer Herold using code names Enid and Arthur in her diary, likely because she was criticizing them.} Herold was completely aware of the frequent criticism, and her daughter Betsy recalled days when her mom would come to their family cubicle, throw herself on her bed and cry. Ethel Herold even wrote a poem about the criticism and posted it on the camp
bulletin board for all to read: “There once was a woman dictator/Who tried to be just and just
cater/But from morning ‘till night/She did argue and fight/And Oh How people did hate
her!”¹⁵ Though the Women’s Committee certainly benefitted the community, it had its
drawbacks, especially for those in charge.

The most serious issue that the Women’s Committee addressed was the topic of
women’s suffrage in camp. Though the women could make suggestions to the all-men
General Committee, they had no right to vote on camp issues or camp representatives. The
men claimed they denied women suffrage so they would not upset the Japanese culturally, as
Japanese women did not have suffrage. Dr. Allen led the women’s suffrage campaign, largely
due to her frustrations with Dr. Nance’s continuous leadership because the men of the
General Committee kept electing him.¹⁶ Dr. Nance constantly overrode all of her suggestions
to improve camp life, and the women felt that they had no voice in camp matters. The
campaign for women’s suffrage began in March 1943, and was met with fierce criticism,
especially from men, one saying “women always make trouble.”¹⁷ Natalie Crouter said the
men reminded her of her father’s conservative friends who had lobbied against women’s
suffrage in the United States years earlier. A month later, the General Committee conceded to
having both men and women vote on the matter; with a total of one hundred eighty-one in
favor of women’s suffrage, and one hundred sixty-eight against.¹⁸

Despite a clear democratic victory, the General Committee continued to reject
women’s suffrage, citing that because some women voted against suffrage, it was just a
women’s issue, not a camp issue. This caused such low morale among the women, that many
wanted to disband the Women’s Committee entirely. In response, some women, including

¹⁵ Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 52.
¹⁶ Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 99.
¹⁷ Natalie Crouter, “April 1943” in Forbidden Diary, 153.
¹⁸ Ibid.
Nellie McKim, were in favor of a mixed men and women’s General Committee, and continued to support the Women’s Committee in the meantime.\textsuperscript{19} Thankfully, on April 24, 1943 the General Committee finally granted suffrage to internee women. Interestingly, less than a year later, newcomer Commandant Tomibe told the General Committee and Women’s Committee to merge themselves into one representative body.\textsuperscript{20} It had taken the internees over a month of fighting and insulting one another to achieve what Tomibe did in a single order. Women’s suffrage demonstrated how internee women faced different obstacles than internee men did, and managed to overcome those hardships together.

\textbf{Camp School}

The development of a camp school was an enterprise that impacted every single internee, whether he or she was a teacher, student, parent of a student, or even an audience member to the school’s various theatrical productions. School was undoubtedly a communal endeavor, and its development made perfect sense: a majority of the adult internee population was college-educated, and therefore valued the continued education of internee children. Brent School was one of the best schools in the Pacific for American civilians, so it was only natural for the students and teachers of Brent to maintain lessons during internment.\textsuperscript{21} Ethel Herold, Elmer Herold, and Carl Eschbach demanded to Commandant Nakamura that the internees be allowed to establish a school, because it was “a waste of time” for the children to be running around with nothing else to do.\textsuperscript{22} Nakamura finally consented, and school at Camp John Hay began on January 26, 1942. Following their transfer to Camp Holmes, the internees established a more permanent school system that eventually expanded to several buildings. Natalie Crouter wrote in her diary that the school’s principal believed the camp school was a

\textsuperscript{19} Natalie Crouter, “April 19, 1943” in \textit{Forbidden Diary}, 157.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, “February 18, 1944,” 290.
\textsuperscript{21} The Robert McKay Collection.
\textsuperscript{22} Betsy Herold Heimke, \textit{Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon}, 65.
great educational experience, and that “one could write a thesis on the Camp Holmes school year,” with teachers overcoming every possible distraction and hardship to teach internee children.\textsuperscript{23}

Around forty-three teachers taught the thirty grade school, and twenty high school students of Camp Holmes.\textsuperscript{24} In addition to the Brent School teachers, several other internees who were skilled in one subject or another came forward to teach. Jim Halsema not only served on the Garbage Crew and produced the daily \textit{Camp Holmes News}, but also taught the forbidden subjects of geography and history—in addition to Spanish. Halsema referred to geography as “physiography” in order to fool the Japanese guards who occasionally monitored classes.\textsuperscript{25} Jim Thompson, a mining engineer, taught high school chemistry, and his students were known to later excel in chemistry when they attended college.\textsuperscript{26} Curtis Tong’s mother, Peg, taught art classes with Helen Angeny. Natalie Crouter attended Peg Tong’s art class and noted how her friend seemed softer and glowing while teaching art, compared to the efficient, determined, and cold method by which she did her camp chores.\textsuperscript{27} Curtis Tong noted that the teachers were just as excited to be back in school as the children were. Despite the small and informal classroom environment, Tong remembered that “the gifts of learning shared with us by our treasure trove of imaginative and motivated teachers were enormous.”\textsuperscript{28} The community cherished teachers just as much as they cherished the children.

Children continued to learn traditional subjects in school, including English, grammar, spelling, mathematics, art, music, foreign languages, geography, and history—

\textsuperscript{23} Natalie Crouter, “October 31, 1942” in Forbidden Diary, 103.
\textsuperscript{24} Betsy Herold Heimke, \textit{Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon}, 86.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, 90.
\textsuperscript{26} James V. Thompson, “Western Mining in the Twentieth Century Oral History Series,” interview by Eleanor Swent, \textit{The Regents of the University of California} (Berkley, CA), 1992, 106.
\textsuperscript{27} Natalie Crouter, “March 21, 1943” in Forbidden Diary, 146.
\textsuperscript{28} Curtis Tong, \textit{Child of War}, 96.
among other topics. The Japanese specifically forbade American history and geography, because they did not want the internees to connect the topics to the ongoing war efforts. However, Jim Halsema did just that during his geography lessons. Rather than approach the topic traditionally, Halsema based his lessons on the geography of the ongoing war effort and explained how that could lead to their liberation. He collected the information for his lessons from the secret camp radio reports and occasional copies of English-language newspapers from Japan. This was one of many methods through which students learned about subjects directly applicable to their lives.

The students of Camp Holmes were just as excited about school as their parents and teachers were. Curtis Tong learned from some of the teenagers who had lived in the United States that many American children “often despised going to school,” a concept that baffled Tong, because he greatly enjoyed attending school, especially while interned. School provided a break from camp monotony, and was central to many students’ lives. Dot Douglas often wrote about school in her diary, recording on October 26, 1943 that she had received her report card and was averaging an eighty-six percent in her subjects, her best being spelling. Children excelled in the camp’s school despite their circumstances, and they remained up-to-date, if not ahead of their education trajectories. Betsy Herold successfully completed fifth, sixth, seventh, and eight grade in the three-year span of internment. Robert McKay, who had been a senior at Brent School going into internment, successfully graduated and earned his high school diploma, as did many other internee students. He received a handwritten diploma from Carl Eschbach, the former headmaster Brent School, and used it to successfully apply to the University of California after liberation. The community not only

29 Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in Forgotten Heroes.
30 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 63.
31 The Dorothy “Dot” Douglas Whittle Collection, “Diary of Dorothy Douglas.”
32 The Robert McKay Collection.
supported children’s education during internment, but their efforts also helped the internee children excel post liberation.

Children were not the only internees that benefitted from the camp school system—adults also enjoyed advanced courses in mathematics, accounting, music, anatomy, and foreign languages among other subjects. In July of 1942, Nellie McKim began offering a Japanese language and culture class for the adult internees of Camp Holmes.33 Her class became quite popular among the adults, including Natalie Crouter. Her valuable lessons helped internees better understand the nuances of their captors’ culture, and how they may interact with the Japanese guards more successfully. The Baguio internees made the most of their situation, and in certain ways, their newfound temporary freedoms—freedom from running a household, freedom from traditional work, and freedom from worrying about bills. They could not fight these losses in their lives, and instead embraced them as an opportunity to better themselves through education. This betterment continued until school was permanently cancelled in December of 1944, when they transferred to Bilibid Prison.

Camp Relationships

Any kind of relationship typical of the world outside was of course present within internment, including childhood friends, adolescent romances, friends as close as family, and even new marriages. The conditions of internment naturally strengthened typical relationships. Internees slept, ate, studied, worked, socialized, experienced births and deaths, celebrated holidays, and shared a bathroom with one another for three years—strong relationships were bound to form. Friendships and romances were a much-needed source of normalcy, support, and comfort among internees. Married couples forced to live apart from one another learned to turn toward their friends to get through daily internment. Friendships were a blessing during internment and after, as the Baguio internees remained friends for life.

Friendships between children were no different in camp than they were outside of it. Betsy Herold and Dot Douglas were friends before internment and became best friends during, especially because of their close proximity living in the same barracks. They attended one another’s birthday parties, which Dot documented in her diary, and they did craft projects typical of any childhood friendship. A notable example is when they created a tin-can telephone that really worked. The telephone string ran from the Herold family cubicle to Dot’s space, and they were pleasantly surprised that they could “hear one each other without shouting.”

34 Fabian Ream created a heart-shaped Ouija board out of balsa wood in his workshop; his daughter Katie used it to play with her siblings, Sally and John, and friends, including Betsy. 35 Curtis Tong and his friends Geoff Gowen, John “Reamo” Ream, and Bedie Crouter were “inseparable scalawags” always running around and playing sports with one another. 36 Children managed to experience typical childhood friendships within the atypical internment environment, and they benefitted because of it.

Internment did not impede upon typical adolescent romances. In July of 1942, Natalie Crouter wrote, “the various romances are flourishing the only way they can in concentration—stilted, public, leading to no actual courtship but tender devotion in conversation and looks.” 37 Robert McKay dated Irene Barrett throughout internment and remained friends with her afterwards. 38 Billy Herold dated Betsy’s classmate, Sue Graham, and Betsy dated the dentist’s son, Carol Walker. Carol made Betsy a ring that she “foolishly” returned to him; he was so upset, he smashed it with a hammer. 39 Young romance was no less

34 Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 85.
35 Ibid, 139.
36 Ibid, 140.
37 Natalie Crouter, “July 30, 1942” in Forbidden Diary, 76.
38 The Robert McKay Collection.
39 Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 98.
awkward or confusing in camp than it was out of camp; teenage internees were still
guaranteed certain embarrassing aspects of adolescence, despite internment. A more volatile
example of adolescent embarrassment was when teenagers Buck Parfet and Gerry Robinson
pretended to be a married couple during the couples commingling hour. When the hour was
over, Buck kissed Gerry and was promptly struck by a Japanese guard, resulting in a bloody
nose and ruptured eardrum.\footnote{Betsy Herold Heimke, \textit{Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon}, 48.} This incident demonstrated the more extreme divergence from
normal teenage romance that internment camp life had. Buck and Gerry remained friends
throughout internment.

Friendships between adults were paramount for psychological perseverance during
internment, particularly among women who were interned without their husbands. Natalie
Crouter was a rock for Peg Tong, who spent a majority of internment separated from her
husband, Walter, who remained interned in Davao. For the first year of internment, she did
not even know whether Walter was alive or not; Natalie Crouter wrote in her diary, “Peg says
that every day there comes a low moment when she stands on the edge looking deep down
and wondering how she can go on.”\footnote{Natalie Crouter, “February 17, 1943” in \textit{Forbidden Diary}, 135.} Natalie Crouter was a source of extreme comfort and
support for Peg Tong and her children, who also benefitted from the friendship. Curtis Tong
enjoyed when his family hung out with the Crouters in the evenings before bed, because it
was a “time for wholesome songs and positive conversations with family.”\footnote{Curtis Tong, \textit{Child of War}, 62.} Their support
system expanded with the late arrival of the Moule family, with Marge Moule developing a
close bond with Natalie and Peg. Upon arrival, Marge Moule was suffering from jaundice
and malaria, and had lost all of her hair from the stress of it; Bill Moule recalled that his wife
had a real morale boost when “one of the little Crouter kids told her she was the most

\begin{footnotes}
\item[40] Betsy Herold Heimke, \textit{Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon}, 48.
\item[41] Natalie Crouter, “February 17, 1943” in \textit{Forbidden Diary}, 135.
\item[42] Curtis Tong, \textit{Child of War}, 62.
\end{footnotes}
beautiful woman in camp.” Bill Moule benefitted from friendship himself; his friend Herb Swick helped Moule recover from polio by creating an improvised hot tub for physical therapy. With Swick’s help, Moule eventually walked without the aid of his cane.

Friendships seriously impacted internee morale, as friends helped one another survive physically and mentally.

Perhaps the greatest example of internment bringing people together was the extravagant wedding of Wilma Park and Carroll Dickey. Park was a missionary nurse, and Dickey was a mining engineer; the unlikely duo came to know one another in camp, and he proposed to her in December of 1942 with a ring he fashioned out of a five centavo coin. Internees were surprised when Commandant Tomibe approved of a wedding ceremony, but he himself was married and “in love” with his wife back in Japan—he was just as excited for the wedding as any internee. Wilma Park and Carroll Dickey married one another on March 23, 1944 in a ceremony officiated by Carl Eschbach, and attended by the entire camp, including Commandant Tomibe. Park wore Betty Halsema Foley’s satin wedding gown, which had been sent into camp by her servants, and carried a “vivid bouquet of pink dahlias and calla lilies” provided by Tomibe. The couple had a traditional wedding reception, and when they were questioned on their decision to get married while still interned, Park replied, “I have always dreamed of a large wedding and where else will I ever round up five hundred people?” Commandant Tomibe even let the couple drive around camp in his car, with tin cans trailing and “just married” written on the back, recalling that “their happiness [was] felt

43 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 320.
44 Ibid.
45 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 125.
47 Ibid.
48 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 174.
Everybody was entranced by the Park-Dickey wedding, which demonstrated that despite being enemies, the internees and the Japanese were not too different. Though they were not all related by blood or marriage, every Baguio internee—and even some of the Japanese—became related through their shared internment experience.

**Childbirth and Motherhood**

Experiences unique to women during internment included pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood. Approximately twenty Baguio internee babies were born during internment, most of whom were conceived prior to captivity. Ironically, many of the young CLS missionary couples felt so safe after being evacuated from China to the Philippines that they decided to start their families—they had no way of predicting the conditions they would be living in come time for childbirth. As a result, a majority of the Baguio babies were born during the beginning of internment at Camp John Hay, with some births later in 1942 at Camp Holmes. An exception was the birth of Linda Moule, who was born January 15, 1942 in the mountains of Baguio while her family evaded capture by the Japanese; the Moules eventually became interned at Camp Holmes. In the meantime, the interned mothers and infants lived together in the Baby House, which provided them greater privacy for breastfeeding, and allowed the other women and children in the barracks to sleep undisturbed by babies crying. Dr. Beulah Ream Allen, who was pregnant herself, helped women get through their pregnancies and assisted during childbirth. These women lived together and raised their camp babies together, each new birth having a positive affect on internee morale.

The internees were not the only people in camp that were fond of babies—the Japanese shared a cultural appreciation for children, as well. Internees observed several instances of gentle interactions between the Japanese guards and internee babies. Helen

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50 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 126.
Angeny remembered one night when an internee’s toddler and infant would not stop crying; the Japanese guard in the barracks encouraged her to quiet her children so the other women could sleep. When the woman struggled to quiet her children, the guard picked up her baby and walked back and forth with her, rocking her gently until she calmed down. Although the baby’s mother was initially tense, she quickly relaxed when she realized what the guard was doing. Helen Angeny surmised that the guard likely had children of his own back home, and that his moment with the baby brought him peace. Babies had the effect of humanizing the Japanese guards, breaking barriers between the captured and their captors. When internee Sara Bartges gave birth prematurely to her son, who tragically died, the internees were not the only members of the community who were devastated for her loss. It was culturally devastating for Japanese families to lose their first-born son, and they responded similarly to the death of the Bartges baby; Major Mukaibo sent Sara Barges a wreath, and Commandant Nakamura picked flowers to make a floral spray for the baby’s burial. Affection for babies was a quality shared by every member of the camp community, Japanese included.

The birth of Carol Angeny was one of the earliest births during internment; Carol took so long to be born, that the Japanese began making women give birth in camp. Helen Angeny had gone into labor and was allowed to go to Notre Dame Hospital with Dr. Dana Nance to give birth; on the stairs of the hospital, Dr. Nance told Angeny, “Honey, I want you to take a good long time at this as I want to get three square meals from this trip.” Although it was beyond Angeny’s control, she suffered through twenty-seven more hours of labor before giving birth to healthy eight-pound eight-ounce Carol Louise on January 19, 1942. Dr. Nance had gotten his wish, but the Japanese were upset, and the consequence of his extended

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51 The Helen Frances Buehl-Angeny Collection, 44.
52 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 58.
53 The Helen Frances Buehl-Angeny Collection, 29.
absence was that the women who went into labor later were forced to stay in camp to give birth. Although it was not Helen Angeny’s fault, the situation highlighted how the actions of one internee had consequences that impacted other internees.

The first baby to be born in Camp John Hay was Richard Hawkins Scott on January 30, 1942. Japanese guards told his mother Isabel that she had to wait through her labor until morning to go to the hospital to give birth, but baby Richard came in the middle of the night. Isabel Scott affectionately nicknamed him “John Hay,” and the healthy birth of the John Hay baby boosted internee morale. Two weeks later, Jessie Junkin gave birth to William Francis Junkin, III, and Gladys Collyer gave birth to Peter David Collyer—both on February 15, 1942 in the Camp John Hay hospital. Fern Harrington, a missionary, likened the environment of their births to that of Jesus Christ; while Jesus was laid in a manger surrounded by the smell of livestock, the internee babies were laid in a laundry sink, surrounded by the stench of dysentery patients. Another notable birth was that of Henderson Wilcox Allen on July 7, 1942; his mother Dr. Allen had helped various other women through childbirth, and she received help from Dr. Nance in the form of a cesarean-section. Baby Henderson was named after his father, Major Henderson Wilcox Allen, whom he never met, because Major Allen died in Cabanatuan Prison Camp before the end of the war.

A struggle that several new mothers faced was feeding their babies. Although Dr. Allen and the Japanese guards encouraged the women to breastfeed due to food shortages, breastfeeding was not always feasible. Natalie Crouter noted that the Japanese believed many of the women to be “no good at all because they can not or will not nurse their children.” Gladys Collyer’s health suffered immensely after the birth of Peter, who nursed constantly.

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54 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 55.
55 Ibid, 52.
56 Natalie Crouter, “March 30, 1942” in Forbidden Diary, 33.
As a result, Collyer never rested, and she dropped from one hundred forty-six pounds to a mere seventy-eight, nearly dying in the process. Close friends Fern Harrington and Cleo Morrison, who were single and childless, successfully convinced Dr. Nance to put baby Peter on formula. The two women rotated shifts in the Baby House feeding Peter while Gladys Collyer made a full recovery staying in the women’s barracks.57 Caring for camp babies and ensuring their survival was a communal effort. The internees successfully lobbied Commandant Hayakawa to buy milk goats for the babies, and the Maryknoll Sisters provided the money to do so.58 Women and girls frequently stepped in to help exhausted new mothers care for their babies. Natalie Crouter wrote that “the children are getting a liberal education on babies” from being around and caring for them so frequently.59

Babies were not the only internees that benefitted from collective camp parenting—children benefitted as well. The separation of men from women and children impacted parenting in the traditional sense. One day, Natalie Crouter observed an amusing exchange between one man leaving another, telling him, “I must go now and take care of my wife’s baby,” before quickly and seriously adding, “of course it’s mine too.”60 While some children interacted with their fathers throughout internment, other children did not have their father in camp at all. Curtis Tong’s father did not arrive in Camp Holmes until March of 1944; in the meantime, Carl Eschbach—whom Curtis affectionately called Uncle B—took Curtis under his wing. Although Peg Tong was afraid of Curtis “growing up too fast” in the men’s barracks, Eschbach helped Curtis avoid “disjointed types” of men.61 In the Baby House, Billy Gray was also without a father. What Billy lacked in a father-figure was more than made up

57 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 82.
58 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 130.
59 Natalie Crouter, “April 20, 1942” in Forbidden Diary, 39.
60 Ibid, “December 31, 1942,” 120.
61 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 53.
for in the countless mother-figures who cared for him whenever his mother Marian was ill, including Fern Harrington and Cleo Morrison. When Margaret Morris died, her young children Denny and Garrett became orphaned. At her funeral, Commandant Tomibe expressed sorrow and remorse, and he reminded the internees that the children would need caring for. Don and Ruth Zimmerman unofficially adopted the children for the rest of internment. Among the Baguio internees, it really did take a village to raise the children.

The Family Unit Plan

Traditional family life suffered throughout a majority of internment because of the forced separation of men from women and children. Curtis Tong claimed that “the callous disregard for natural family relationships was one of the more haunting memories of prison life.” Commandant Tomibe recognized that “family separation poisoned the atmosphere” in camp, and therefore approved of reuniting families via the Family Unit Plan—but he required that the internees decide among themselves if they approved of it and how to implement it.

Implementation of the Family Unit Plan certainly seemed logical. It was apparent that family separation impacted the behavior of camp children, who often felt that as long as they obeyed camp rules they did not have to obey their parents. Children felt like they belonged to the camp as a whole and not necessarily to their own family, having lost “all sense of family identity.” Although supported by many married couples and parents, a considerable number of internees actually vehemently opposed implementing the Family Unit Plan. The plan was eventually implemented, but not before internees underwent fierce debates with each other. The Family Unit Plan was an interesting example of an incidence in which the internees did not come together as a community to improve camp life.

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62 The Ethel Thomas Herold Papers (M1991), Box 1 Folder 1, 52.
63 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 56.
64 Ibid, 178.
65 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 126.
Debate about the Family Unit Plan began shortly after it was first mentioned in the General Committee on March 5, 1944. The topic arose in conjunction with Commandant Tomibe announcing that he would allow Carroll Dickey and Wilma Park to live together after their wedding later that month. Many internees immediately opposed the plan’s implementation, including single internees who did not wish for their own cubicle space to be disturbed, and even married couples who preferred not having to live with their spouse. The opposition primarily argued that reuniting spouses would result in inopportune pregnancies. They went so far as to argue that those in favor of the Family Unit Plan were sex-crazed and unpatriotic because so many young American men were serving their country and unable to have sex themselves. Ethel Herold boldly opposed the plan, citing inopportune pregnancies as justification. Her hypocrisy was not lost on her fellow internees, as she had always lived with her husband throughout internment and had not become pregnant herself. Natalie Crouter wrote that her husband Jerry was tired of the Herolds’ judgment, noting their “cosy place,” and that “no remarks at all should come from that quarter.” A month later, Crouter recorded: “Arthur and Enid signed the petition against family unit, the heels.” Tensions between internees escalated, as each group scorned the other for their beliefs over the plan.

Those in favor of the Family Unit Plan missed living together as a family. Missionaries and miners alike desired to live with their children and spouses again, and considered that merely sleeping next to their partner at night would be a luxury. Couples had little privacy to even chat with one another in camp, let alone be physical, making traditional marriage life socially awkward. Bill Moule recalled that couples had to sneak around to see each other and could face consequences if caught by a Japanese guard or fellow internee. He

66 Natalie Crouter, “March 5, 1944” in Forbidden Diary, 296.
67 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 137.
68 Natalie Crouter, “March 10, 1944” in Forbidden Diary, 300.
noted, “I don’t know why it should be embarrassing to be caught with your own wife, but it was.” Father Sheridan, a Catholic Priest, was one of the main proponents for the Family Unit Plan. He even developed a plan for how to reorganize the women’s barracks to accommodate family cubicles, and he proposed that fathers could move into the Baby House. A month later, in early April 1944, Bill Moule was among three men tortured by the Kenpeitai in relation to two men escaping Camp Holmes. Upon Moule’s return to camp, the internees witnessed his emotional reunion with his wife and three children, which Father Sheridan cited as a prime example of why families should be together. In the meantime, families had even begun to create their own private cubicles in dugouts beneath the raised women’s barracks, and would use them during the day, and sleep separately at night.

Fortunately, internees voted to implement the Family Unit Plan. The hospital staff had petitioned the plan in protest of potential pregnancies, however, multiple staff members diverged from their peers and voted in favor of the plan. Fern Harrington, Cleo Morrison, the newlyweds, and a missionary doctor refused to sign the petition against the plan because they believed it was beneficial to families, and especially to children. Natalie and Jerry Crouter were the oldest couple to sign up for a family cubicle, and after exactly two years and four months of living separately, the Crouter family finally lived together. The Moules also reunited and were grateful for their new eighty-eight square foot family cubicle. It was ironic that the Family Unit Plan—which had done more to boost internee morale than any other camp policy—was also responsible for driving so many internees apart. It was also

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70 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 344.
71 Natalie Crouter, “March 17, 1944” in Forbidden Diary, 305.
73 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 137.
74 Natalie Crouter, “April 28, 1944” in Forbidden Diary, 334
75 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 345.
ironic that it was Commandant Tomibe, and not the internees, who initiated this plan, when it was the Japanese who had separated the families in the first place. Only four pregnancies resulted from the Family Unit Plan, almost all of which ended in childbirth just prior to or after liberation from internment. When Marjory Patton gave birth to her son amidst liberation at Bilibid Prison, her fellow internees joked that she should name him Rokuro, because Commandant Tomibe’s approval of the Family Unit Plan directly resulted in the baby’s conception. She named him Richard, which many internees considered to be the anglicized version of Rokuro.\(^{76}\)

**Conclusion**

Women and children faced different obstacles than men during internment, but they received support from the entire community and one another to persevere. Children maintained as normal of a childhood as possible, including going to school and playing with their friends—though there were exceptions. The high school boys had the morbid extracurricular of digging graves for the internees who died in Camp Holmes.\(^{77}\) The eldest Tong child, Eloise, experienced the pressure of supporting her mother through the absence of her father, which Curtis claimed was “at the expense of her time to be a young girl and do things with other girls her age.”\(^{78}\) In spite of these exceptions, children were resilient—the adults of the internment community, some Japanese included, ensured of this. Likewise, women and new mothers persevered because of the support they received from one another. Friendships carried internees through hardship and created communal support in both good times and bad. Internees may not have always agreed with one another, particularly regarding the Family Unit Plan, but in the end, they did what was best for the children.

\(^{76}\) Curtis Tong, *Child of War*, 232.

\(^{77}\) The Ethel Thomas Herold Papers (M1991), Box 1 Folder 1, 69.

\(^{78}\) Curtis Tong, *Child of War*, 118.
Part III: Role of the Japanese

The Japanese military’s ultimate goal during World War II was to expand the Japanese Empire in the Pacific—racially, culturally, economically, and politically—through the development of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (GEACPS). The Japanese regarded World War II as a “Holy War, with the armed forces and the people as the instruments of the Divine will” to bring further glory to the Emperor.¹ The Philippines fell within that sphere of influence, and the Japanese military invaded and occupied it accordingly. Lieutenant General Masaharu Honma declared that the Japanese would give birth to the new Philippines, incorporate the country into the GEACPS, and make a “clean sweep of all exploitations, outrages, insults, and degenerations caused by the Americans in the last forty years.”² The Japanese viewed the Philippines as an “eternal subordinate economically and politically to the U.S.” and sought to eliminate all American influence and any Filipino who resisted, of whom there were many.³ Although the Japanese claimed they were making an “Asia for the Asiatics,” the Filipino people recognized that the Japanese were forcing their own culture upon the Philippines, not restoring native culture. That, coupled with the fact that the Philippines was going to gain independence from the U.S. in 1946 anyway, resulted in ongoing Filipino resistance to Japanese occupation.⁴

The popular historical perspective on the Japanese in the Pacific during World War II is one of extreme brutality; the source of which derived from Bushido Code. The Japanese indoctrinated students and soldiers alike into the beliefs laid forth in Bushido Code. Bushido


³ Ibid, 7.

emphasized warrior-like qualities including courage, ruthlessness, determination, and death before dishonor. It asserted that the Japanese possessed a “spiritual superiority” linked to “protective deities of the nation,” and that the Japanese alone had “high spiritual values” that could defeat the “materialistic” Americans. The goal of Bushido was to “further the glory and might of the Japanese Empire” and the ends justified any means.\(^5\) What resulted was a ruthless Japanese military whose soldiers fought to the death and indiscriminately slaughtered tens of millions of people. However, despite Japanese military authorities’ emphasis on and belief in Bushido Code, the ultimate fault was that Japanese soldiers were only human. Bushido was unnatural, inhuman, and flawed; human nature and the will to live often trumped indoctrination and code requirements.\(^6\) Internees observed the faults in Bushido Code through their human interactions with their Japanese commandants and guards.

In truth, Japanese authorities had to frequently switch out the guards in the Baguio internment camps because they feared the guards were becoming too soft on the internees. Jerry Crouter discouraged his son Bedie from hating the Japanese guards and blaming them for what was obviously outside of their control. He reminded Bedie that one guard, Yamamoto, had said being in camp with the internees was “the best time of his life,” which was a testament to how little so many of the guards had at home in Japan.\(^7\) When the internees were living at their worst, some of their guards were living at their best, which still was not much. The Japanese guards did not demonstrate Bushido spirit or steadfast loyalty to their Empire—some were openly critical of it. One guard mentioned to internees that the Japanese government was “not good,” while others were astonished by the Red Cross packages that the American government was willing to send to mere civilians—the quality of

\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) Natalie Crouter, “June 29, 1943” in Forbidden Diary, 189.
which they could not expect from their own government.⁸ Natalie Crouter wrote: “We undermine the common soldier. He likes us, and we feel friendly toward him...One even remarked that after war here, Japanese, Americans and Filipinos will get along together.”⁹

Like the internees, Japanese authorities forced the camp guards into an undesired situation.

Although the internees of Baguio successfully created a functioning, autonomous internment community, the extent to which they did so relied heavily on the extent to which their Japanese captors allowed them to do so. The autonomy and comforts the Japanese afforded the interned Americans fluctuated and were dependent upon the residing camp commandant, the conditions of the ongoing war, and the behavior of the internees. While the camp commandant had the power to positively or negatively impact internment living conditions, they had virtually no authority to protect their internees from the Kenpeitai, at the hands of whom several internees suffered. The internees certainly impacted their own survival and strived for normalcy within their own community, but it was the influence of the Japanese, especially Commandant Rokuro Tomibe, that helped them thrive. The internees survived internment in Camp John Hay and Camp Holmes making decisions within their own control, but it was the Japanese decision to move them to Bilibid Prison in Manila that ultimately saved their lives from the destruction of the Battle of Baguio. The internees were relatively independent, but their survival still heavily depended on the Japanese.

**Early CLS Missionary Torture and the Death of Rufus Gray**

In late January 1942, hardly one month into internment, the Japanese Kenpeitai began interrogating missionary men, particularly those involved in the Chinese Language School (CLS). In an episode of internment that supports the historical perspective on Japanese brutality during World War II, the Kenpeitai tortured some of the CLS missionary men, and

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⁹ Ibid.
ultimately killed internee Rufus Gray. The Kenpeitai targeted the CLS missionaries because they suspected the missionaries of being spies for the Chinese government, and used torture to try to force the men to confess. At that time, Helen Angeny had just given birth to baby Carol in Notre Dame Hospital. Her husband Ed was among the CLS men pulled for questioning. Ed quickly ran into the hospital to see his wife and meet his daughter when the camp truck stopped to pick up supplies on the way to Kenpeitai headquarters. Fortunately, the Kenpeitai only held him for one day, and released him after two hours of questioning. The Angenys’ friends were not as fortunate.

CLS missionaries Rolland Flory, Herb Lattigs, and Rufus Gray were among those that the Kenpeitai held and tortured. The Japanese specifically tortured the CLS missionaries who had been helping teach English to a local group of Chinese, whom the Kenpeitai suspected to have ties to mainland China. Rufus Gray had taken pictures with his Chinese friends, which the Japanese discovered when they searched his home. They considered these photographs proof that Gray was a spy for the Chinese government and tortured him via waterboarding in an attempt to force a confession. Similarly, the Kenpeitai water boarded Rolland Flory and Herb Lattigs, but while these men survived the torture, Rufus Gray died. In the meantime, their wives waited desperately for their return, and Jo Flory gave birth to hers and Rolland’s first child, Jimmy. At one point, the Japanese briefly released the missionaries from Camp John Hay, and it was during this period that Marian Gray found Rufus’s photographs missing in their home. She approached the Kenpeitai headquarters demanding to know where her husband was, and Major Mukaibo falsely claimed to know nothing about the fate of her

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10 The Helen Frances Buehl-Angeny Collection, 30.
11 Ibid, 33.
13 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 49.
husband, who at that point had already died.\textsuperscript{14} Shortly, the missionaries had to return to Camp John Hay, and Marian Gray waited with Billy, praying for her husband’s return.

It was not until April 14, 1942—nearly three months after the Kenpeitai took them in for questioning—that Rolland Flory and Herb Lattigs returned to Camp John Hay.\textsuperscript{15} They had survived but were understandably traumatized. It was at this point that Rolland Flory briefly reunited with his wife and newborn child, before joining in a volleyball game to begin his process of returning to normal life. Marian Gray continued to wait for her husband, and it was not until late summer of 1942 that the new commandant, Hayakawa, finally informed Marian of Rufus’s death. The Kenpeitai listed his official date of death as March 13, 1942, however, Rufus Gray likely died shortly after the Kenpeitai took him in for interrogation in late January. The Kenpeitai did not list that his death was a direct result of torture, but the doctors at Notre Dame Hospital confirmed that his body indicated that he had, indeed, died from torture.\textsuperscript{16} It was because of the Japanese Kenpeitai that Marian Gray no longer had a husband, and Billy Gray lost his father before he could ever remember him.

During Rufus Gray’s memorial service on August 2, 1942, Marian Gray asked to read Bible passages concerning life after death. The Japanese had returned Rufus’s Bible to her, and she found that he had dated and underlined several passages related to this subject. Rufus Gray underlined Matthew 10:28, “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell”—dated January 25, 1942, the day of his interrogation and probable death.\textsuperscript{17} He had found solace in his faith until the day the Kenpeitai killed him, and Marian Gray continued to do the same throughout internment. In wake of her husband’s brutal death, Marian found support for

\textsuperscript{14} Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 49.
\textsuperscript{15} The Helen Frances Buehl-Angeny Collection, 34.
\textsuperscript{16} Curtis Tong, Child of War, 114.
\textsuperscript{17} Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 82.
herself and Billy through faith, her closest friends, Fern Harrington and Cleo Morrison, and the greater internment community. After liberation in Manila, the War Department’s Bureau of Public Relations filmed Marian Gray, with Billy sitting on her lap, as she described the circumstances of her husband’s death and why her son no longer had a father. She was grateful for their liberation, and she said in a hopeful manner: “Billy knows that his dad is in heaven.”

Although the Baguio internees experienced frequent instances of kindness and humanity from some of their Japanese commandants and guards, they were not immune to the Kenpeitai’s brutality, which the commandants and guards had no authority to prevent.

**Camp Commandants**

For three years, the Baguio internees experienced life under several different camp commandants, each significantly influencing the internees’ ability to survive and strive for normalcy. While some commandants negatively impacted internment life, others managed to improve life for their internees as often as they could. Relationships between internees and their commandants varied—some were extremely negative, while one was profoundly positive. Before they encountered any of their commandants, however, the internees first faced Major Musa Mukaibo, the Japanese officer who registered them at Brent School. Mukaibo had earned a Doctor of Divinity from Harvard University, conducting espionage for the Japanese while stateside. Once gathered at Brent, Mukaibo threatened the internees that they would be shot for indiscretions and proceeded to separate the men, women, and children from one another. Ultimately, Mukaibo had the lasting impact of instilling extreme fear in the internees, especially the children. Many internees carried that fear with them from their first day of internment until their last, which negatively affected their psychological health.

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19 Betsy Herold Heimke, *Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon*, 37.
Additionally, Major Mukaibo abused his power by blatantly stealing from the internees what little funds they had with them in camp. Mukaibo, along with Major Akari Nagatomi, the Camp Finance Officer, ordered the internee men to place all of their money and valuables in their possession, falsely claiming they would use the pool of resources to buy camp food supplies. Many internee women seized the opportunity to hide their valuables before Mukaibo could take theirs, too; internee Leora Nagel saved her wedding ring from the pillage by swallowing it and recovering it a few days later. The direct impact of Mukaibo’s and Nagatomi’s plunder was that most internees struggled to afford to feed themselves with supplementary food sources. Additionally, the theft significantly reduced internee morale, and the internees developed a deep hatred for Mukaibo. When one internee noted the irony that Mukaibo was a Christian, Carl Eschbach quipped, “If he’s Christian, I’m Jesus.” Later, Nellie McKim learned from Commandant Hayakawa that Mukaibo’s superior officers had actually charged him with theft and inhumane treatment of civilians, dishonorably discharged him, and sent him back to Japan. By order of a court-martial, Major Nagatomi was demoted to the rank of Private and spent a year imprisoned at Fort Santiago. The Japanese military held the men accountable for their transgressions against the internees.

From January until mid-summer 1942, Commandant Nakamura oversaw Camp John Hay and Camp Holmes. He earned the title “Mr. Faucet” for his pattern of giving to the internees then taking away from them. He opened and closed the camp school, changed his mind on matters regarding the camp hospital, and extended and shortened commingling

20 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 55. The significance of saving her wedding ring was not realized until after the war. Unfortunately, Leora Nagel’s husband, a POW, transferred from Bilibid Prison to Japan just two weeks prior to the Baguio internee transfer to Bilibid; he died when US forces sunk his POW transport vessel.

21 Ibid.

22 United States of America vs. Masaharu Homma, XXVI 3003-3087 (Military Commission convened by the Commanding General, United States Army Forces, Western Pacific February 5, 1946), 3006.

23 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 77.
opportunities. Nakamura had been a former employee of Elmer Herold. A real “rough-and-ready” type of person, his proximity to American miners influenced his frequent use of profane language when speaking English.\textsuperscript{24} As a Japanese civilian, Nakamura maintained strict authority and discipline over his internees, but could not control the camp’s guards, who were Japanese soldiers. Consequently, guards acted hostilely toward the internees under his command, because they were veterans of harsh battles against U.S. forces. At one point, when Mukaibo tried to remove Nakamura from his position, the internees protested that he should remain. This caused Mukaibo to believe Nakamura was too lenient, so Nakamura returned with a vengeance against the internees.\textsuperscript{25} His superiors ultimately removed him from his position after Nakamura openly tortured a Chinese internee who had escaped Camp Holmes but was caught—the torture display was intended as a threat to the American internees not to escape.\textsuperscript{26} A complex commandant, Natalie Crouter described Nakamura as “the strict disciplinarian, with a weakness for song, flower arrangement, and color. Many like him, some do not.”\textsuperscript{27} He certainly was not the worst commandant, neither was he the best.

Nakamura’s successor, Commandant Masago Hayakawa, supervised Camp Holmes from mid-summer 1942 until December 1943; he did not leave a particularly strong impression on the internees. Hayakawa was less than thirty years old, spoke modest English, and was “clearly not an army enlistee with bushido (warrior-like) manner.”\textsuperscript{28} If anything, Hayakawa was often reclusive and avoided Nellie McKim, because her Japanese language skills intimidated him. Commandant Hayakawa cooperated more with the General Committee than Nakamura had, however, the internees remembered him for doing little to

\textsuperscript{24} Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in Forgotten Heroes, 66.
\textsuperscript{25} Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 82.
\textsuperscript{26} Curtis Tong, Child of War, 89.
\textsuperscript{27} Natalie Crouter, “June 28, 1942” in Forbidden Diary, 64.
\textsuperscript{28} Curtis Tong, Child of War, 104.
supplement the camp’s dwindling food supplies throughout 1943 and address increasing starvation. 29 Hayakawa’s timid personality was best summarized by an incident that Natalie Crouter recorded in her diary. One night in January 1943, internees caught Commandant Hayakawa in the men’s barracks, sleeping in Ray Hale’s bed. Apparently, he was so intimidated by his own Japanese guards that he did not want to sleep in close proximity to them, so he slept amongst his prisoners instead; the internees were not sure how often he had done this. 30 Hayakawa’s passivity to declining camp conditions greatly contrasted his successor, Commandant Rokuro Tomibe, who did more than any other commandant to improve living conditions for his internees. 31

Lieutenant Kogoto Oura—who supervised Camp Holmes from July 1944 until the move to Bilibid Prison in December 1944—also significantly contrasted his predecessor, Tomibe. While Tomibe was kind to internees and forged genuine friendships with them, Oura had an “unabashed hatred of Americans” and considered them “greedy elitists.” 32 A Japanese guard told Fern Harrington that Oura was “shell-shocked” and demoted to the commandant position because he could no longer command his own troops. 33 Oura was especially frustrated speaking to Nellie McKim, because she spoke a high-class dialect of Japanese while he only spoke a lower-class dialect. Consequently, the “chip on Oura’s shoulder” caused him to do everything he could to “be nasty” to his prisoners. 34 He did very little to seek food outside of camp to feed his internees, and internees began to starve under his

29 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 105.
30 Natalie Crouter, “January 31, 1943” in Forbidden Diary, 129.
31 Because of the profound impact that Tomibe had on the Baguio internees, details of his tenure as commandant merit their own section immediately following this one.
32 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 182.
33 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 140.
34 Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in Forgotten Heroes, 66.
leadership. Lieutenant Oura was apathetic and nasty to his internees, bringing “only misery, pain, and severe depression to camp.”

By the end of internment, after transferring to Bilibid Prison, the internees did have some positive experiences with the Japanese, especially compared to the wrath of Lieutenant Oura. Yamato, Oura’s interpreter who also transferred to Bilibid, enjoyed talking with internees to practice his English. He was relatively attached to Nellie McKim and Carl Eschbach, forging friendships with the two missionaries. He even bid his internee friends farewell when he had to leave Bilibid; unfortunately, American troops shot Yamato shortly after he departed the prison’s gates. Despite having miniscule food and the increasing approach of American forces in Manila, Commandant Ebiko of Bilibid Prison tried his best to fulfill Carl Eschbach’s daily demands to improve internee lives. The city was obviously lost, yet Ebiko still tried to care for his internees. He did not draw the battle into the confines of the prison, and he did not execute the internees in retaliation for the military loss. The same could not be said of many Japanese soldiers’ retaliations against the Filipino people. The internees continued to survive because the Japanese continued to spare their lives.

Commandant Rokuro Tomibe

Commandant Rokuro Tomibe did more to challenge the historical perspective on Japanese brutality in the Pacific during World War II than any other Japanese man that the internees encountered throughout internment. Tomibe truly and genuinely cared about the well being of his internees and he did everything in his power to make their lives in internment more comfortable, at times even challenging his superior officers to do so. Natalie Crouter claimed that Tomibe “has shown more comprehension and desire to be considerate

35 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 181.
37 Ibid, 205.
than anyone connected with our administration. He wants to know Americans and their customs, apparently admires many aspects of us.”

Jim Halsema described Tomibe as a “gentleman in the true sense because he treated us well even though he had never seen white people up close before.” Tomibe confirmed that the only impression he had of “white people” came from Hollywood perceptions of Americans, whom he had believed forced Japan into war, but he told the internees that “my life with you changed my misconception.”

Above all, Tomibe was human. He had a wife and a young son and daughter back home in Kyoto, but he had only been home in Japan with them for two of the past seven years when he became commandant. He not only empathized with the internees, but he also used that empathy to improve their lives in whatever way he could.

Tomibe acknowledged that he was complicit with the Japanese military, stating: “If you ask me if I were guilty of allowing a yellow Japan to detain Caucasian Americans in a restricted jail-like camp for a long period of time I would unhesitatingly say ‘I am guilty.’” However, he believed that if he had treated the internees cruelly, it would have “left a dark stain on the history of the Japanese victory;” therefore, he considered what he would have wanted if he were in their position, and he acted accordingly. He determined to let the camp rule themselves with little interference on his part through the General Committee—which he integrated with both men and women. Above all, Tomibe believed that since he “could not rule by power, the only way was to appeal to human warmth and mutual trust.”

Tomibe immediately earned internee respect and appreciation by ensuring the delivery of their Red

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38 Natalie Crouter, “February 26, 1944” in Forbidden Diary, 294.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid, 40.
Cross packages in time for Christmas of 1943—an event that significantly raised internee morale and “saved lives at a critical time.”

On September 2, 1943, the Swedish ship *MS Gripsholm* departed from New Jersey carrying one hundred forty thousand Red Cross relief packages for POWs and internees in the Pacific. The U.S. government valued the packages at $1.3 million, and the Red Cross noted that “particular thought has been given to the requirements of women and children.” The Red Cross had sent relief packages the previous year including a supply designated for Camp Holmes, however, those packages never arrived in Baguio. Tomibe noted that “in those days it was quite rare for such precious goods to reach internees, since confiscation and stealing were frequent.” Tomibe’s first act as commandant was arranging the necessary transportation to and from Manila to deliver the precious packages; he employed several internees, including Carl Eschbach, to make the rough journey with him. At that point in the war, Japanese military transportation was limited, so Tomibe improvised and requested the use of empty copper ore trucks returning from Manila to the mines in Baguio to transport the packages. Tomibe gave Lieutenant Colonel Nagano, the officer in charge of the trucks, ten cartons of Red Cross cigarettes as a gesture of gratitude—besides those cartons, the Baguio internees received every single parcel designated for them. Not necessarily the traditional Santa that the internees had imagined, Commandant Tomibe delivered those precious gifts on Christmas, just as he had promised he would.

Every man, woman, and child in Camp Holmes received a forty-seven-pound Red Cross package; they were grateful for the equality and evenly divided the excess materials

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45 Curtis Tong, *Child of War*, 169.
48 Ibid.
among those in need. Regarding the packages, Natalie Crouter said that “the contents were concentrated essence of all we lacked for two years.”⁴⁹ For many internees, it was the greatest Christmas they had ever experienced, the likes of which they expected to never experience again. The packages provided relief in the form of food, life-saving medicine, clothing, shoes, soap, toiletries, and sporting equipment, among other items. Internee families rationed their precious new food supply—many did not eat their final cans of food until just prior to liberation in Bilibid over a year later, which prevented complete starvation. The packages not only saved internees physically, but also psychologically. Natalie Crouter marveled, “Morale soared so high that people went out of reach!”⁵⁰ Regarding the extreme significance his act had on the internees’ lives, Tomibe merely said, “We were just being good neighbors.”⁵¹

Commandant Tomibe’s pattern of giving continued. He immediately reinstated school, which Commandant Hayakawa had cancelled, and he allowed couples to hold hands, hug, and even kiss one another.⁵² Tomibe was aware of the secret camp radio—a transgression for which the punishment was death—but he had an agreement with Phil Markert that he would not tell his superior officers so long as Markert kept him updated on what he heard, which he did.⁵³ When internees complained about their dining conditions, Tomibe ate breakfast with them to understand their perspective; the very next day he began allowing men, women, and children to eat together during dining times—the first time since internment began that they could do so.⁵⁴

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⁴⁹ Natalie Crouter, “December 25, 1943” in Forbidden Diary, 264.
⁵⁰ Ibid, 266.
⁵² Curtis Tong, Child of War, 170.
⁵³ Ibid, 251.
⁵⁴ Natalie Crouter, “February 28/29, 1943” in Forbidden Diary, 294, 295.
because he saw that dancing was a part of American culture; subsequently, he allowed his internees to start hosting community dances. The Dickey-Park wedding, of which he was an enthusiastic guest, was an example of one such event when he allowed internees to dance into the night. He even asked Nellie McKim about women’s hygiene, claiming he would do anything he could to help acquire feminine hygiene products. The internees had transitioned from commandants who avoided interacting with women and were insensitive to their conditions, to a commandant who specifically sought to help them. Tomibe brought families together first through dining, then through marriage, and finally through the Family Unit Plan, when his predecessors had kept people apart.

Commandant Tomibe developed a friendship with Nellie McKim, who at his request had begun teaching him English so he could better interact with his internees. Tomibe was a frequent guest in McKim’s Japanese class for adult internees, conversing with the students and telling them about Japanese culture and folklore. It was interactions like these that helped forge the unusual bond between the captured and their captor. Many were in agreement regarding their fondness of the commandant; Natalie Crouter wrote:

“He is honest and forthright. He says his Baguio friends chaff him about being too lenient, tell him perhaps he will receive a medal from the American government after the war...Miss McKim says that Tomibe San is by far the best man we have had on the job. He is making a real attempt to understand and adjust problems, with a wider scope, vision and comprehension than others before him.”

He helped internees survive physically and psychologically, and he continually lifted previous camp restrictions to restore normalcy. Internees held a deep respect for Rokuro Tomibe, not because he demanded it, but because he had earned it.

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55 Natalie Crouter, “February 26, 1944” in Forbidden Diary, 294.
The 4/4/44 Escape and its Repercussions

Commandant Tomibe’s kindness, which uplifted the internees, ultimately contributed to his downfall. He had allowed internees to have picnics on the hill behind the camp, which was technically out-of-bounds. Fern Harrington said that “the exercise from climbing the steep hill as well as the psychological lift from getting out of sight of the camp helped us both physically and emotionally.”

She was not the only internee who benefitted from the weekly picnics—internee Herb Swick used them as an opportunity to connect with Filipinos and get in contact with the local guerrilla resistance movement. Swick, a former miner, had evaded capture by the Japanese until February 1943, and had been involved with the resistance movement until then. Unlike other Pacific countries who welcomed the expulsion of their colonizers by the Japanese, the Filipino resistance fighters believed in the justice and civil liberties that the Americans had established, and they highly anticipated General MacArthur’s return. Japanese military authorities were aware of the movement, and for that reason they ordered in January 1944: “Contact between Filipinos and Americans inevitably give rise to plans to escape. They should be strictly forbidden.” On February 25, 1944, the Japanese made all internees sign a pledge to obey orders and that they “will not, under any circumstances, attempt escape.” Slightly more than a month later, Herb Swick and Richard Green successfully escaped Camp Holmes.

Late in the evening of April 4, 1944 (4/4/44), Herb Swick said goodbye to his good friend, Bill Moule, telling him, “I think I’m doing what I’m supposed to be doing. Time will tell.” Moule had no prior knowledge that his friend and Richard Green were going to

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57 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 111.
60 The Ethel Thomas Herold Papers (M1991), Box 1 Folder 2.
61 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 326.
escape. The date of their escape, 4/4/44, was significantly ominous to the Japanese, because
the Japanese word for four is a homonym with death, and they therefore consider the number
bad luck. Although neither escapee knew of the date’s significance, many internees suspected
that Lieutenant Colonel Russell Volckmann—who commanded the guerrilla movement in
Northern Luzon and helped organize the escape—knew exactly what he was doing when he
selected that date. The following morning there were heavy rains, so the guards cancelled
roll call and did not discover until evening roll call that the two men had escaped—nearly
twenty-four hours after the fact. The guards knew that the men had escaped on 4/4/44,
however, the official incident report stated that the escape occurred “between morning roll
call (0730 hours) and evening roll call (2130 hours) on 5 April.” This was blatantly false,
but was likely an attempt to save face for having not discovered the escape for an entire day,
and because it had occurred insultingly on 4/4/44.

The consequences of the escape that followed impacted the entire Camp Holmes
Community. Japanese authorities assigned a new unit of ninety soldiers to guard the camp,
they installed barbed wire to enclose the camp, they forbid walks behind the camp, and they
gave Tomibe a reprimand. The Kenpeitai interrogated and tortured Jim Halsema, Bill
Moule, and Gene Kneebone because they were friends of Swick and Green—none of those
three men knew anything about the plan for the escape. In fact, the only internee besides the
escapees who knew about the plan was Douglas Strachan—nobody suspected him of
knowing, and he therefore avoided the following interrogations and torture. The Kenpeitai
tortured the three men for seven hours straight by hanging them from their thumbs and
beating their bodies. Moule, who had only barely recovered from polio, described his torture:

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62 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 326.
64 Rokuro Tomibe, “The Secret Story of War’s End,” 44.
65 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 176.
“God how it hurt! It felt as if my thumbs were coming off and my shoulders were being pulled out of their sockets…The pain was excruciating. I know I must have screamed bloody murder.” In between his horrendous torture, during which he gladly anticipated death, Moule sat in a cramped cell with other Filipino prisoners, who showed him incredible kindness by massaging his thumbs to prevent him from losing them. Gene Kneebone experienced similar torture, which he described on film to the Bureau of Public Relations after liberation in Manila. Kneebone claimed, “I will never forget the Japanese.”

Commandant Tomibe feared for the internees’ lives, and in form true to his character, he marched down to the Kenpeitai headquarters and demanded that they release his internees into his custody. When the Kenpeitai tried to withhold the men claiming they had not yet healed, Tomibe recalled, “I insisted that we would mend them in the internment camp and brought them home with me,” thus preventing further torture. Bill Moule recalled seeing tears in Tomibe’s eyes when he brought them back to Camp Holmes. Tomibe invited Jim Halsema to his personal quarters where he served him a dish of sweetened small beans and apologized to him for what happened. Nellie McKim, who was present to translate, informed Halsema that the dish was a significant gesture of deep apology in Japanese culture. Tomibe was obviously hurt that internees had taken advantage of his kindness, but he understood and was sorry for the repercussions that those left behind would face. Bill Moule summarized the consequences of Tomibe’s actions accordingly: “It was inevitable that we would lose Tomibe, for he showed his hand by going into the Japanese headquarters and asking for our release, and ended up getting told off by Japanese Intelligence.” Tomibe had sacrificed even more of his honor to save his internees.

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66 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 330.
67 Interviewing Philippine Internees: Bureau of Public Relations Film, No. 1083.
68 Rokuro Tomibe, “The Secret Story of War’s End,” 44.
69 Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in Forgotten Heroes, 66.
70 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 342.
In the aftermath of the 4/4/44 escape, Japanese authorities replaced Tomibe with the militant Lieutenant Oura. Tomibe remained in Camp Holmes for a few months before his departure, which was bitter sweet. The internees were sorry to be left in the hands of Oura, but were relieved that Tomibe would not be around for the end of the war when he would be in great danger of the Filipino resistance for being a camp commandant, regardless of his kindness.\footnote{Natalie Crouter, “July 5, 1944” in Forbidden Diary, 358.} Tomibe departed Camp Holmes on the morning of September 15, 1944. Before leaving, he spoke to his internees, who had gathered to bid him farewell. During his speech, Tomibe told the internees, “I feel very sorry that our friendship has existed under such conditions and I hope that it will be renewed under far different ones when peace comes.”\footnote{Michael P. Onorato, “Camp Holmes Dailey News Vol. 3, No. 259” in Forgotten Heroes, 81.}

Tomibe wrote the following poem to his friend, Jim Halsema:

> “You are a young man bearing upon your shoulders/Your fatherland. I am like you./We have become friends here, but if the fate/Of our countries demands it, I am sure that/We will confront each other bravely./However, into the dawn of peace, our friendship/Will be deeper than before.”\footnote{Natalie Crouter, “October 12, 1944” in Forbidden Diary, 394-5.}

Internees acknowledged everything Tomibe had done to help them survive, not just physically, but mentally and emotionally, as well. Natalie Crouter believed that “if each person is, in a sense, an ambassador from his native land, then he has done his country a great service in here.”\footnote{Ibid, “September 14, 1944,” 384.} Rokuro Tomibe truly challenged the historical perspective of Japanese brutality by never ceasing to show anything but kindness and humanity to his internees.

**Move to Old Bilbid Prison in Manila**

The final major influence that the Japanese military had on the Baguio internees’ survival was their decision to move them from Camp Holmes to Old Bilbid Prison in Manila. Just as General MacArthur had promised, American forces returned to liberate the...
Philippines, beginning with their landing on Leyte on October 20, 1944. At that point in internment, the internees had begun starving again, eating only about seven hundred calories per day while still performing their manual labor chores. American flyovers became more frequent by the end of their stay in Camp Holmes, and seeing their troops return greatly lifted internee spirits. In response to the American advances, Commanding General Tomoyuki Yamashita moved his headquarters from Manila to Baguio, and the Baguio internees transferred to Bilibid Prison to make room for the incoming Japanese soldiers. On December 28 and 29, 1944—exactly three years after internment began—the internees departed Camp Holmes in packed trucks, riding down the dangerous mountain roads to Manila.

The transportation to Bilibid was dangerous and uncomfortable. Dot Douglas felt happy that she was not separated from her parents during this transport, but she feared that the trucks would fall off the edge of the mountain road. The internees were extremely fortunate that American forces did not conduct bombing raids during their transport period—American bombers would have undoubtedly bombed their unmarked Japanese military trucks. After liberation, Fern Harrington asked an Air Force Officer visiting Bilibid why they had not conducted bombing raids at the end of December, and he informed her that they were out of fuel because an enemy bomb had destroyed their gasoline storage facilities. Many internees, including those who were not particularly religious, considered the fuel shortage an act of God that had spared their lives. Conditions in Bilibid, which also housed POW survivors of Bataan and Corregidor, were abysmal compared to Camp Holmes. Internee mattresses were covered in bed bugs and the dried blood and feces of the dying POWs who

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76 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 346.
77 Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in Forgotten Heroes.
78 The Dorothy “Dot” Douglas Whittle Collection.
79 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 173.
used them previously. Living conditions were claustrophobic and the internees continued to starve. The Maryknoll Sisters were again a blessing by buying food for the collective camp supply. Many internees suffered from dysentery, dengue fever, and malaria. Outside the thick prison walls, the Battle of Manila raged on.

Despite their horrid conditions, the internees survived because the Japanese transferred them to Manila. American forces liberated Bilibid prison and saved the internees from complete starvation long before they liberated Baguio on April 26, 1945. In fact, Jim Halsema believed that the Battle of Baguio was more devastating than the Battle of Manila. The internees who had remained in Baguio—primarily the elderly and the ill who were under house internment—suffered a fifty percent death rate because of the American bombing raids. On March 15, 1945, one of those raids killed E.J. Halsema, Jim’s father and the former mayor of Baguio. If the Japanese had kept the internees at Camp Holmes, those who had not yet starved to death likely would have died in those bombing raids. The transfer to Bilibid was certainly a blessing in disguise, as it was in Bilibid on February 4, 1945, that American forces finally liberated the internees after over three years of internment.

**Conclusion**

The humane interactions between the Baguio civilian internees and their Japanese captors throughout internment challenged the historical perspective of extreme Japanese brutality during World War II. While the Kenpeitai’s interrogations and torture of internees upheld that perspective, the interactions within the internment camp itself demonstrated humanity. The “emblematic imperial bayonet” illustrated a stark contrast between Baguio internment and the realities of the war elsewhere in the Pacific. During World War II,

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80 Curtis Tong, *Child of War*, 204-205.
81 Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in *Forgotten Heroes*, 70.
Japanese soldiers indiscriminately slaughtered tens of millions of people with their bayonets, including men, women, children, and babies, civilians and enemy soldiers, native populations and European colonizers. While internee children like Dot Douglas and Curtis Tong may have feared their Japanese guards’ bayonets, those bayonets remained unused against their fellow internees. Instead, internee perspective on the Japanese was complex. Their captors, who punished their transgressions and ceaselessly guarded them, were the same captors with whom the internees had played sports, celebrated a wedding, and forged friendships.

The Japanese played a significant role in internee survival, not only regarding elements beyond internee control, but also concerning matters within internee control. Although the Baguio internees frequently solved their own problems for the benefit of their community, they could not always accomplish what was best for themselves. Natalie Crouter wrote that she was ashamed that it had required Japanese interference for the internees to start a camp garden as a vital food source, and that it was Tomibe who had given them the Family Unit Plan when they would not do it themselves.\(^{83}\) She believed that as a community, they should have done those things willingly, but instead, the Japanese did it for them. While many internees derogatively referred to the Japanese as “Japs,” many other internees refused to show such disrespect. Peg Tong told her children, “You and I must remember, that because we see cultures and colors as different, that does not make them evil. We must learn to understand and respect.”\(^{84}\) The evil actions of some Japanese soldiers did not dictate the impression of all Japanese soldiers, and many internees acknowledged that. Natalie Crouter summarized that sentiment: “To me, they are all human beings, not animals, struggling in their way as we struggle in ours, both complex, mixed with right and wrong.”\(^{85}\)

\(^{83}\) Natalie Crouter, “September 14, 1944” in Forbidden Diary, 384.
\(^{84}\) Curtis Tong, Child of War, 136.
\(^{85}\) Natalie Crouter, “January 9, 1944” in Forbidden Diary, 274.
Historical Context: 1945-Post World War II

The Baguio internees arrived in Old Bilibid Prison at the very end of 1944, and their final month of internment starkly contrasted the prior three years in Baguio. Upon arrival, Bill Moule noted that “the damn place looked like death itself!” and that “the concrete fortress of Bilibid made Camp Holmes seem like summer camp.” Gone were the days of Camp Holmes’ idyllic mountain landscape and cool climate. Since the surrender of American forces in early 1942, Bilibid had housed Bataan and Corregidor death march survivors. These POWs remained separated from the civilian internee section of Bilibid, but the internee children would frequently sneak up to the top floor of the prison to peak down at their emaciated neighbors. The industrious attitudes of the civilian internees strongly contrasted those of Bilibid’s POWs. Internees noted that although the POWs had been imprisoned for nearly three years, “there still wasn’t a makeshift chair, table or tool.” Comparatively, internees immediately began creating makeshift chairs and tables, had begun creating individual mosquito nets, and got the showers and toilets running. The efficiency from Camp Holmes transferred with the internees to Bilibid, and it was obvious how different their conditions of imprisonment had been compared to those of the American POWs.

On January 9, 1945, American forces finally landed on Luzon at Lingayen Gulf. It took them less than a month to reach Manila, and it became daily routine for the internees to watch the fighting, children included. Curtis Tong witnessed American forces kill a Japanese soldier just outside of Bilibid on Quezon Boulevard; over the following days, he observed as Filipinos looted the body, leaving the soldier in nothing but his underwear. Gone was any sense of childhood innocence as the Battle of Manila raged on in the streets outside.

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1 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 356, 363.
2 The Dorothy “Dot” Douglas Whittle Collection.
3 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 356, 363.
4 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 215.
American forces neared the prison on February 3, and internees continued to watch the rampage from the prison windows, despite the danger of doing so. Bill Moule said, “we had waited over three years for this show, and we wanted to be there at curtain time.”\(^5\) Carl Eschbach correctly predicted that the Japanese guards would leave Bilibid prison rather than drawing American forces inside its walls for a fight to the death. After one thousand, one hundred thirty-four days of internment, the Japanese finally freed the Baguio internees.

On February 4, 1945, Commandant Ebiko gathered the internees in the prison courtyard and called his soldiers down from the prison roof where they had been fighting. He gave Carl Eschbach the official statement of release: “The Japanese Army is now going to release all the prisoners of war and internees here on its own accord…You are at liberty to act and live as free persons.” Ebiko left the following message on the closed gates of Bilibid Prison: “Lawfully released Prisoners of War and Internees are quartered here. Please do not molest them unless they make positive resistance [sic].”\(^6\) The Japanese guards left Bilibid, and the internees emotionally rejoiced in their freedom. Carl Eschbach raised Ethel Herold’s homemade American flag, and the internees tearfully sang “The Star Spangled Banner” and “God Bless America.” A POW quickly told the internees to take the flag down because it would draw enemy fire, so they hung it on the wall in the courtyard of the prison.\(^7\)

Later that evening, two members of the 37\(^{th}\) Infantry Division accidentally stumbled upon the Americans held within Bilibid. From over the thick prison walls internees heard a young soldier shout: “Hell, Harvey, we’re on the wrong street!” Fern Harrington said that “never had profanity sounded so beautiful.”\(^8\) The internees caught their attention, and the

\(^5\) William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 370.

\(^6\) Natalie Crouter, “February 4, 1945” in Forbidden Diary, 470.

\(^7\) Curtis Tong, Child of War, 220.

\(^8\) Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 161.
soldiers entered Bilibid; Leora Nagel described them as “two handsome hunks of humanity.” The first to enter the prison was a soldier named Kincaid from Arizona; when one woman told him he was the first American soldier they had seen in three years, he replied, “Lady, you’re the first American woman I’ve seen in three years, too.” With the arrival of American forces in Bilibid, the Baguio internees were not only free, but also liberated. One of the first things that American troops did was briefly transfer the civilian internees to the nearby Ang Tibay Shoe Factory because fires from the battle burned dangerously close to Bilibid. Unfortunately, when they returned to Bilibid the next day, they found that Filipinos had looted the entire prison, and with it many of the internees’ precious objects, including diaries, wedding presents, and the homemade American flag. Luckily, some internees, like Natalie Crouter and Dot Douglas, kept their diaries on their person, and they survived to provide valuable insight into their internment experiences.

After liberation, General MacArthur visited Bilibid Prison and briefly met with the civilian internees before understandably spending a majority of his time with the liberated POWs. He even kissed young Linda Moule on the head as her father told her, “Linda, this is the fellow we’ve been waiting for.” While the liberated internees awaited their transportation back to the U.S., the Army clothed and fed them. The internees had shrunken stomachs from starvation, and although they loved the new abundance of food, they struggled to digest the Army rations. Military doctors weighed the liberated internees, and determined that the average man weighed slightly more than one hundred pounds, while the average woman weighed slightly less—some even as low as eighty pounds. Peg Tong had lost seventy pounds during internment, and her son Curtis had not gained any weight over the

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9 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 221.
10 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 371.
11 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 226.
12 William Moule, God’s Arms Around Us, 376.
three years; he quickly gained five pounds in two weeks on Army rations. Similarly, Elmer and Ethel Herold both lost sixty-five pounds, Billy Herold grew nine inches but gained no weight, and Betsy Herold had grown slightly taller and managed to gain five pounds throughout internment. The internees began to gain strength for their journeys home.

On February 22, 1945, Carl Eschbach and Robert McKay were among the first twenty internees selected to go home; they flew to Leyte and boarded a ship to San Francisco where they reunited with their respective families after over three years of separation. The rest of the liberated internees eventually followed suit, often on the same transport vessel with one another. Dot Douglas’s family departed the Philippines on April 10, 1945, aboard the USS E.W. Eberle, as did Fern Harrington, Cleo Morrison, and Marian and Billy Gray. They arrived in San Pedro, California, used coupons to buy new clothes at a local department store, then began their cross-country train journeys to their respective families’ homes. The Tong family rode in a C-47 aircraft to Leyte, where they stayed on the beach awaiting their transport vessel. In the same waters that General MacArthur had made his famous return, Curtis Tong nearly drowned while playing catch with his sister. A G.I. named Frank Magelky saved Curtis’s life, and the two kept in contact for years after the war. On April 8, 1945, the Tong family departed the Philippines aboard the USS Admiral Capps; while aboard, Curtis enjoyed watching boxing matches and trading souvenirs with the sailors. By the end of the month, they finally sailed under the Gold Gate Bridge, and began their cross-country journey home to family on the east coast.

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13 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 186.
14 The Ethel Thomas Herold Papers (M1991), Box 1 Folder 1, 54.
15 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 231. The Robert McKay Collection.
16 The Dorothy “Dot” Douglas Whittle Collection. Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 177.
17 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 243.
18 Ibid, 245.
For the Baguio internees, life went on, and World War II soon ended. The official surrender ceremony to end the war in the Philippines occurred at the Mansion House at Camp John Hay. On September 3, 1945, General Tomoyuki Yamashita surrendered in front of the recently liberated American POW, General Jonathan Wainwright.\(^\text{19}\) World War II in the Philippines had begun and ended at John Hay Air Station in Baguio. Elsewhere, the liberated Baguio internees were trying to regain a sense of normalcy in their lives. Most faced the issue of having lost all of their personal property and savings during the war, which forced them to completely start over financially, regardless of their age. The U.S. government even tried to charge the internees a $275 repatriation fee. Fortunately, Senator Claude Pepper introduced postwar legislation waiving that fee, and instead afforded internees twenty cents on the dollar for all of their property that they had lost to the Japanese during the war.\(^\text{20}\) Natalie Crouter’s husband, Jerry, struggled to find new work after losing his business in Baguio. Although he worked for two years in the Philippines, he returned to the U.S. in 1947 after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage. He was unable to maintain a steady job, and he died in 1951 from cirrhosis and liver cancer.\(^\text{21}\)

Children internees also struggled. Despite maintaining their educations in camp and transitioning into their projected grade level in American schools, the internees were inherently different from their American classmates. Dot Douglas went from a class of eight students, to one of three thousand. She was never a typical carefree teenager—she was more serious than her classmates because she had personally witnessed life and death in war.\(^\text{22}\) Bedie Crouter, who went by “Fred” once stateside, suffered from chronic stomach issues and nightmares because of his internment experiences. June Crouter went through a delayed

\(^{19}\) Betsy Herold Heimke, *Bring Cup, Plate and Spoon*, 57.

\(^{20}\) Natalie Crouter, *Forbidden Diary*, 523.

\(^{21}\) Ibid, 525.

\(^{22}\) The Dorothy “Dot” Douglas Whittle Collection.
rebellious phase in her twenties. While normal American teenagers were testing the limits of their growing independence, June was both literally and figuratively inseparable from her mother for three years; internment conditions afforded her no opportunity for privacy or traditional teenage independence and rebellion. It took three years of psychotherapy in her late twenties for her to process her internment experiences and the effect it had on her relationship with her mother.\(^{23}\) Betsy Herold experienced “king-sized culture shock” upon her arrival to the U.S., and although many internees forgave the Japanese for what they had done, Betsy never did.\(^{24}\)

Despite their struggles, the liberated internees experienced many successes. After conducting searches throughout the U.S., Philippines, and Australia, Natalie Crouter found her FBI-confiscated diary in a military warehouse in Kansas. She transcribed the thousands of scraps of paper, emotionally reliving internment, and eventually published it.\(^{25}\) The FBI even tried to recruit her to be a political informant, having incorrectly assumed that internment had made her a “superpatriot;” she refused, and instead was involved in the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.\(^{26}\) Her diary entries were a testament to her opinions on the Japanese during internment; she did not think they were evil, she thought they were humans, just like the internees, and she did not hold animosity against them. Similarly, Marian Gray was able to move on after internment and the death of her husband, Rufus. She answered Billy’s prayers to have a father and a baby sister by marrying Charles Cowherd, an Army Chaplain, whom she had dated long before her marriage to Rufus. They gave Billy a sister.\(^{27}\) Even Bill Moule, who had more reason to hate the Japanese than most

\(^{23}\) Natalie Crouter, Forbidden Diary, 525.
\(^{24}\) Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 234.
\(^{25}\) Natalie Crouter, Forbidden Diary, 524.
\(^{26}\) Ibid.
\(^{27}\) Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 185.
other internees, ultimately forgave the Japanese despite his horrific torture. He found forgiveness through religion, particularly Luke 23:34, in which Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Moule eventually came around to forgiveness, claiming that “I could see a little of what He was getting at. Besides that, I had promised Him many things—among them that I would forgive.”

Mere days after liberation, Jim Halsema returned to journalism and began working for the Associated Press. He interviewed POWs from the Death Railway in Burma, as well as his fellow internees. It was Halsema who found the beloved Commandant Rokuro Tomibe in the aftermath of the war—many internees had assumed he died during the Philippines Campaign. After the Japanese military relieved Tomibe of his commandant duties, he was an active duty infantry officer. During January 1945, his infantry group became separated from the rest of the Japanese infantry in Manila, and they retreated north toward Baguio. During this period, Tomibe contracted malaria and amoebic dysentery and nearly died; in August 1945 he unsuccessfully attempted suicide. On September 10, 1945, he surrendered to American forces, and in February 1946, after his health recovered, they transferred him to POW Compound Four, which was specifically for war criminal suspects. Tomibe served as a witness during the trial of General Kuo, another internment camp commandant. Jim Halsema happened to be covering the trial and was shocked to find his friend still alive.

The U.S. military intended to try Tomibe for war crimes because of his role as an internment camp commandant. However, Tomibe’s humanity, generosity, and kindness while in Camp Holmes saved him. Internees including Jim Halsema, Father Richard Sheridan,

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29 Michael P. Onorato, “Interview with James Halsema,” in *Forgotten Heroes*.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid, 34.
Nellie McKim, Carl Eschbach, and Walter Tong all wrote letters on behalf of Tomibe, describing the profoundly positive impact he had on internee life as camp leader. Sheridan’s letter said that Tomibe “had treated the internees fairly and kindly and had given them freedom by not surrounding them with bared wire.”

The internees’ testimonies on behalf of Tomibe’s character ultimately exonerated him, and the U.S. military did not try him for war crimes, but instead repatriated Tomibe to Japan in August 1946. His family was shocked and elated to learn that he was alive, and Tomibe and his brothers resumed their textile yarn-dyeing business in Kyoto.

Not long after liberation, the Baguio internees began their decades-long tradition of reuniting with one another. At reunions, former internees did not dwell on old issues, but rather laughed about them and reminisced about good memories. One of the very first reunions was Christmas 1946, when Marian Gray hosted Betty Halsema Foley and Fern Harrington. It was during this reunion that the women learned of the incredible postwar fate of Rokuro Tomibe. Internees went on to visit Tomibe in Japan throughout the years, and he always remembered the names of several internees and would ask about them. The Baguio internees hosted many reunions throughout the years. Their last major reunion, titled “Our Last Hurrah,” was in St. Augustine, Florida, in February 2007. During that reunion, thirty-seven internees, in addition to members of the 37th Infantry Division, spoke to grade school children about their experiences when they were their age and interned. Unfortunately, most of the Baguio internees have passed away, and those who were the youngest are now elderly.

Perhaps the most notable Baguio internee reunion was that of 1977. Hundreds of former internees gathered in San Francisco to reunite with one another and welcome their

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34 Ibid.
35 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 186.
36 Betsy Herold Heimke, Bring Cup, Plate, and Spoon, 140.
honored guest, Rokuro Tomibe. Among the party that picked Tomibe up from the airport was none other than escapee Herb Swick. When Swick greeted him, Tomibe smiled, threw his thumb over his shoulder and laughed, “Over the hill!” After more than thirty years, there were no hard feelings.\textsuperscript{37} During the reunion, Tomibe gave a heartfelt speech about his perspective on internment, and how his interactions with the American internees changed his outlook on life, and what he had been taught in Japan. He recalled that on the Emperor’s birthday, April 29, 1944, he gave every child in camp a banana, and had expected a traditional Japanese bow in thanks. Instead, he witnessed the children divide the bananas evenly among themselves, then one by one, they shook his hand and personally thanked him.\textsuperscript{38} Tomibe confessed that it was the children “who attached so much importance to everyone’s free will” that taught him the difference between their cultures.\textsuperscript{39}

From his experience as camp commandant and his friendships with the American internees, Tomibe developed an altruistic perspective on life. He defied the historical narrative on Japanese brutality during World War II, and did not embody Bushido spirit. Tomibe ended his speech to his former internees by saying, “I also remember your words in the camp: ‘Keep smiling…believe in victory and keep smiling.’ I hope we will all keep smiling to build a better world today when we do not have wars.”\textsuperscript{40} Tomibe received a standing ovation, just as he had after his farewell speech in Camp Holmes more than three decades previously. The occurrence was almost unbelievable, but Tomibe wrote: “I could not hold back the warm tears that came to my eyes in this beautiful and elegant hall of Spanish architecture. Such a scene did occur in this place—people will remember.”\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{37} Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 189.
\textsuperscript{38} Curtis Tong, Child of War, 251.
\textsuperscript{39} Natalie Crouter, Forbidden Diary, 528.
\textsuperscript{40} Rokuro Tomibe, “The Secret Story of War’s End,” 45.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
Conclusion

The Baguio internees successfully survived and strived for normalcy in the face of adversity. Through organization and ingenuity, they developed a functioning camp infrastructure and camp leadership—a microcosm of American society. Through patriotism, faith, and friendship, they supported one another and preserved their mental health. Through cooperation, sacrifice, and kindness, they uplifted internee children, babies, and new mothers. Rather than resigning to their fate, the Baguio internees rallied around one another to live as comfortably and normally as they possibly could, given their circumstances. They survived both in spite of and because of their Japanese captors. They strived for normalcy both because of and in spite of one another. The internees’ struggles and subsequent endurance demonstrated human perseverance, the development of a lasting community, and the creation of cross-cultural friendships in a time of war. World War II may not have endured, but the Baguio internees did.

The Baguio internees’ experiences exemplified the ability for humans to persevere through ongoing hardship. Their population’s relatively small size and homogeneity, in addition to their ideal mountain location, were advantageous to their successes and perseverance in comparison to other internment camps. Often, it was the internees’ faith in God and in one another that carried them through internment. Dot Douglas considered it a blessing for her family to be together; she said that “no matter how bad it was, it was very comforting for me to be with my parents, and I didn’t worry as long as my parents were there.”¹ Many missionaries had unwavering faith in God; Peg Tong always reminded her son Curtis, “When you feel down, look up. Someone good is watching over you.”² Most internees had a positive outlook on their lives in internment, although Ethel Herold’s role as a leader

¹ The Dorothy “Dot” Douglas Whittle Collection
² Curtis Tong, Child of War, 74.
altered her perspective. To her, life in internment was “drudgery,” because she believed that everyone was constantly squabbling and hated one another. Fern Harrington challenged that perspective, and instead recounted that “except for isolation and our loss of freedom, we learned to enjoy our simple lifestyle…Our energies could be directed toward creative solutions of the problems within our own little world.” Internment truly was a world that only the internees could appreciate; their friends on the outside would never understand how the internees could look back on their experiences and laugh. Helen Angeny recalled, “Well, laugh we did, and our sometimes low-keyed, strange sense of humor got us through some very bad times.”

Through their internment, the Baguio internees developed a lasting community. They knew that they had a “communal spirit,” and that despite all of their differences, they always had “a unified desire for freedom” that connected them for the rest of their lives. The internees were self-aware regarding the intricacies of developing their community. During one of his anthropology lectures, Dr. Barton likened the concept of the primitive herd to the internee community in Camp Holmes, citing “space friction, group battles, propinquity and neighborliness making friends, the early struggle for leadership, then attempts to hold privilege or to get more.” His students recognized all of these traits among themselves. Likewise, some internees already predicted the lifelong endurance of their unique community. On November 28, 1942, Natalie Crouter recorded in her diary: “Father Gowen says that in ten years we will look back with nostalgia on Camp Holmes comradeship and experience. He was greeted with roars as he enlarged on this but he is right. We will talk

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3 The Ethel Thomas Herold Papers (M1991), Box 1 Folder 1, 67.
4 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 76.
5 The Helen Frances Buehl-Angeny Collection, 43.
7 Natalie Crouter, “June 12, 1943” in Forbidden Diary, 182.
about it the rest of our lives, laugh over the battles and the mistakes.” They fulfilled Father Gowen’s prophecy; their reunions spanned decades, and their community lasted for life.

Above all, the Baguio internees’ experiences demonstrated great humanity and forgiveness through the development of cross-cultural friendships. Helen Angeny was among many internees who strongly believed in “Love thy neighbor as thyself” as a way to achieve peace within internment; those neighbors included their Japanese captors. Rokuro Tomibe challenged the historical perspective on Japanese brutality, and instead showed sincere compassion for his internees. Natalie Crouter recorded that Tomibe believed that “all human reactions and emotions are the same; whether it is a Japanese or an American fondness for children, that we are all alike in those things.”

While Bushido Code emphasized Japanese “spiritual superiority” over all races, Tomibe refused to see himself any differently from his American internees—they were all human. Several internees held that same sentiment about the Japanese. Fern Harrington profoundly stated: “Although we had suffered as prisoners of the Japanese, we did not hate the Japanese. We hated war. We saw the Japanese as individuals created in the image of God with the same potential for good or evil that we had. They, like us, were victims of war.”

The idea that the internees developed friendships with their Japanese commandant was unbelievable, yet it happened. On his seventy-first birthday, Rokuro Tomibe wrote to his friend, Father Sheridan. He believed that “a warm relationship of brotherhood, a real friendship was born between people of enemy countries,” and that that friendship was lifelong. In his old age, Tomibe wrote, “I regret very much now that I did not make more

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8 Natalie Crouter, “November 12, 1942,” 110.
9 The Helen Frances Buehl-Angeny Collection, 43.
10 Natalie Crouter, “May 18, 1944,” in Forbidden Diary, 344.
11 Fern Harrington Miles, Captive Community, 163.
12 Curtis Tong, Child of War, 252.
effort to transplant this seed of friendship to the next generation. I would like to bequeath or leave behind for the next generation something and I am seriously thinking about and reflecting what that something will be.”¹³ However, Tomibe did make a profound effort to transplant that seed of friendship to the next generation: he had given it to the Camp Holmes children so many decades prior. Rokuro Tomibe died September 26, 1983, but his legacy, and the legacy of the Baguio internee community, lived on through the internee children. Those children continued to reunite with one another, and with Tomibe’s family. The cross-cultural friendships continued to the next generation. The Baguio internees passed on their legacies to their own children, and through their publications, their perspectives and internment experiences endure, just as they had endured one thousand, one hundred thirty-four days of internment.

¹³ Curtis Tong, Child of War, 252.
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