

THOUGHTS AFTER ALL HAD LEFT

I shall never forget how quiet 5,000 people can be.

I have learned to appreciate patience, courtesy, family pride
concern for others and humbleness

They had truly learned to like this community and were reluctant
to go to Jerome. x

How many will never return to their home

Twelve I know will never return (Because they remain here in
Fresno beneath tombstones and plots of grass.) Others are destined
for the same foreseeable kind of destination before the end of the
war.

but for more than double the number of those that spent their
final days here at Fresno Center This became the first and only
home they have ever known because they were born while mother lived
here. By the time they are grown this place will be no more.

In 40 years I wonder how much of this experience will I or they recall.

Like a giant setting for a stage play or movie after the action was
over.

That big outdoor auditorium had one occupant -. A tiny bedraggled
cloth doll on the end of the last row. x

The elevated projection building behind and above the rows of
bench seats looked somewhat like an overgrown birdhouse with
its door open and swinging in the late afternoon breeze.

For the first time since early May the guard towers at the perimeter
corners of the Center had no occupants and the main gate to the
Center had no guard on duty.

No one had been left behind they were all gone.

Every sign of occupancy that remained reminded me of industrious
people. But the aura of energy was gone.

It was strange to note that every necessity to house, feed and accom-
odate 5,000 people were here no longer needed.

I knew that the armed services would use the facilities soon but
I am sure it will never be used as a community for families again.

Every trace of the Japanese evacuees existence here will soon
vanish and I am quite sure the City of Fresno will soon forget
that the Japanese were ever housed here. x

Probably few of the very young that lived here the past six
months will recall a single memory of the place in five years.

Within a few days I too will be gone from here. Heading north
within weeks for another unforeseeable adventure war caused
adventure in the Pacific Northwest. x

I am sure I shall never forget those gentle people with faces
like the enemy. x