

Internment at Santo Tomas University, a Podcast

by
Ryan Atwood

A THESIS

submitted to
Oregon State University
Honors College

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Honors Baccalaureate of Science in Mechanical Engineering
(Honors Scholar)

Presented June 2, 2017
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Abstract approved: _____

Thomas Bahde

The Santo Tomas University Internment Camp Podcast tells the story of a prison camp run by the Japanese in the Philippines during World War Two, told through a scrapbook created by two internees named Frank and Mildred Miles. Consisting of two parts, an academic portion which focuses on the historical analysis of the scrapbook, and a series of podcast scripts, which aim to tell the story in a relatable manner.

Key Words: Santo Tomas Internment Camp, World War Two, Philippines, Scrapbook, Frank and Mildred Miles, Prisoners of War, Manila, Podcast

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Honors Baccalaureate of Science in Mechanical Engineering project of Ryan Atwood presented on June 2, 2017.

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Ryan Atwood, Author

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Introduction

In February of 1945, on the island of Luzon in the Philippines, Frank and Mildred Miles were finally free. They had spent three years alongside their daughter Janet, her husband Bert, and their two daughters inside of a Japanese internment camp, and had been liberated by the American army. After the war, Mildred and Frank shared the story of their years of captivity with friends, family, and newspapers. At some point, they collected the photographs, the articles, the letters, and they made a scrapbook about their experience in the camp. The scrapbook serves as a form of living memory.

As you turn each page, a new aspect of their life inside of Santo Tomas Internment Camp is revealed. Hand drawn maps of the internment camp give a sense of space and community. Letters reveal their day to day efforts to maintain normalcy. Photographs show emaciated men, women, and children embracing American soldiers on the day of their liberation. The scrapbook serves as a visual guide to their story, to help Frank and Mildred remember and explain.

This is why I have chosen to create a podcast to narrate the story told by the items within the scrapbook. A scrapbook is only part of the story, it provides images and items to illustrate the story, but it is meant to be paired with a spoken narrative. Someone who sits beside you and guides you from page to page, telling you why they chose the items inside, and telling you the story behind the items. The podcast is an attempt to do that, share the story behind the items with a listener who lacks the historical understanding of the events, helping them to see the significance of the items inside.

To tell this story, I need to understand the history behind the camp, and the Pacific War in general. My thesis begins by examining how thousands of Americans came to be

living in the Philippines when the Japanese invaded, and why the Japanese chose to invade the Philippines. While the scrapbook makes little mention of either of these topics, they are both necessary in order to understand the scrapbook and the story inside.

Once the historical context is put into place, the scrapbook can be directly examined. Like chapters in a book, the order the items appear in the scrapbook help guide the overarching story. The items inside the scrapbook form a narrative, loosely tied together through the physical arrangement. Frank and Mildred arranged the items and the pages inside to tell a story, to share with family and friends.

But Frank and Mildred Miles are no longer here to tell this story, and the scrapbook has become separated from their living relatives. What story can we glean from its pages? What is missing from the scrapbook, what stories were they unable to tell, and why would someone want to remember an experience filled with hunger, fear, and the constant possibility of death? Frank and Mildred Miles made this scrapbook to share the story of their time in the camp, and to tell others about how the internees at Santo Tomas Internment Camp faced imprisonment with strength, community, and honor.

The American Empire

The last quarter of the 19th century is known as the age of imperialism, as rival European nations carved swaths of Asia and Africa for themselves. The Russians, Ottomans, and Chinese empires spread across vast land empires, while the French, British, and Spanish grew overseas. Belgium, Great Britain, France and Germany established colonies in Africa, and parts of China were fought over by all the European powers. By the 1900s nearly all of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific was controlled by these empires. In this world of global empires, the United States was considered a second rate

power at best. While the U.S. had not yet expanded overseas, Manifest Destiny had driven Americans westward across the North American continent, officially incorporating the modern west coast in 1846 with the signing of the Oregon Treaty with Great Britain. In 1890, the U.S. Census Bureau declared the frontier closed. Americans had spread so widely across the country that there was no longer a clear boundary between settled and unsettled land. The idealism of Manifest Destiny persisted, yet it seemed to have nowhere to go.¹

This same year, Naval Officer Alfred T. Mahan published his highly influential book *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*. In it, Mahan extolled the importance of a large navy, along with a strong network of overseas bases to support it. Mahan's work was read and applauded worldwide. The largest empire the world had ever seen patrolled every ocean with its massive fleet. The sun never set on the British Empire. Mahan also had a solution for the Americans, who "must now begin to look outward." Having reached their natural borders, with Mahan's words ringing in their ears, Americans once again looked west, but now they stared far across the Pacific. Businessmen saw a massive untapped market for American goods in China, as well as products they could bring back to U.S. households that were clamoring for foreign goods such as clothing and spices. Missionaries saw millions of souls to be saved, and politicians saw American security, as well as the opportunity to ride the train of Manifest Destiny as far as it would go. Mahan's influence encouraged top officials in the White House to begin eyeing Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Cuba as potential strategic naval bases. In 1893 American planters in Hawaii staged a coup, overthrowing the Hawaiian government and then petitioning the U.S. to annex the islands. However this annexation fell into political limbo as it was overshadowed by events much closer to home.²

¹ Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!: An American History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014), 664-665.

² Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 666-667.

A rising independence movement in Cuba had attempted to throw off its Spanish rulers in 1868, and only after ten years of fighting were the Spanish able to quell the uprising. In 1895 rebellion again broke out, and the island was embroiled in war. The Spanish were lambasted for their conduct in the war by the American press. Unable to distinguish combatants from civilians, the Spanish resorted to herding Cubans into detention camps, destroying crops, and brutal treatment of anyone suspected of helping the guerrillas. American newspapers reported the detention camps, the starving people, and the disease that spread through the Cuban people like wildfire. Popular opinion quickly shifted against the Spanish, but for the next three years, the American government did nothing to intervene.³

On February 15th, 1898, the American battleship *Maine* was rocked by a massive explosion while docked in a Cuban harbor, destroying the ship and claiming just under 270 lives. The American press wasted no time blaming Spain for the explosion, though later investigations concluded it had been an accident, and calls for retribution against the Spaniards rained down on Congress and the White House. By the end of April, President McKinley asked Congress for a declaration of war, such that the U.S. might assist the Cuban people in their struggle for “Liberty and Freedom.” The ensuing war lasted only four months, with the US suffering fewer than 400 deaths. But what seemed like a quick and easy war spiraled beyond its original goal of liberating the Cuban people. Despite originating in Cuba, the Spanish-American War was an international conflict. The decisive battle of the war occurred half the world away, when an American fleet destroyed the Spanish armada in

³ Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 667.

Manila Bay, the most important harbor in the Philippines, another outpost of Spain's crumbling empire that yearned for freedom.⁴

The treaty that ended the Spanish-American War granted the United States the Philippine archipelago, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Cuba was granted provisional independence, and the U.S. was granted a lease on naval stations in Cuba, most notably Guantanamo Bay.⁵ These newly acquired territories provided the U.S. with strategically important bases, and opened the door for further trade with South America and Asia. Emilio Aguinaldo, a leader of the Philippine resistance against the Spanish, wrote a letter that was published in American newspapers in which he describes his initial optimism about U.S. intervention, and the subsequent betrayal of its political principles:

“In combination with our forces, you compelled Spain to surrender... Joy abounded in every heart, and all went well... until... the government at Washington... Commenc[ed] by ignoring all promises that had been made and end[ed] by ignoring the Philippine people, their personality and rights, and treating them as a common enemy... In the face of the world you emblazon humanity and Liberty upon your standard, while you cast your political constitutions to the winds and attempt to trample down and exterminate a brave people whose only crime is that they are fighting for their liberty.”⁶

The United States arrived as liberators, but when it became clear they had no plans to leave, they simply became the new oppressors. Emilio Aguinaldo led a war against the American occupation, and the United States became guilty of the same crimes they had derided the

⁴ Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 667-670.

⁵ Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 670.

⁶ Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 675.

Spanish for committing just a few years earlier. From 1899 to 1902, American forces fought a guerilla resistance in a foreign nation, and they responded harshly. Unable to distinguish enemy combatants from civilians, a scorched earth campaign was waged against the Filipinos. Villages burnt to the ground, crops destroyed, prisoners tortured, and men, women, and children were executed. In fighting their “Splendid Little War” against the Spanish, the United States stumbled into one of the darkest, yet least remembered periods of American history. More than four thousand American soldiers died in the war, and an estimated 20,000 Filipino soldiers lost their lives as well. But these numbers are dwarfed by the civilian losses: 34,000 civilians were killed as a direct result of the fighting, and another two-hundred thousand died from a cholera epidemic exacerbated by the destruction of the war.⁷ While the war officially ended in 1902, pockets of resistance continued to fight until 1913. This tense relationship would remain for the coming decades, gradually easing until the 1930s, when preparations commenced to grant the Philippines its independence by the mid-1940s.⁸

The Rise of the Japanese Empire

Just under two-thousand miles to the north of the Philippines another island nation had existed in near isolation since the early 1600s. Japan’s shogunate had closed off the country, turning inward while enforcing strict restrictions on foreign trade and travel until it was forced to open its doors in 1856, by none other than the United States of America. In 1852, then President Millard Fillmore assigned Commodore Matthew C. Perry to force the opening of Japan to American trade. Over the course of the next four years Perry visited

⁷ Robert Ramsey, *Savage Wars of Peace: Case Studies of Pacification in the Philippines, 1900-1902* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press), 103.

⁸ Louis Morton, *United States Army in WWII: The Pacific: The Fall of the Philippines*, (Pickle Partners Publishing, 2013), Kindle Edition. Chapter One.

Japan twice, and through gifts, intimidation, and a Japanese in crisis, was able to force Japan to give up on its restrictions of foreign trade.⁹

When Japan was forced to look outward, it saw western colonial powerhouses such as Great Britain, France, and Spain as well as the colonies under the heel of these western powers. The Meiji Restoration took place right in the middle of what many historians call the British Imperial Century, and Japanese leaders had front row seats as Great Britain trounced China's Qing Dynasty in the First and Second Opium Wars. China had been the cultural, economic, and military powerhouse of Asia for literally thousands of years, and it had been brought to its knees by a small island nation most Japanese would have never heard of until these events took place.

Seeing the world being split between colonizers and the colonized, the unequal treaties forced on Japan made it abundantly clear which side Japan would end up on if western powers were given a reason to act. With this in mind, Japanese leaders came to the conclusion that the only way to ensure their own sovereignty was to build a military capable of fighting with the west on equal footing. A modern, western style military would need to be built, and to do this, Japan would need men, oil, and steel. The home islands had a ready supply of young men, and it would simply be a matter of conscripting them. However, the second two, oil and steel, those were things Japan severely lacked. For now, the military could make do with what was available in Japan and what it could buy on the international market, but it would need more in the coming years.

⁹ George Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 212-213.

Japan's first opportunity to improve its own national safety and material situation came in 1894. A series of peasant riots in Korea led to the Korean king, a Chinese protectorate, to ask China for aid in halting the rebellion. China obliged, sending troops to his aid, but a diplomatic disagreement about whether China had informed Japan about the troop movements ensued, and Japan responded by sending eight-thousands of their own troops to Korea. These Japanese troops proceeded to capture the Korean king and install a pro-Japanese faction in the government. The ensuing war between Japan and Korea, now known as the First Sino-Japanese War, was proof of Japan's success in modernizing its military, and China's failure to do the same. Japan managed to push the Chinese forces out of China after only two engagements, and then the war moved into Manchuria, the homeland of the ruling Chinese Dynasty, and the war ended after less than a year of breaking out. Japan ended the war with the treaty of Shimonoseki, which granted Japan control over Taiwan, the Liaodong Peninsula, and a large cash payment.¹⁰

Greater challenges loomed with Russia. In its endless quest for a warm water port, Russia had been eyeing the Liaodong Peninsula for some time. Backed up by France and Germany, this Triple Intervention made a simple demand to Japan. It could keep Taiwan, it could keep the money, but it had to return the Liaodong Peninsula to China. Japan was in no way ready to face the combined force of Russia, France, and Germany, and as soon as Japan had left the peninsula, Russia arranged to lease the land from China, and then occupied it, stationing its Pacific Naval Fleet in the major port of the Peninsula, known as Port Arthur. Worse than the humiliation, however, was the dangerous position this turnover created for Japan. Russia was now able to patrol the Asiatic waters with impunity, threatening Japan's

¹⁰ Michael Seth, *A History of Korea: From Antiquity to the Present* (Lanham: Rowmand & Littlefield, 2010), 225.

access to the war supplies, the aforementioned oil and steel, which Japan so desperately needed to feed its war machine. To make matters worse, Russia quickly began to expand its influence in both Manchuria and Korea.¹¹

In 1900, just five years after Russia occupied the Liaodong Peninsula, the Boxer Rebellion broke out in China. A heavily anti-foreign rebellion, foreigners and their property were targeted by the rebels, and foreign powers quickly intervened to protect their citizens. Russia used this opportunity to send two-hundred-thousand troops into Manchuria in order to “protect” their holdings. However, when the rebellion had been squashed, and treaties signed, the Russian forces remained in Manchuria. Now when Japan looked west it saw a growing Russian threat in Manchuria, right on the edge of and encroaching into Korea, and this was a situation Japan felt it could not tolerate. To Japanese leaders, war seemed inevitable. Russia needed to be pushed out of Manchuria, and Korea needed to be firmly under Japanese control. Anything less would risk the safety of the home islands, as well as Japan’s access to oil and steel.¹²

But Japan was not immediately ready to take on Russia. It needed time to expand the army and navy, and preparations and plans would need to be made. Diplomatic negotiations were attempted between the two countries to avoid war, but by 1904 the rising tensions finally snapped, and the Russo Japanese war began on February 8th, 1904, with Japan initiating the conflict with a tactic for which they would become infamous, the sneak attack. Three hours before the Japanese declaration of war was received by the Russian government, Japan attacked Port Arthur, the very port the Russians had “stolen” from Japan ten years

¹¹ Isaac Meyer, “The Maelstrom, Part 1”. *History of Japan*. Podcast audio, Sept. 3, 2016. <http://historyofjapan.libsyn.com/episode-163-the-maelstrom-part-1>

¹² Isaac Meyer, “The Maelstrom, Part 2”. *History of Japan*. Podcast audio, Sept. 10, 2016. <http://historyofjapan.libsyn.com/episode-164-the-maelstrom-part-2>

earlier. The Russian fleet was bottled up in the port by Japanese ships and mines, and Japanese troops began landing on the peninsula. What followed on the land has been called a “preview” of World War One by many historians. The fighting was hard, slow, and costly for both sides. After a year and a half of this, Japan was finally able to win, ending the campaign with a textbook victory against the Russian Baltic fleet which had been sent to reinforce their Pacific fleet. The war officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth on September 5th, 1905. Russia agreed to return Manchuria to China, give up their territorial ambitions in East Asia, give the Liaodong Peninsula and Port Arthur to Japan, and recognize Japan as the dominant power in Korea. It was the first Asian nation to win a war against a western power, and it quickly set to work strengthening its position. Korea was declared a Japanese protectorate just a month after the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth. Just five years after becoming a protectorate, Korea was simply annexed into Japan with the signing of the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1910.¹³

When the First World War broke out Japan joined the Entente Powers and captured German territories in Asia. This provided Japan the opportunity to further escalate its influence in China, and increase its forces in its various colonies. When the war ended, Japan gained a permanent seat on the newly formed Council of the League of Nations, and kept control of the once German territories it had captured. However, when Japan attempted to add a racial equality clause to the Treaty of Versailles, it was rejected by the Western powers.¹⁴

The years following the Great War were hard for Japan. In 1926 the country was hit with a recession, which was only further exacerbated by the Great Depression in 1929. This

¹³ Saburō Ienaga, *The Pacific War: 1931-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 6.

¹⁴ John Costello, *The Pacific War: 1941-1945* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), 33-34.

economic instability lead to political instabilities that showed the weakness of the Japanese legislature. During this, the military was seen as a beacon of stability in trying times, and its political influence grew accordingly. The design of the Japanese government had a flaw that the military was able to exploit with reckless abandon. The law required that the roles of Army Minister and Navy Minister be filled by active duty officers nominated by the Army and Navy. If a prime minister failed to fill these positions, he would be required to resign. This gave the Army and Navy a complete veto on any prime minister who did not support their goals, and they used this veto to make sure that military demands were met.¹⁵

Beyond the military control of the civilian government, the military struggled to control its own rank and file. On September 18th, 1931, a Japanese lieutenant detonated a small bomb near a Japanese owned railroad in Manchuria. The army used this as an excuse to invade Manchuria, quickly overrunning the Chinese and establishing a puppet state called Manchukuo.¹⁶

The false flag bombing was condemned by international groups, and the League of Nations called on Japan to abandon its conquests in Manchuria. Japan refused, and eventually would leave the League of Nations in 1933 due to this dispute.

The invasion of Manchuria is the point at which historian Saburō Ienaga says the Pacific War truly starts. At this point, Japan becomes more and more entangled in what it would call “The China Incident.” This entanglement will continue to plague Japan as it attempts to quash Chinese nationalists and communists, both of which will try to throw off the Japanese.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ienaga, *The Pacific War*, 33-36.

¹⁶ Ienaga, *The Pacific War*, 37.

¹⁷ Ienaga, *The Pacific War*, 37-38.

As Japan's war in China continued to escalate, international condemnation of the Japanese and American support for the Chinese grew. Then President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was encouraged to aid the Chinese, but his focus was on the war in Europe, and therefore used more diplomatic and material means of aiding the Chinese.¹⁸ In order to aide both of America's allies, Roosevelt encouraged Congress to pass the Lend-Lease Act, allowing military aid to be supplied to Britain and China without compensation.¹⁹ By the end of 1941 nearly 170 million dollars' worth of loans were provided to the Chinese Nationalists.²⁰ This aid to the Chinese strengthened their fight against the Japanese, but further infuriated the Japanese high command, who saw it as a foreign power meddling in their own sphere of influence. Reaching out for assistance, the Japanese found friends in the Germans and the Italians, signing the Tripartite Pact in September of 1940.²¹ Now the two conflicts were tied together, the war in Europe and the war in China simply different theaters of what was now truly a world war. In response to the alliance America continued to pressure the Japanese. A month after the signing of the Tripartite Pact the American-Japanese commercial treaty that had been in place for nearly thirty years was abrogated, and Congress granted President Roosevelt the authority to control exports to Japan. With this new power, Roosevelt cut off American exports of oil, scrap metal, and aviation gasoline to the Japanese. By early 1941 nearly all iron, steel, gas, and other war materials were forbidden to be sold to the Japanese.²²

This increased pressure on the Japanese put them in a difficult position. They did not have access to enough oil and metal on their own to supply their war needs, but also felt

¹⁸ Costello, *The Pacific War*, 76.

¹⁹ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 525-526.

²⁰ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, Kindle edition, ch. 1.

²¹ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 531.

²² Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 531-532.

obligated to continue fighting. The war in China had been going on for nearly a decade for the Japanese, to give up now would dishonor the sweat and blood that had already been shed, as well as weaken Japan's position as a world power. What Japan needed was direct access to the resources the Americans were denying them, and the closest place they could find it was in Southeast Asia. Unwilling to compromise with the United States, the Japanese settled on an invasion of the Dutch East Indies and British Malaya, where they could obtain supplies of oil and metal. However, these areas were protected by the combined forces of the Americans, British, Chinese, and Dutch referred to as the "ABCD" alliance by the Japanese. They recognized that they could not simply seize British and Dutch holdings without provoking the Americans to join the fight, so the Japanese deemed it necessary to open the fight with attacks against each member of the alliance. The plan was simple in concept: attack suddenly against all enemies, crippling any possibilities of a swift counterattack. While the ABCD alliance was reeling from the sudden offensive, the Japanese would seize the supply of oil and metal necessary to continue Japanese war production, and establish a strong defensive line in the Pacific. With defenses in place, the Japanese hoped to force the ABCD alliance to the negotiating table where they could work out a favorable peace. This plan relied heavily on the success of negotiations. Even if Japan secured the supplies of oil and metal it needed, Japanese production was nowhere near that of the Americans. The hope was that the Americans would be too focused on the war in Europe, and give up on their Pacific holdings once they had been lost. With this plan in mind, the Japanese began their preparations.²³

²³ Ienaga, *The Pacific War*, 129-135.

To prepare for the new war in Southeast Asia Japan signed a neutrality pact with the Soviet Union in April of 1941, freeing the Japanese from needing to defend their northern frontiers and allowing transfer of men and material to Southern China. In July Japanese forces occupied naval and air force bases in Southern Indochina, further alarming the ABCD alliance, as Japanese forces were now within striking range of the Dutch East Indies, British Malaya, and the Philippines. Each member of the ABCD alliance began preparing for war, but they did not realize how quickly it would come.

The Military Invasion of the Philippines

For those west of the International Date Line, the “date which will live in infamy” came on the eighth of December, 1941. While Pearl Harbor is the best-remembered attack, it was quickly followed by simultaneous Japanese attacks on British Malaya, Singapore, Guam, Hong Kong, Wake Island, and the Philippines. Word of the attack on Pearl Harbor reached the Philippines at 2:30 in the morning. A state of war was announced immediately and American and Filipino troops were ordered to battle positions. Those living in the Philippines had been dreading this day for months if not years, and knew that Japanese forces would likely target the Philippines.²⁴ Unlike in the United States, the declaration of war was not met with cheering and demonstrations, but “a grim, thoughtful silence.”²⁵ War in Asia was not a remote conflict to be enjoyed over the television or radio. To those in the Philippines it quickly became a close and immediate reality.

The attacks on Pearl Harbor threw out the aggressive plans that General MacArthur had hoped to implement. The Philippines were cut off and isolated, the nearest American base over five thousand miles away. With no hope of quick reinforcements, the Philippines

²⁴ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, Kindle edition, ch. 5.

²⁵ Richard Mallonée, *Bataan Diary*, I, 34.

relied solely on the Far East Air Force and the Asiatic Fleet to defend itself. Five hundred miles away from Manila, Japanese Army and Navy air forces waited on the island of Formosa, modern Taiwan, for the chance to destroy the last of the Philippine defenses.²⁶

American commanders were conflicted over how to respond to the Japanese threat to the Philippines, and before any decisions were made, the Japanese pounced. One hundred and eight Japanese bombers accompanied by eighty-four Zero fighters left in formation for the Philippines, and arrived at Clark Airfield near Manila at a perfect time for themselves, and the worst possible time for the American air forces stationed there. American antiaircraft defenses were woefully out of date. The 3-inch guns used ammunition manufactured nearly a decade beforehand, and only one of every six shells exploded after firing. Those that did explode missed their targets by nearly a mile, simply unable to achieve the altitude of the Japanese bombers. The American air fleet stationed at Clark Airfield had been patrolling the skies just hours before, but had been called down to refuel and repair in preparation for offensive action, and were now caught impotent on the ground. A few American planes attempted to take off before being bombed, but only three succeeded, and another five were destroyed during the attempt. By the end of the hour over half of the American bomber force had been destroyed, leaving only seventeen B-17s operational. Fifty-three P-40s and three P-35s were destroyed, along with thirty other aircraft of various designs. All the remaining planes were heavily damaged. In this attack eighty Americans were killed, and over 150 wounded. The Japanese only lost seven fighters.²⁷

The attack on Clark Airfield repeated itself throughout the Philippines at other, smaller airfields. American forces were caught unprepared, and by the end of the day

²⁶ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, Kindle edition, ch. 5.

²⁷ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, Kindle edition, ch. 5.

American air superiority had been destroyed. The American Navy faced a similar fate. Now in control of the skies, Japanese aircraft could bomb Navy outposts at will, targeting the small and spread out Asiatic Fleet. The fleet near Manila consisted only of five destroyers, two of which were under repair, twenty-seven submarines, and three of which were being overhauled, twenty-eight small patrol boats, a handful of utility planes, and ten utility boats.

When General MacArthur had taken control of the American forces in the Philippines, he had hoped to respond to Japanese aggression with force. Rather than simply fighting a delaying action as the original war plans had stipulated, he wished to use the Philippines as launching pad for naval and aerial attacks on the Japanese, preventing them from successfully landing on the Philippines and pushing them back to the mainland. However, these first few days of attacks had destroyed the offensive potential of both the navy and the air force, as well as allowing the Japanese to control strong footholds on Luzon. Any hope for an aggressive campaign was over, and so General MacArthur fell back to the original war plans of a defensive delaying action.²⁸

Titled “War Plan Orange,” the American plan was adopted by the military in 1924. It was a plan for the possibility of a surprise attack by the Japanese in the Pacific, and that the Americans would have no significant aid from other powers when fighting the war. This plan assumed that the Philippines would not be able to be saved, and eventually would need to be recaptured by American forces as they conducted an island hopping campaign through the Pacific. Until these forces could arrive, the American military in the Philippines would seek to slow and delay the Japanese as much as possible, enduring a long siege without aid.²⁹

²⁸ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, Kindle edition, ch. 12.

²⁹ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, Kindle edition, ch. 4.

MacArthur ordered his men to begin the delaying action and prepare for the siege. To slow the Japanese advance on Manila, MacArthur ordered that seven lines cutting Luzon from east to west be formed. The army would defend the northernmost line as long as possible, and once it became too difficult to hold, the army retreated to the next line, destroying bridges, roads, and encampments as they moved southward. This process repeated itself over the course of December, and as the month reached its end preparations for the final siege were made. The final siege would take place on the Bataan Peninsula, a name that would become infamous in American history. Overlooking Manila Bay, the Americans could deny the Japanese the use of the bay for as long as they controlled the high ground on Bataan. As they prepared to hole up on this rocky outcropping, food, ammunition, and medical supplies were brought in to supply the army. As the final retreat to the peninsula began, Manila was declared an open city on December 26th, allowing the Japanese to occupy it without resistance.³⁰

The Invasion of the Philippines from the Civilian Perspective

While the American and Japanese governments attempted in vain to avoid war, many Americans living in Asia began to see conflict as inevitable. Others laughed it off, thinking Japan would never attack the United States, and that if war were to occur it would be the United States that would take the offensive, not Japan. Americans living in the Philippines saw the rising tensions in a different light. Each day news reached them of the ever encroaching Japanese threat. The Manila papers published stories of convoys of over one hundred ships moving south through the China Sea. Reports of fighting near Hong

³⁰ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, Kindle edition, ch. 13.

Kong raised fears still further. The capture of the Spratly Islands, a group of islands halfway between the mainland and the Philippines, was an alarm bell that many could not ignore.³¹

Despite the increasing activity by the Japanese, to those living in Manila, the United States did not seem to be taking precautionary action. Washington was still hoping for peace with Japan, and far too focused on the conflict in Europe. This lack of action led many Americans to take matters into their own hands. In January of 1941, a group of American businessmen and officials met in the Elks Club of Manila to discuss what actions they could take to prepare for war. They were focused on protecting the welfare of American civilians in the Philippines, and sought to work with the U.S. Army, Navy, and U.S. High Commissioner's office to help protect civilians and their interests. This group of men came to be called the "American Coordinating Committee." Meeting once a week, they planned locations of air raid shelters, evacuation areas, and instructed civilians to stock up on food, clothing and medical supplies. The committee urged anyone who was "non-essential," mostly talking to women and children, to return to the United States.³²

When war finally came on December 8th, Manila time, those still in the Philippines congregated in Manila. Last minute attempts to leave the islands for the United States, India, or Australia proved fruitless. Captains refused to go to sea for fear of being bombed or torpedoed by Japanese forces. Ships that had been attempted to leave Southeast Asia poured into Manila Bay, increasing the population of foreigners still further. They were stuck in the Philippines.³³

³¹ Frederic Stevens, *Santo Tomas Internment Camp* (Stratford House, Inc., 1946), 1.

³² Stevens, *Santo Tomas Internment Camp*, 3-5.

³³ Celia Lucas, *Prisoners of Santo Tomas* (Trowbridge: Redwood Burn Limited, 1975), 3-5.

By December 20th, it was clear that Manila would be taken by the Japanese. Knowing that any Americans caught by the Japanese would be interned, the American Coordinating Committee took matters into their own hands. They approached the officials of Santo Tomas University, asking if the campus could be used as an internment camp for the civilian population should the Japanese require internment. The authorities readily agreed, and a letter was prepared and sent to the United States High Commissioner's office informing him of the university's willingness to host the Americans.³⁴

On the second of January, 1942, the Japanese arrived in Manila. A battalion of Japanese soldiers on bicycles streamed through the city, followed by trucks and official cars.³⁵ Quickly establishing their presence in the city, all of the major buildings were occupied, and throughout the city cries of "Bonzai!" could be heard from the city stadium.³⁶ As civilians waited in their homes to see what the Japanese occupation would bring, the soldiers went from door to door, searching homes, requisitioning anything useful, and seizing valuables. When the Japanese Commander, a General Homma, arrived in Manila, he was greeted by officials from the U.S. High Commissioner's Office, and presented with the letter prepared by the American Coordinating Committee. General Homma sent a group of men to inspect the location mentioned in the letter.³⁷

The next day, January 3rd, the Manila Tribune was distributed, a special edition written under the supervision and directive of the Japanese. The paper confirmed that the Japanese now controlled Manila, and warned citizens to behave. The Japanese warned that

³⁴ Stevens, *Santo Tomas Internment Camp*, 3-5.

³⁵ Dorothy Danner, *What a Way to Spend a War: Navy Nurse POWs in the Philippines* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 70.

³⁶ Danner, *What a Way to Spend a War*, 70.

³⁷ Stevens, *Santo Tomas Internment Camp*, 6.

for each violation of Japanese orders, a ten-to-one reprisal would be doled out. Large posters were plastered throughout the city, listing rules for all civilians, ordering them to “salute Japanese soldiers when you meet them” and to place Japanese flags in doorways. Certificates of residency and other official papers should be carried at all times, and a curfew was enforced. In addition to these orders, all Americans and Europeans were instructed to present themselves for registration. Told that it would be a short term affair, they were told only to bring three days’ worth of food and clothing. Brought to various locations throughout the city, the internees would linger in limbo for some time while they waited to be registered.³⁸

On January 4th, all foreigners who had been placed in “protective custody” by the Japanese were instructed that they would be transferred to Santo Tomas University to finalize their registration. Brought in with buses, around three hundred civilians were brought to the university that first day. Another 1700 arrived on the fifth, and by the middle of January the camp's population had risen to nearly 3500 people. As more and more people crowded into the camp, and nobody left after the supposed “three day stay” they had been promised, it became clear to even the hopeful that this would not be a short term situation.³⁹

The First Days at Santo Tomas Internment Camp

Frank and Mildred Miles were an American couple living in Manila when the war broke out. When the Japanese ordered that all Americans report for registration, they did as they were told, along with their daughter Janet and her husband Bert Searl. The Japanese sent Santo Tomas where they began to live a new life, like the thousands of other “enemy aliens” that had been herded into the camp. Years later, when the war had ended, Frank and

³⁸ Danner, *What a Way to Spend a War*, 71-81.

³⁹ Stevens, *Santo Tomas Internment Camp*, 7-16.

Mildred would make a scrapbook about their experience in the camp. Filled with photographs, newspaper articles, and documents from the camp itself, this scrapbook tells the story that the Miles family wanted to tell about the camp, and the life they led inside it.

Civilians were originally brought into the camp under the pretense of registration, though the internees quickly figured out that this would not be a short stay. Nonetheless each internee was expected to fill out a form with pertinent information for the Japanese government, and a copy of this form has been saved in the scrapbook. Under the title “Personal Report,” Frank Miles has filled out the form in its entirety, and from this we can learn more about both Frank and Mildred, and what the Japanese wanted to know about enemy aliens in the Philippines. When he filled out the form it had been fifty-one years since Frank was born in Meadow Grove, Nebraska. He and his wife had been living in the Philippines for twelve years, and at the time of internment worked as an executive of a public utility. He had brought sixty pesos with him into the camp, and had another nine-hundred in the local bank. This form included other small pieces of information like which room he had been assigned to, and included strict instructions that each internee must fill out the form and return it by noon on Friday, January 9th, 1942.⁴⁰

These first days were hectic for the internees. Some still hoped that they would be freed in the coming days, allowed to return to the city once the registration was complete. The internees were isolated behind the iron fence of Santo Tomas University, and they lacked the food and supplies necessary for a long stay inside the camp. There wasn't nearly enough food for the thirty-five-hundred internees, and many people had spent the first few nights sleeping on the concrete floor, having not brought beds with them. None of this

⁴⁰ *Mildred and Frank Miles Scrapbook of the Santo Tomás Internment Camp, 1942-1947*, Special Collections and Archives Research Center (SCARC), Valley Library, Oregon State University.

could be found inside the camp, and the Japanese were unwilling to help. The internees had to seek outside aid in order to feed and supply themselves.

Propaganda, Food, and Filipinos

In the scrapbook there is a small yellow pamphlet, a piece of paper folded in half with a drawing of a mother, daughter, and grandmother embracing, titled “Folks At Home.” The pamphlet explains that the Americans are using the Filipinos to “pick their chestnuts from the fire” and that the Americans are the true aggressors in the Pacific War. Drawing from the troubled history between the Americans and the Filipino people, it claims that the Filipinos have been “abused, exploited, [and] neglected” by the Americans, and that while inside the internment camps the Americans continue to “scorn” and “make fun of” the Filipino people. The pamphlet sought to isolate the Americans from the Filipinos.⁴¹

Next to the pamphlet the Miles wrote “Propaganda used by the Japanese to turn the Filipinos against the Americans. They had little success in this.” Despite the efforts of the Japanese propagandists, the Miles family had confidence in the Filipino people. The experience of the Miles family while in the camp helps explain why they had such faith in the Filipinos. Throughout the stories told about Santo Tomas, the writers make sure to highlight the generosity that the Filipino friends, co-workers, and servants showed towards the internees.

In these first days of the camp, the Filipinos people proved themselves to the Miles family. Each morning the iron fence of the camp was packed with Filipinos. Barred from entering, they brought food, clothing, newspapers, notes, soap, and other basic necessities for their friends and employers inside the camp. The Japanese did not approve of this, but

⁴¹ Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

there was little they could do. “[The fence] was so crowded that ... they held up placards with their names written on them.”⁴² Once the recipient was found, the goods were pushed through the bars of the iron fence.

Eventually the Japanese weaved palm fronds and split bamboo into the fence, preventing anything from passing through it, but then the Filipinos simply took to throwing the items over the fence. The Japanese attempted to stop the smuggling by creating a ring of bamboo fences one meter inside the walls, but still the Filipinos persisted and items went through. Finally the Japanese opened a package inspection line, allowing food and other necessities into the camp after proper inspection for contraband. In the later years of the camp even this privilege would be revoked, but for the time being it was a major source of food and information in the camp.⁴³

Camp Government

The Japanese largely left the camp to run itself, and established the Executive Committee as the internal government of the camp. Headed by Earl Carroll, an insurance executive before the war, the committee was filled with businessmen who had been living in Manila before the war.⁴⁴ Having organized themselves, they set about the task of organizing and running the camp. The Japanese survey “Investigation of Public Opinion” asked internees how long they believed the war would last. Some were convinced it would be over in a few months, others were more pessimistic. One man had managed to bring three years of vitamin supplements with him, based on his estimate of how long the war would last.⁴⁵ Despite their disagreement of the exact length of the war, the internees were all aware that

⁴² *Filipinos Smuggled Food Into Jap Camp, Nurse Captive Says*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁴³ Lucas, *Prisoners of Santo Tomas*, 16.

⁴⁴ Stevens, *Santo Tomas Internment Camp*, 12-13.

⁴⁵ Lucas, *Prisoners of Santo Tomas*, 13.

they would be in the camp for much longer than the three days originally promised. With this in mind they set out to make the camp their new home, with the Executive Committee leading the way. The Executive Committee would be the internee government for the duration of their imprisonment. They set about organizing and running the camp, spawning committees, each with its own sphere of influence. They covered anything and everything that needed organization in a densely packed camp like Santo Tomas, “Sanitation and Health” to manage bathrooms and cleanliness around camp, “Building and Construction” to repair leaks and coordinate construction of small buildings, the “Patrol Guard” to police the camp internally, a “kitchen” committee to coordinate the communal food, and even a “Library” committee in charge of maintaining and distributing the universities vast collection.⁴⁶

By the end of the first month the camp had begun to settle into a routine. In the scrapbook there is a photograph titled “First Year in St. Tomas.” In it a circle of men and women are sitting in wooden lawn chairs, a shady tree overhead, the Main Building looming in the background. They seem relaxed, two women appear to be knitting, and a couple of grinning men have noticed the camera. It doesn’t look like a photo of an internment camp. The internees had settled into their routine, this was their home for the time being and they were relatively comfortable.⁴⁷

Escape Attempt

This comfort did not last long before the internees were shocked by a sudden turn of events. On February 12th, just after roll had been called and internees were preparing for bed, three men escaped from the camp. Blakely Borthwick Laycock, Henry Edward Weeks,

⁴⁶ Lucas, *Prisoners of Santo Tomas*, 13.

⁴⁷ Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

and Thomas Henry Fletcher had managed to sneak out of the camp and travel northward, with the intention of joining the men trapped in Bataan. They were caught by the Japanese the next day and dragged back to the camp, where they were interrogated and severely beaten while their room monitor and camp officials were made to watch. The Japanese commandant was furious with the camp. He believed himself to have treated the internees fairly, and felt betrayed at the attempted escape. He stated that “any recurrence will result in death for the escapees and very stringent restrictions for the Internees.”⁴⁸

After being held in the camp jail for a day, the three men were taken to face a Japanese military court martial. There, all three were sentenced to death. The camp was shocked. Many had thought the beatings were the punishment, but those were simply part of an interrogation, used to force the men to say “We deeply regret our actions - we know that we made a mistake and we urge that no one ever attempt it again.” The internees pleaded with the commandant, but he explained that it was not under his authority that the executions had been ordered. When he was presented with a petition to alleviate their sentence, the commandant agreed to take it to the proper persons, but made no promises.⁴⁹

In the end all was for naught. The Japanese court did not budge on the sentence, and on Sunday, February 15th, the three men were taken to Manila North Cemetery. Earl Carroll, Chairman of the camp Executive Committee, the room monitors C. E. Stewart and R. H. Pedder, Reverend Griffiths, and Ernest Stanley (acting as interpreter) accompanied the commandant and other officers to the cemetery. There the three men “were made to sit with their legs hanging into the grave itself,” after which they were shot.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Stevens, *Santo Tomas Internment Camp*, 241-245.

⁴⁹ Stevens, *Santo Tomas Internment Camp*, 7-16.

⁵⁰ Stevens, *Santo Tomas Internment Camp*, 7-16.

The camp remained silent for days after the executions. Camp morale took another massive hit when news arrived that Singapore had fallen to the Japanese on February 15th.⁵¹ Radios were forbidden in the camp, but news filtered through, and the Japanese were happy to talk about their success. Angry, frightened, and looking for a place to put the blame, a rift opened between the British and American internees. The Americans looked down on the British for giving up Singapore so easily while the Americans were fighting tooth and nail in Bataan. The British blamed the Americans for egging Japan into war in the first place, and not supporting their allies.⁵² The Japanese happily encouraged the discontent. In the scrapbook, a copy of a survey produced by the Japanese can be found. It is titled “Investigation of Public Opinion” and asks “Which is more responsible for the outbreak of the present war among Japan, America and Britain. America or Britain?”⁵³

Christmas 1942

Details about the rest of 1942 are scarce in the scrapbook, with one major exception, Christmas. As December approached, the internees prepared for the holiday season. Many had missed Christmas of 1941 due to the chaos after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and they intended not to miss another, even if it would occur behind the walls of an internment camp. Groups of adults collected scrap wood, cloth, and metal, and bought whatever was available, and funneled it all to a team of “Santa’s Little Helpers.” Carpenters, engineers, seamstresses, anyone who could craft worked together to make toys and gifts of all kinds for the 3500 internees. The workers made scooters, trucks, puzzles, toys, stuffed animals, dolls, and complete doll wardrobes, and for the adults, hand carved pipes, cigar and cigarette holders, bamboo beer mugs, whatever they could manage. One mining engineer named

⁵¹ Lucas, *Prisoners of Santo Tomas*, 32.

⁵² Lucas, *Prisoners of Santo Tomas*, 32-33.

⁵³ Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

Weigel made thousands of bamboo knitting needles for the internees, who then used them to knit fresh clothing and blankets. As Christmas approached, the internees hosted a toy fair, where the workers showed off what they had made, trading, buying, and selling whatever extra they had. Filipinos donated broken toys and Santa's Little Helpers repaired them. Americans still living outside of the camp due to illness or old age sent in gifts, one couple named Cliff and Kate Billings donated toys for a dozen children. Donations of food by the Filipinos filled internee stomachs, scores of roasted turkeys and pigs, as well as ice cream, cakes, and candy.⁵⁴

In mid-December, the Japanese ship *Teia Maru* arrived in Manila carrying Red Cross Comfort Kits, one for each internee.⁵⁵ The comfort kits were huge and heavy, filled to the brim with things the internees hadn't seen in months.⁵⁶ In the scrapbook a photograph shows a massive crowd of internees waiting in line to receive their kit filled with canned food, butter, vitamins, medicine, and even chocolate.⁵⁷ These kits proved a godsend in the coming years, and were saved by most. As Christmas neared, the camp grew more and more festive, filling up with little trees and paper decorations. Nearly every shanty had its own little Christmas tree, and some even had decorations that had been left from last year. One internee even made a cardboard nativity scene for all to enjoy. Even the Japanese participated, the commandant and first lieutenant giving gifts away to the internees.⁵⁸

The hardship that the internees had faced made Christmas all the better, and it was one they would never forget. As one internee recalled "That Christmas Day will remain with us always. With Japanese soldiers on guard at the gate, Santa arrived. He needed no pass. He

⁵⁴ Raymond Cronin, *Christmas in a Japanese Prison Camp*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁵⁵ Raymond Cronin, *Christmas in a Japanese Prison Camp*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁵⁶ Lucas, Lucas, *Prisoners of Santo Tomas*, 63.

⁵⁷ Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁵⁸ Raymond Cronin, *Christmas in a Japanese Prison Camp*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

went straight to our giant Christmas tree, brought in from the Baguio Mountains, and distributed the hundreds of gifts with words of cheer for each boy and girl.”⁵⁹

After Christmas came New Years, but for the internees the New Year came on January 4th, as it was January 4th, 1941 when the camp was first opened. The day gave the opportunity for the internees to reflect on their full year of internment, and to wonder what awaited them this coming year. Dave Harvey, camp entertainer in chief, produced a radio play titled “Our Time: 1942” and a full copy of the script is in the scrapbook.⁶⁰ The play works its way through the months of the camp, recalling “one of the strangest periods of our lives.” Giving glimpses into “the unpleasant times, the constant and galling restraint, the uncomfortable and crowded quarters, the incessant and inevitable round of work and routine, the strain upon our minds and bodies.” Yet it commends the internees for “[coming] through with colors flying.”⁶¹

Despite the hardship the internees had faced in their first year in the camp, and the uncertainty about their future, despite “the chow, the work, the weather, the snorers, our Uncle, and all the rest,” the play is hopeful. It encourages the internees to keep doing what they’ve done already, to “laugh it off and go right on doing the things we have to do.” The internees did not know how much longer they would be in Santo Tomas Internment Camp, they did not know what the New Year would bring. But they were resolute that they “simply will carry on; steadily, bravely, a bit complainingly, perhaps, but proudly and honorably.”⁶²

⁵⁹ Raymond Cronin, *Christmas in a Japanese Prison Camp*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁶⁰ *Our Time: 1942*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁶¹ *Our Time: 1942*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁶² *Our Time: 1942*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

Camp Conditions in 1943

The year 1943 brought new challenges for the internees, and the conditions inside the camp changed to suit them. During the year one-hundred and fifty internees were repatriated as part of a prisoner exchange, and this was the first major opportunity for information about the camp to reach the outside world. It appears that a family member of the Miles reached out to one of the repatriated internees, a Marjorie A. Davis, and her reply is in the scrapbook. In the three dense pages she explains what the situation inside the camp is like and how the internees live day to day, as well as providing specifics about the Miles family, who she appears to have been close with.⁶³

Davis spends a good deal of the letter describing the food available to the internees. Two meals are served in the camp kitchen each day, except for children who receive three. Fresh fruit and vegetables are brought in Filipinos designated to purchase food for the camp, and when meat or eggs are available they are sold in the camp canteen. Breakfast consists of cornmeal served with a spoonful of sugar every other day, as well as a cup of black coffee. Bread made of rice and cassava flour is prepared and served alongside the dinner meal, which is usually a bean stew, though sometimes it has meat. Davis explains that prices for many commodities such as sugar, meat, and fruit have gone up substantially, the price of a banana being fifteen times what it cost before the war broke out.⁶⁴

By the time Davis left Santo Tomas nearly six hundred shanties had been built across the university campus, offering a retreat for people to enjoy their meager meals. It was also where much of the cooking was done, as Davis explains that many of these shanties have small charcoal stoves. The living arrangements in the buildings had gotten worse as the camp

⁶³ Marjorie Davis, *Letter*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁶⁴ Marjorie Davis, *Letter*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC, 1-2.

population increased, with “an average of about 20 people in a room 35’ x 17’ which makes room for a bed only, and all ones personal belongings have to be kept underneath.” In order to free up space, the Japanese had granted certain men permission to sleep in their shanties.⁶⁵

Davis does not only talk about the general conditions of the camp, but makes sure to describe how the Miles family themselves are doing. She explains that the Miles family has received no word from outside the camp, only two-hundred letters having been admitted into the camp. Despite not being able to communicate with their family in the United States, she explains that the Miles have lots of Filipino friends who help them, and she is “sure they will always have plenty of food.” She isn’t sure what jobs either Frank or Mildred have taken up in their free time in the camp, though she is sure they have taken up some kind of work, but she explains that their time is limited as “washing and cooking and mending for a family keeps one pretty busy all day.” When not working the Miles’ enjoy playing bridge while listening to records broadcast over the camp loudspeaker.⁶⁶

Frank and Mildred are in good health, but their daughter Janet and her husband Bert Searl have had a rather complicated health situation. “[Bert] was not well when war broke out, having ulcers of the stomach and ... nervous tension,” both of which were exacerbated by the lack of proper nutrition. Since entering the camp Janet has “lost a lot of weight and was highly nervous due to a hyper-thyroid condition.” Despite these health troubles, the Searl family had a new member arrive a few months before Davis left. At some point after entering the camp Janet had become pregnant, and was allowed by the Japanese to live in her home until the summer of 1943, at which point all Americans were required to be in some camp, at which point she moved to a smaller camp on the outskirts of Manila. There

⁶⁵ Marjorie Davis, *Letter*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC, 2-3.

⁶⁶ Marjorie Davis, *Letter*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC, 1-2.

she and her husband awaited the baby, who would also be named Janet, and were joined by Mildred Miles just before the birth. A few weeks after the birth the family was brought back to Santo Tomas, where Davis says they still were living by the time she left.⁶⁷

With this wonderful news, Davis goes on to assure the reader that “the morale of the camp is excellent” and that the Miles themselves are “always grand.” She says that those living in the camp want their friends and family not to worry, “for we are all right.” Though she stresses that the internees urged her to not “give them the impression that we want to stay here all our lives.” The community in the camp was strong and working well together, even if they sometimes “get on each others nerves.”⁶⁸

This sense of community had been strengthened by the hardships that the camp endured together, but it also grew from the friendships, competitions, and entertainment that the internees shared. Though each person was expected to work, the average work day was no longer than an hour or two for any individual. Personal chores and work were done outside of this, such as washing clothes, preparing personal meals, and waiting in line, but the internees still had a large portion of their day with nothing to do. Needing a way to fill this time, the internees found ways to entertain themselves. Games of all sorts were played in the camp, such as chess, checkers, go, poker, cribbage, and more.⁶⁹ Some picked up hobbies, such as drawing or carving. These activities created their own clubs and organizations, further strengthening the sense of community inside the camp, and by far one of the most popular forms of community entertainment was sports: American football, soccer, cricket, volleyball, and of course, baseball. Of the many items in the Miles scrapbook, they made

⁶⁷ Marjorie Davis, *Letter*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC, 1-2.

⁶⁸ Marjorie Davis, *Letter*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC, 3.

⁶⁹ Lucas, Lucas, *Prisoners of Santo Tomas*, 47.

sure to include the 1943 baseball schedule which was produced by the Baseball Committee, and sold to internees for 20 centavos each. The ten pages included a game schedule, team rosters with batting averages, and a practice schedule. The men's league boasted eight teams and the women's league four. The games were popular not only because of the number of people playing, but the enthusiasm from those watching. The baseball schedule includes pages dedicated to short quotations from various fans cheering on their favorite teams.⁷⁰

War News and Secret Radio

Though the camp was cut off from directly contacting the outside world, news continued to filter in through various means. Filipino friends continued to sneak notes into the camp about the war situation. Rumors circulated that a secret radio had been smuggled into the camp, and that certain internees were in contact with the American military through the device. This secret radio was not just a rumor, it was a reality. The idea was first brought up by Luis de Alcuaz, a local Filipino scientist who served as secretary to the Rector of Santo Tomas University, and George Newman, shortly before their internment. Using equipment from the physics department of the university, smuggled components, and raw material available inside the camp, construction began on May 15th of 1943. It took several months to complete the device due to a lack of material and the need for absolute secrecy, as the five or six men working on the project were sure that execution awaited them if they were discovered.⁷¹

In the end two receivers and two transmitters were constructed, though only the receivers were tested, as the transmitters were not tested for fear of detection. Once completed, the devices were dismantled into small components so that the pieces could be

⁷⁰ *STIC Baseball Schedule at Santo Tomas Internment Camp: Manila, Philippines*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁷¹ Stevens, *Santo Tomas Internment Camp*, 265-267.

hidden around the camp to avoid detection. These devices would occasionally be reconstructed to listen to radio broadcasts of war news, and through this the internees learned about American military progress in the Pacific.⁷²

Though only a few knew about the radio, the information learned over the radio was shared discretely to help share the news whenever possible. Rumors would circulate through the camp, and camp leadership would find ways to confirm them. A common way this was done was through the music played on the camp loudspeakers. A daily source of entertainment, the loudspeakers played records from the large quantity on campus. Often the music would be chosen to fit the times, such as playing “Singing in The Rain” during three long rainy weeks in July, or “Nothing to Spend But Time” when the Japanese confiscated all currency and replaced it with their own printed money, which would earn the nickname “Mickey Mouse Money.”^{73 74}

In the scrapbook there are several pages titled “War News via Music.” These pages record the music played at the 6:30 am reveille on the camp loudspeaker, and the world event that the camp leadership was confirming to the internees. As the war both in the Pacific and Europe escalated, the rumors circulating in the camp were confirmed through the camp loudspeakers. When in June of 1944 the Americans won the Battle of the Philippine Sea, “The Yanks Are Coming” could be heard throughout the camp, followed by “It’s a Hap, Hap, Happy Day.” News about Europe filtered through as well. Shortly after the Allies invaded Southern France on August 15th, “Midnight in Paris” was played for all to

⁷² Stevens, *Santo Tomas Internment Camp*, 265-267.

⁷³ Stevens, *Santo Tomas Internment Camp*, 265-267.

⁷⁴ *War News in Music*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

hear. News wasn't always ready at hand, and a lack of news brought songs such as "What's New?" and "This Doubting Is Getting Me Down."⁷⁵

As the American forces pushed to the Philippines, more and more news managed to arrive in the camp. On October 20th, an announcement was made before the first song of the day, the camp broadcaster apologizing for being delayed in playing the music, saying "better Leyte than never"⁷⁶ followed by the song "Lulu Has Come To Town." The Americans had landed on the Gulf of Leyte.⁷⁷ This was much needed good news to the internees. As 1944 progressed conditions inside the camp steadily worsened. In the scrapbook, a bulletin produced after internment shows a record of the food supplied to the camp. By 1944 the Japanese had taken over the supply, no longer allowing internees to hire Filipino agents to purchase food for them. In February this supply dropped to just under fifteen-hundred calories. The Japanese were struggling to get supplies to the Philippines, and the rations available to the internees steadily dropped from month to month. By October, each internee only had access to one-thousand calories a day, and only twenty-four grams of protein. Internees were losing weight, on average men would lose fifty-one pounds by the end of their internment, women thirty-two pounds.⁷⁸

As the Americans pushed into the Philippines, the internees could hear the war approach them. Sounds of airplanes, gunfire, and artillery became increasingly common, though the Japanese denied any "rumors" that they were losing the war. A comic produced inside the camp shows a man pointing to the sky shouting "Look! Another rumor!"⁷⁹ The

⁷⁵ *War News in Music*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁷⁶ Angus Lorenzen, *A Lovely Little War: Life in a Japanese Prison Camp Through the Eyes of a Child* (Palisades: History Publishing Company, 2008), 127.

⁷⁷ *War News in Music*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁷⁸ *The Liberation Bulletin of Philippine Internment Camp No. 1*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC, 4.

⁷⁹ *Comic*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

Japanese forbid internees from looking at airplanes as they passed overhead. When three men were caught doing so, they were ordered to stand in a field for several hours, looking straight up.⁸⁰ As the war -- and its end -- grew closer, the Japanese grip on the camp grew stronger.

The Scrapbook and the Philippine Campaign

Frank and Mildred clearly saw themselves as part of the larger story of the war. In their scrapbook they not only preserved material from inside the camp, but newspaper clippings describing the war as well. These clippings are arranged such that they tell the story of the American push towards Manila, and the great effort the Americans put towards freeing the internees. Early in the scrapbook, newspaper articles outline the American drive across the Pacific and finally to the Philippines, an article titled “100,000 Yanks Landed Along Lingayen Gulf” proclaiming the success of the American campaign.⁸¹ A following article describes how MacArthur’s forces begin to expand this foothold on the beaches of the Philippines, using armored columns to seize roads and junctions, pushing six to eight miles inland along the twenty mile beachfront by January 12th, 1945.⁸² An article from the very next day shows the exceptional progress being made, most columns making it twelve miles inland, and the Sixth Army now twenty miles inland.⁸³

This storytelling through article clippings only continues, the next page describes the crossing of the Agno River on January 15th, marking major progress towards Manila.⁸⁴

Alongside this article another describes a captured diary of a Japanese soldier on Luzon, in

⁸⁰ Lorenzen, *A Lovely Little War*, 129.

⁸¹ *100,000 Yanks Landed Along Lingayen Gulf*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁸² *Sixth Expands Its Beachhead In Manila Drive*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁸³ *Sixth Army Advances Steadily Toward Manila*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁸⁴ *Americans Advance on Luzon*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

which the soldier describe the devastation of American aircraft and artillery.⁸⁵ A third article on the page describes the efforts being made on the Japanese home front, including a new labor registration law meant to bolster war industry, and the Japanese Premier admitting that the Pacific situation “does not warrant optimism.”⁸⁶

The articles and clipping included early in the scrapbook focus on the war in general, and after each page close in on the Philippines and the establishment of beachheads on Luzon. Then the articles begin to focus on the drive to capture Manila, such as a newspaper graphic titled “Razzle-Dazzling Japs on Luzon Island” which shows the army columns that pushed from Philippine beaches to Manila.⁸⁷ The next page includes an article describing this four column push on Manila, and how the army had surrounded the city.⁸⁸ Several articles show how the capture of Manila would be an emotional victory for the American forces and not simply a strategic one, such as one article titled “Yanks, Even Sick, Vie To Be First In Manila.”⁸⁹ The next article in the scrapbook is titled “We Will Reach Manila Today, Says M’Arthur” dated February 3rd, 1945.⁹⁰

Liberation

In the scrapbook there is a document titled “The Liberation Bulletin of Philippine Internment Camp No. 1 at Santo Tomas University.” This document is a treasure trove of information about the camp, and includes a timeline of major events in the camp. The entry on February 3rd, 1945 reads: “10 U.S. Planes parade to Santo Tomas, drop goggles and message of good tidings into East Patio ... continuous machine-gun fire can be heard.”

⁸⁵ *Jap Private Knew Only Fear After Yanks Landed on Luzon*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁸⁶ *Situation Bad, Japs Admit*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁸⁷ *Razzle Dazzling Japs on Luzon Island*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁸⁸ *Four Columns Closing Trap Around Manila*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁸⁹ Lee Atta. *Yanks, Even Sick, Vie To Be First In Manila*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁹⁰ William Dickinson. *We Will Reach Manila Today, Says M’Arthur*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

As the sun set on February 3rd, the internees started inside for roll call. Suddenly American planes flew low over the camp, showing off the stars on their wings. The Japanese tried to get the internees to ignore the planes and ordered them to their rooms, but a few internees had noticed that something dropped from one of the airplanes. An internee dashed into the East Patio to find a pair of pilot goggles with a note attached to it: “Roll out the barrel.” This was a reference to a popular song with the lyrics “the gang’s all here,” a signal to the internees that the army was on its way.⁹¹ What they didn’t know was that General MacArthur had ordered a special attack just to retrieve the internees. Fearing that the internees might be executed by the Japanese before the Americans could reach them, MacArthur ordered the 1st Cavalry Division to dash twenty-eight miles behind enemy lines and free the internees. Outrunning their supply lines, this “flying column” of men and tanks knocked down the front gate of the camp just hours after the goggles had been dropped into the camp. Having traveled sixty-five miles in a day, the 1st Cavalry Division arrived shortly after 9 pm, and it was dark throughout the camp.⁹² An article titled “The Liberation of Sto. Tomas - As I Saw It” by Bessie Hackett takes up a page in the scrapbook. In it, Bessie recalls the “great roaring sound and ... the rumble of tanks” outside the camp. The internees were confused but hopeful, not entirely sure if it was American forces making all the noise outside, one girl cried out “I heard one of them say ‘Hell yes!’” A man shouted from the third floor “Are you Americans” as the dark figures moved up the center pathway towards the Main Building. The tank stopped in front of the building and “huge, giant forms began

⁹¹ Bessie Hackett. *The Liberation of Sto. Tomas – As I Saw It*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁹² Atta. *Four Columns Closing Trap Around Manila*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

climbing out. There was no longer any doubt in the tremendous shout ‘Americans! The Americans are here!’”⁹³

The internees in the Main Building rushed outside and embraced their liberators. For a moment, there was excitement, sobbing, and shouting. But the ordeal was not over. The Japanese guards holed up inside the Education Building, with several hundred internees as hostages. As the night turned into the next day, shooting between the Americans and the Japanese guards occasionally broke out. A Japanese officer who was particularly hated by the internees attempted to throw a grenade at the Americans, but was shot before he could do so. Eventually negotiations were made, and the Japanese soldiers were allowed to leave with their weapons. The hostages made it out of the situation with only minor injuries.⁹⁴

The internees were finally free. Over the coming weeks and months the American hold over the Philippines would strengthen, and preparations made to move the internees back to the United States. The U.S. government heavily pressured Americans to return to the United States, but Frank and Mildred Miles refused. An article written after the war titled “Couple is Thankful Jap Nightmare Over” in the scrapbook interviews Frank and Mildred, who were visiting family in the United States at the time, though the date of the article is unknown. In the article Frank and Mildred express their gratitude that they “came through alive, in good health.”⁹⁵ Their gratitude came with the memory of those who were not so lucky. In the back of the scrapbook, placed after the articles describing the American liberation, following photographs of men and women smiling with American soldiers, of children sitting on top of the tanks that broke down the iron gate, are two pages dedicated to

⁹³ Hackett. *The Liberation of Sto. Tomas – As I Saw It*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

⁹⁴ Lorenzen, *A Lovely Little War*, 137-149.

⁹⁵ Barbara Hayden, *Couple Is Thankful Jap Nightmare Over*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

those who would never see liberation. These two pages list the men, women, and children who had died during the internment. In all, three-hundred and fourteen people died at Santo Tomas Internment Camp.⁹⁶

Conclusion

The internees had spent a little over three years in Santo Tomas Internment Camp, and the scrapbook helps us to understand the world they created within those walls, and how they looked back on those years. The documents that were created inside the camp help us to see how the internees lived and the ways in which they made the camp a home. The photographs help us to relate to those who had been imprisoned. The newspaper articles help place all of this into the larger story of the Pacific War. By piecing these documents together with the knowledge of the war and other accounts of Santo Tomas, a rich story is formed.

The Mildred and Frank Miles Scrapbook is a fascinating window both into the history of Santo Tomas, and into how people remember and archive their own personal histories. The items inside may tell us things we can learn from other sources or stories, but how they have been arranged gives us a glimpse into connections and thoughts of the person who made it. Though Frank and Mildred are no longer able to share their story, the scrapbook they created helps us to understand how they would have told it. Frank and Mildred chose items from inside the camp that highlighted the community inside, their relationship with the Filipino people, all while placing themselves into the larger story of the Pacific War through newspaper articles about the Philippine Campaign.

⁹⁶ *In Memoriam: Civilians Who Died During Internment*, Miles Scrapbook, SCARC.

Personal Reflection

I first saw the Mildred and Frank Miles Scrapbook while working in the Special Collections and Archives Research Center at the Valley Library of Oregon State University. Arriving at work one day, I found Anne Bahde, the Rare Books and History of Science Librarian, in a particularly excited mood. Calling me over to a table littered with vibrantly colored scrapbooks and boxes, Anne explained that a local sorority had donated a collection of scrapbooks and photo albums. As I approached, one item stood out. Bound in old leather, brown feathering pages sticking out, warped from being under the weight of other books, was a scrapbook. Taped to the cover was a note with the scribbled writing “This is not a [Kappa Delta] scrapbook.”

Anne urged me to carefully look inside, helping me to turn the fragile pages. By glancing through the photographs and newspaper articles inside, it became clear that the scrapbook was about World War Two, and specifically a prison camp of some kind. After we pored over the pages together, now filled with questions and amazed by this historical artifact, I made the comment “this is going to be someone’s thesis.” Anne assigned me to research and describe the scrapbook so that library patrons would be able to find it for their research, and I took to the task with excitement. Soon, I decided that not only would this be someone’s thesis, it would be my thesis.

I have always been an avid lover of history and listener of podcasts, and I saw the opportunity to do both with this scrapbook. I knew that I wanted to tell a story, but I wasn’t sure what this story would be. Yes it would be about the Santo Tomas Internment Camp, but I wanted to focus on the scrapbook. It is a unique and fascinating document, and I don’t know of anyone who has ever worked with it before. But the most of the items that are

contained in the scrapbook are not unique on their own. They're newspaper clippings of major events I could find in any history textbook, postcards, or documents that have already been recorded online. The overall story of Santo Tomas has been told many times, I've read many of the books in my research. I wanted tell a unique story, but the only things unique in the scrapbook are the items that pertain directly to the Miles family, such as the story about their granddaughter being born in the camp. But there simply isn't enough in the scrapbook for me to tell the story about the Miles family in the camp, and my attempts to find their living relatives came to nothing.

With that failing, I found myself beginning to write a war history, but stopped myself, once again I was moving away from the scrapbook. The scrapbook doesn't go into great detail about the Pacific War, and I wanted the scrapbook to be the focus of the thesis. I was lost. I had this fantastic document, but no idea what to do with it. Then one day, I was telling my friend about the scrapbook, about the terrible conditions in the camp, about the war, and they asked "why would someone make a scrapbook about that?"

This is when I first started to realize what I wanted to do. The purpose of a scrapbook is to assist in telling a story. You sit down with friends and family, crack it open, and move from page to page, using the items inside to remind you about people, places, and events as you tell a story. You tell the story through the scrapbook, through the photographs, letters, and items you saved between its pages. Frank and Mildred Miles made their scrapbook with this purpose in mind, to sit down with their grandchildren, their friends, and to tell a story through the items inside. But Frank and Mildred are no longer here to do that.

The two portions of my thesis represent the two halves of my approach to telling Frank and Mildred's story. The academic portion has helped me to dive into the overall material from the time period, and bolstered my understanding of the world around Frank and Mildred. The podcast scripts are my way of sharing this story, in a format as close as possible to the way Frank and Mildred would have shared their scrapbook. Simply a person, telling a story through the items saved between its pages.

I am hoping that with both the podcast episodes and the academic portion, I have been able to tell Frank and Mildred's story to some degree. My goal with this thesis has been to sit where Frank and Mildred sat with the scrapbook laid out in front of them, and tell the story as they seem to have wanted it told, through the items they saved in the scrapbook. The research I have done outside of the scrapbook has allowed me to fill in holes in the story that the scrapbook doesn't explain. In this project, I have tried my best to be the narrator of the scrapbooks story.

Podcast Section

Episode One: Introduction and the American Empire

In February of 1945, a tank knocked down an iron gate. This gate had been the outer wall of a prison for nearly five thousand men, women, and children for over three years. The tanks and men moved through the gate, the prison grounds illuminated by flares and stars. Prisoners began to stir in their rooms, their eyes peering out the windows straining to see anything in the poor light, wondering what the commotion was. Soon the windows were full of faces. Skinny from months without adequate food, the prisoners eyes struggling to focus, as many suffered from beriberi, brought on by a chronic lack of vitamin B1. The prisoners could not tell who it was at the gate, and they were forbidden to leave their rooms. Finally the prisoners began calling out, “Are you Americans?” The tanks stopped at the front door of the main prison building, large, dark figures climbing out. Unable to wait any longer prisoners began to stream out to the front door, and were greeted by the cheers of American soldiers. The prisoners of Santo Tomas Internment Camp were finally free.

Among the prisoners freed were Frank and Mildred Miles, an American couple who had been living in the Philippines for over a decade before World War Two broke out in December of 1941. Sometime after the war, Mildred and Frank collected letters, photographs, newspaper articles, and anything else they could find about Santo Tomas Internment Camp, and made a scrapbook, filling the pages with their memories. Nearly 70 years after Frank and Mildred were freed, their scrapbook made its way to the Special Collections and Archives Research Center, known as SCARC, at the Valley Library of Oregon State University. SCARC is something like the restricted section in Harry Potter, filled with rare books, manuscripts, and artifacts that need special care. I was lucky enough to be working at the special collections when the scrapbook first arrived. I remember

walking in to work one day to find Anne Bahde, the Rare Books and History of Science Librarian, in a particularly excited mood. Calling me over to a table littered with vibrantly colored scrapbooks and boxes, Anne explained that a local sorority had donated a collection of scrapbooks and photo albums. As I approached, one item stood out. Bound in old leather, brown feathering pages sticking out, warped from being under the weight of other books, was a scrapbook. Taped to the cover was a note with the scribbled writing “This is not a [Kappa Delta] scrapbook.”

Anne urged me to carefully look inside, helping me to turn the fragile pages. By glancing through the photographs and newspaper articles inside, it became clear that the scrapbook was about World War Two, and specifically a prison camp of some kind. After we pored over the pages together, now filled with questions and amazed by this historical artifact, I made the comment “this is going to be someone’s thesis.” Anne assigned me to research and describe the scrapbook so that library patrons would be able to find it for their research, and I took to the task with excitement. Soon, I decided that not only would this be someone’s thesis, it would be my thesis.

This podcast is the final product of my thesis. Frank and Mildred Miles made this scrapbook in order to tell the story of Santo Tomas Internment Camp, and while Frank and Mildred are no longer with us to share this story, their scrapbook survives, albeit in a rather frail state. My goal with this podcast is to try and tell the story of the internees of Santo Tomas Internment Camp through the photographs, newspaper articles, letters, and other items contained in the scrapbook. At the same time, pieces of the story are missing, and I will try my best to fill in the blanks with other historical accounts and records that I have managed to find.

In order to begin our story, we need to step way back, to events and times that the scrapbook doesn't mention in any way, in order to answer a couple of questions. Why did the Japanese invade the Philippines? And why were thousands of Americans living in and around the Philippines when Japan invaded in December of 1941?

Let's begin by answering the second question, how the United States became entangled in the Philippines. The late 19th century is known as the age of imperialism, dominated by rival empires carving up large swaths of the globe. European powers formed vast overseas empires, holding territories in Asia and Africa, while the Russians, Ottomans, and Chinese controlled vast land empires. By the 1900s nearly all of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific would be controlled by these empires. And then there was the United States. Considered a second rate power at best, the United States had not joined in the zealous overseas colonization, instead driving west across the North American continent, pushed by Manifest Destiny. The modern west coast of Washington, Oregon, and California was finally completed in 1846 with the signing of the Oregon Treaty with Great Britain, and in 1890, the U.S. Census Bureau declared the frontier closed. Americans were so widely spread across the continent that there was no longer a clear boundary between settled and unsettled land. But the idealism of Manifest Destiny persisted, yet it seemed to have nowhere to go.

That same year, 1890, Naval Officer Alfred T. Mahan published his highly influential book *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*. In it, Mahan extolled the importance of a large navy, along with a strong network of overseas bases to support it. Mahan's work was read and applauded worldwide. The best piece of evidence for his argument was plain for all to see. The largest empire the world had ever seen patrolled every ocean with its massive fleet.

The sun never set on the British Empire. Mahan also had a solution for the Americans, who “must now begin to look outward.” Having reached their natural borders, with Mahan’s words ringing in their ears, Americans once again looked west, but now they stared far across the Pacific. Businessmen saw a massive untapped market for American goods in China, as well as products they could bring back to U.S. households that were clamoring for foreign goods such as clothing and spices. Missionaries saw millions of souls to be saved, and politicians saw American security, as well as the opportunity to ride the train of Manifest Destiny as far as it would go. Mahan’s influence encouraged top officials in the White House to begin eyeing Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Cuba as potential strategic naval bases. In 1893 American planters in Hawaii staged a coup, overthrowing the Hawaiian government and then petitioning the U.S. to annex the islands. However this annexation fell into political limbo as it was overshadowed by events much closer to home.

I am about to briefly describe what is now known as the Spanish-American War, and I wish that I could go into more detail, but it is simply a step along the way to our main story. If you’re interested in listening to a podcast that focuses on the Spanish-American War, I highly recommend the episode “The American Peril” from Dan Carlin’s “Hardcore History” podcast. Now let’s return to the story.

Just a little over 100 miles south of Florida, the island of Cuba was undergoing a rebellion. A rising independence movement in Cuba had attempted to throw off its Spanish rulers in 1868, and only after ten years of fighting were the Spanish able to quell the uprising. In 1895 rebellion again broke out, and the island was embroiled in war. The Spanish were lambasted for their conduct in the war by the American press. Unable to distinguish combatants from civilians, the Spanish resorted to herding Cubans into detention camps,

destroying crops, and brutal treatment of anyone suspected of helping the guerrillas. American newspapers reported the detention camps, the starving people, and the disease that spread through the Cuban people like wildfire. Popular opinion quickly shifted against the Spanish, but for the next three years, the American government did nothing to intervene.

Then, on February 15th, 1898, the American battleship *Maine* was rocked by a massive explosion while docked in a Cuban harbor, destroying the ship and claiming just under 270 lives. The American press wasted no time blaming Spain for the explosion, though later investigations concluded it had been an accident, and calls for retribution against the Spaniards rained down on Congress and the White House. By the end of April, President McKinley asked Congress for a declaration of war, such that the U.S. might assist the Cuban people in their struggle for “Liberty and Freedom.” The ensuing war lasted only four months, with the US suffering fewer than 400 deaths. But what seemed like a quick and easy war spiraled beyond its original goal of liberating the Cuban people. Despite originating in Cuba, the Spanish-American War was an international conflict. The decisive battle of the war occurred half the world away, when an American fleet destroyed the Spanish armada in Manila Bay, the most important harbor in the Philippines, another outpost of Spain’s crumbling empire that yearned for freedom.

The treaty that ended the Spanish-American War granted the United States the Philippine archipelago, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Cuba was granted provisional independence, and the U.S. was granted a lease on naval stations in Cuba, most notably Guantanamo Bay. These newly acquired territories provided the U.S. with strategically important bases, and opened the door for further trade with South America and Asia. Emilio Aguinaldo, a leader of the Philippine resistance against the Spanish, wrote a letter that was

published in American newspapers in which he describes his initial optimism about U.S. intervention, and the subsequent betrayal of its political principles:

“In combination with our forces, you compelled Spain to surrender... Joy abounded in every heart, and all went well... until... the government at Washington... Commenc[ed] by ignoring all promises that had been made and end[ed] by ignoring the Philippine people, their personality and rights, and treating them as a common enemy... In the face of the world you emblazon humanity and Liberty upon your standard, while you cast your political constitutions to the winds and attempt to trample down and exterminate a brave people whose only crime is that they are fighting for their liberty.”

The United States arrived as liberators, but when it became clear they had no plans to leave, they simply became the new oppressors. Emilio Aguinaldo led a war against the American occupation, and the United States became guilty of the same crimes they had derided the Spanish for committing just a few years earlier. From 1899 to 1902, American forces fought a guerilla resistance in a foreign nation, and they responded harshly. Unable to distinguish enemy combatants from civilians, a scorched earth campaign was waged against the Filipinos. Villages burnt to the ground, crops destroyed, prisoners tortured, and men, women, and children were executed. In fighting their “Splendid Little War” against the Spanish, the United States stumbled into one of the darkest, yet least remembered periods of American history. More than four thousand American soldiers died in the war, and an estimated 20,000 Filipino soldiers lost their lives as well. But these numbers are dwarfed by the civilian losses: 34,000 civilians were killed as a direct result of the fighting, and another two-hundred thousand died from a cholera epidemic exacerbated by the destruction of the

war. While the war officially ended in 1902, pockets of resistance continued to fight until 1913. This tense relationship would remain for the coming decades, gradually easing until the 1930s, when preparations commenced to grant the Philippines its independence by the mid-1940s.

Ties between the United States and the Philippines grew over the decades as tensions calmed down. The United States established a military presence on the islands, and Manila became an important port for American traders. All of this commercial, government, and military activity drew thousands of Americans into the Philippines, many of whom would settle there. For example, Frank and Mildred appear to have been living in the Philippines since sometime around 1929, and continued to live there with their daughter Janet until World War Two broke out. Many of these Americans were running businesses or assisting in government work, Frank worked as an executive at a public ice company. These Americans were the population that would make up the majority of the prisoners at Santo Tomas when the Japanese invaded.

North of the Philippines, on the opposite side of the Pacific from the United States, the island nation of Japan had begun to step into foreign politics at the same time as the United States. Next episode, we will follow Japans rise from an isolated island nation to a world power.

Episode Two: The Japanese Empire

Last episode we learned why so many Americans were living in the Philippines right before World War Two broke out. This week, we will learn why Japan decided to attack the United States, and why that required the Japanese to invade the Philippines.

Like the previous section, my description will be a summary, lacking in many of the details and interesting stories that I would like to include, but simply don't have the time for. Instead I will recommend another podcast, the "History of Japan Podcast" by Isaac Meyer, a PhD student at the University of Washington. His podcast covers huge swaths of Japanese history, both in broad storytelling, as well as individual episodes and miniseries about unique people, places, and events. In particular I want to recommend the miniseries "An Unnatural Intimacy" parts one through five, which are podcast episodes 63 through 67. In this Meyer covers what I will be discussing in the rest of this episode, but in much greater detail.

Now to the story.

Just under two-thousand miles north of the Philippines another island nation had existed in near isolation since the early 1600s. Japan's shogunate, the feudal military government that ruled Japan, had closed off the country in the early 1600s and turned inward, enforcing restrictions on foreign trade and travel until a foreign nation forced Japan to open up to the outside world. This foreign nation? Why none other than the United States of America. In 1852, hoping to open a new market for American merchants as well as ports in the Pacific for American sailors, then President Millard Fillmore assigned Commodore Matthew C. Perry to force the opening of Japan to American trade. Over the course of the next four years Perry visited Japan twice, and through gifts, intimidation, and a

Japanese government in crisis, was able to force Japan to give up on its restrictions of foreign trade.

This intervention by the United States played a part in the folding over of the Japanese shogunate, and led to the Meiji Restoration. The Meiji Restoration is a terribly fascinating and complicated series of events, and we simply don't have the time to get into the details. What is important to know is that the Meiji restoration threw out the shogunate, restored imperial rule, and led to a centralization of Japanese power. This new government created a new constitution based on Prussian and British models. In theory the Emperor ruled as supreme ruler, with a Prime Minister and Cabinet who followed his lead, but in reality the Prime Minister was in charge of the government. However, with time this confusion about who was really in charge, as well as other flaws in the Meiji Constitution, will eventually steer Japan directly into war, but now I'm getting ahead of myself.

The restoration complete, the Meiji government was now forced to look outward, no longer able to focus on only Japan as the shogunate had been able. And the new world was scary to a newly emerging country. In China and South-East Asia, Japan saw Western colonial powerhouses such as Great Britain, France, and Spain swallowing up territory and creating colonies. To the northwest, Russia was becoming a growing presence near Korea and Manchuria. The Meiji Restoration took place right in the middle of what many historians call the British Imperial Century, and Japanese leaders had front row seats as Great Britain trounced China's Qing Dynasty in the First and Second Opium Wars. China had been *the* cultural, economic, and military powerhouse of Asia for literally thousands of years, and it had been brought to its knees by a small island nation most Japanese would have never heard of until these events took place.

Japan itself did not get off scot-free. When the United States forced the country open, it imposed an “unequal treaty” on Japan, forcing concessions such as the opening of treaty ports, extraterritoriality for Americans, and removing Japan’s ability to enforce tariffs. Once the Americans got this deal, every other western power forced similar treaties on Japan just weeks afterwards.

Seeing the world being split between colonizers and the colonized, the unequal treaties forced on Japan made it abundantly clear which side Japan would end up on if western powers were given a reason to act. The Meiji government was simply unable to oppose the foreign powers, lacking the military strength of the west. Western guns, ships, and military structure had proven itself in China, and Japan did not want to face the same fate. With this in mind, Japanese leaders came to the conclusion that the only way to ensure their own sovereignty was to build a military capable of fighting with the west on equal footing. In order to do this, the Japanese would need a modern, western style military, and that required men, oil, and steel. The home islands had a ready supply of young men, and it would simply be a matter of conscripting them, which it did in 1873, forcing every male to serve for four years from the ages of 17 to 21, with three years after that in the reserves. In order to equip these men the Japanese needed guns and war machines, and so they began purchasing guns, cannons, and ships from western powers. For example, after the civil war had ended in the United States, the United States sold guns to Japan, as well as the armored ship Stonewall, which was renamed Adzuma by the Japanese.

But purchasing military strength could only go so far. The Meiji government found that it was the last two items that became the problem, oil and steel. Japan severely lacked

both of these resources, and would need to secure a steady source of both if it were to truly be self-reliant.

Japan's first opportunity to improve its own national safety and material situation came in 1894. A series of peasant riots in Korea led to the Korean king, a Chinese protectorate, to ask China for aid in halting the rebellion. China obliged, sending troops to his aid, but a diplomatic disagreement about whether China had informed Japan about the troop movements ensued, and Japan responded by sending eight-thousand of their own troops to Korea. These Japanese troops proceeded to capture the Korean king and install a pro-Japanese faction in the government. The ensuing war between Japan and China, now known as the First Sino-Japanese War, was proof of Japan's success in modernizing its military, and China's failure to do the same. Japan managed to push the Chinese forces out of Korea after only two engagements, and then the war moved into Manchuria, the homeland of the ruling Chinese Dynasty, and the war ended after less than a year of breaking out. Japan ended the war with the treaty of Shimonoseki, which granted Japan control over Taiwan, the Liaodong Peninsula, and a large cash payment.

And now Russia steps into the picture, here to ruin Japan's fun. In its endless quest for a warm water port, Russia had been eyeing the Liaodong Peninsula for some time. Backed up by France and Germany, this Triple Intervention made a simple demand to Japan. It could keep Taiwan, it could keep the money, but it had to return the Liaodong Peninsula to China. Japan was in no way ready to face the combined force of Russia, France, and Germany, and as soon as Japan had left the peninsula, Russia arranged to lease the land from China, and then occupied it, stationing its Pacific Naval Fleet in the major port of the Peninsula, known as Port Arthur. Worse than the humiliation, however, was the dangerous

position this turnover created for Japan. Russia was now able to patrol the Asiatic waters with impunity, threatening Japan's access to the war supplies, the aforementioned oil and steel, which Japan so desperately needed to feed its war machine. To make matters worse, Russia quickly began to expand its influence in both Manchuria and Korea.

Tensions between Japan and Russia only escalated from here. Just five years after Russia occupied the Liaodong Peninsula, the Boxer Rebellion broke out in China. A heavily anti-foreign rebellion, foreigners and their property were targeted by the rebels, and foreign powers quickly intervened to protect their citizens. Russia used this opportunity to send two-hundred-thousand troops into Manchuria in order to "protect" their holdings. However, when the rebellion had been squashed, and treaties signed, the Russian forces remained in Manchuria. Now when Japan looked west it saw a growing Russian threat in Manchuria, right on the edge of and encroaching into Korea, and this was a situation Japan felt it could not tolerate. To Japanese leaders, war seemed inevitable. Russia needed to be pushed out of Manchuria, and Korea needed to be firmly under Japanese control. Anything less would risk the safety of the home islands, as well as Japan's access to oil and steel.

But while the Japanese considered war inevitable, they waited for the right moment. They still lacked the military strength to face Russia, but by 1904 the rising tensions finally snapped, and the Russo Japanese war began on February 8th, with Japan initiating the conflict with a tactic for which they would become infamous, the sneak attack. Three hours before the Japanese declaration of war was received by the Russian government, Japan attacked Port Arthur, the very port the Russians had "stolen" from Japan ten years earlier. The Russian fleet was bottled up in the port by Japanese ships and mines, and Japanese troops began landing on the peninsula. What followed on the land has been called a

“preview” of World War One by many historians. The fighting was hard, slow, and costly for both sides. After a year and a half of this, Japan was finally able to win, ending the campaign with a textbook victory against the Russian Baltic fleet which had been sent to reinforce the Russian Pacific fleet. The war officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth on September 5th, 1905, mediated by none other than U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt. Russia agreed to return Manchuria to China, give up their territorial ambitions in East Asia, give the Liaodong Peninsula and Port Arthur to Japan, and recognize Japan as the dominant power in Korea. Japan was the first Asian nation to win a war against a western power, and it quickly set to work strengthening its position. Korea was declared a Japanese protectorate just a month after the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth. Just five years after becoming a protectorate, Korea was simply annexed into Japan with the signing of the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1910.

As Japan solidified its hold over Korea, tensions in Europe rose and then erupted into the First World War. Now confident in their military strength, and recognizing that German colonies in Asia had little to no hope of reinforcements, Japan joined the Entente Powers and captured said German territories. This further escalated Japanese influence in China and Asia in general. When the First World War ended, Japan gained a permanent seat on the newly formed Council of the League of Nations, and kept control of the once German territories it had captured. However, when Japan attempted to add a racial equality clause to the Treaty of Versailles, it was rejected by the Western powers.

The years following the Great War were hard for Japan. In 1926 the country was hit with a recession, which was only further exacerbated by the Great Depression in 1929. The economic instability of the times greatly diminished trust in the government, but the military

appeared to be a beacon of stability. Japanese sons and fathers had all served, and the Japanese Empire had been growing through decades of military success. As trust in the government fell, the military's political strength only grew.

Remember earlier when I mentioned that there were flaws in the Meiji Constitution, and that I was getting ahead of myself? Well now is the time to talk about those flaws. What I want to focus on is two main aspects, the first of which is the forming of the Prime Minister's cabinet. When a Prime Minister was chosen, he would establish his own cabinet. The law required that the roles of Army Minister and Navy Minister be filled by active duty officers nominated by the Army and Navy. If a prime minister failed to fill these positions, he would be required to resign. This meant that the Army and Navy could force a cabinet to dissolve and get a new prime minister if they disagreed with his policies. While the Army and Navy rarely ever had to use this trump card, the mere threat of it was enough in most cases. This gave the Army and Navy a silent veto on any prime minister who did not support their goals, and they used this veto to make sure that military demands were met.

The second flaw was not explicitly written into the constitution, but had to do with the Emperor being designated as the supreme ruler, and how Japanese culture and customs interacted with said designation. All large decisions, for example going to war, had to be decided on by the Emperor during a meeting with his ministers, from whom he would ask their opinion and advice about the correct course of action. However many of these decisions would have already been made ahead of time by the ministers, who would spend great deals of time and effort making back room deals and negotiating until they could all agree on a single proposal they would all support. At this point, it would be presented to the Emperor, who effectively acted as a rubber stamp. This placed the burden of decision

making on the Emperor, yet he was never really given the full picture. While the ministers had prepared the plan, no one man truly owned it, due to all the negotiations and back room dealing. This style of decision making made it so nobody felt personal responsibility for the decisions made, making it easier for controversial decisions to be agreed upon.

These flaws opened the door for the Japanese army to push for increased presence in China, an action that was in some ways forced upon the high command by radicals in the rank and file. Despite being considered a shining beam of stability by the civilian population, the army struggled to control many of its lower ranked soldiers and officers. On September 18th, 1931, a Japanese lieutenant detonated a small bomb near a Japanese owned railroad in Manchuria. The army used this as an excuse to invade Manchuria, quickly overrunning the Chinese and establishing a puppet state called Manchukuo.

The false flag bombing was condemned by international groups, and the League of Nations called on Japan to abandon its conquests in Manchuria. Japan refused, and eventually would leave the League of Nations in 1933 due to this dispute.

The invasion of Manchuria is the point at which historian Saburō Ienaga says the Pacific War truly starts. At this point, Japan becomes more and more entangled in what it would call “The China Incident.” As the 1930s progressed, Japan would push further and further into China in an attempt to put China under its thumb. This entanglement will continue to plague Japan as it attempts to quash Chinese nationalists and communists, both of which will try to throw off the Japanese.

As Japan’s war in China continued to escalate into the late 1930s, international condemnation of the Japanese and American support for the Chinese grew. Then President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was encouraged to aid the Chinese, but his focus was on the war

in Europe that had broken out in 1939, and therefore used more diplomatic and material means of aiding the Chinese, rather than direct military support. In order to aid both of America's allies, Roosevelt encouraged Congress to pass the Lend-Lease Act, allowing military aid to be supplied to Britain and China without compensation. By the end of 1941 nearly 170 million dollars worth of loans were provided to the Chinese Nationalists (Fall of Philippines). This aid to the Chinese strengthened their fight against the Japanese, but further infuriated the Japanese high command, who saw it as a foreign power meddling in their own sphere of influence. Reaching out for assistance, the Japanese found friends in the Germans and the Italians, signing the Tripartite Pact in September of 1940. Now the two conflicts were tied together, the war in Europe and the war in China simply different theaters of what was now truly a world war. In response to the alliance America continued to pressure the Japanese. A month after the signing of the Tripartite Pact the American-Japanese commercial treaty that had been in place for nearly thirty years was abrogated, and Congress granted President Roosevelt the authority to control exports to Japan. With this new power, Roosevelt cut off American exports of oil, scrap metal, and aviation gasoline to the Japanese. By early 1941 nearly all iron, steel, gas, and other war materials were forbidden to be sold to Japan.

This increased pressure on the Japanese put them in a difficult position. They did not have access to enough oil and metal on their own to supply their war needs, but also felt obligated to continue fighting. The war in China had been going on for nearly a decade, to give up now would dishonor the sweat and blood that had already been shed, as well as weaken Japan's position as a world power. What Japan needed was direct access to the resources the Americans were denying them, and the closest place they could find it was in Southeast Asia. Unwilling to compromise with the United States, the Japanese settled on an

invasion of the Dutch East Indies and British Malaya, where they could obtain supplies of oil and metal. However, these areas were protected by the combined forces of the Americans, British, Chinese, and Dutch referred to as the “ABCD” alliance by the Japanese. They recognized that they could not simply seize British and Dutch holdings without provoking the Americans to join the fight, so the Japanese deemed it necessary to open the fight with attacks against each member of the alliance. The plan was simple in concept: attack suddenly against all enemies, crippling any possibilities of a swift counterattack. While the ABCD alliance was reeling from the sudden offensive, the Japanese would seize the supply of oil and metal necessary to continue Japanese war production, and establish a strong defensive line in the Pacific. With defenses in place, the Japanese hoped to force the ABCD alliance to the negotiating table where they could work out a favorable peace. This plan relied heavily on the success of negotiations. Even if Japan secured the supplies of oil and metal it needed, Japanese production was nowhere near that of the Americans. The hope was that the Americans would be too focused on the war in Europe, and give up on their Pacific holdings once they had been lost. With this plan in mind, the Japanese began their preparations.

Next episode we will cover the breakdown of relations between the United States and Japan, and then the subsequent invasion of the Philippines.

Episode Three: The Invasion of the Philippines

In our last episode we covered Japan's transition from an isolated island nation to an empire stretching across East Asia, and the episode before we covered the United States' war with Spain, and their subsequent occupation of the Philippines. Today we will cover the invasion of the Philippines by the Japanese, finally arriving at the main topic of this podcast, Santo Tomas Internment Camp.

Before we begin, I just want to quickly remind you of the reasoning and goals of the Japanese campaigns. The Japanese wanted to secure access to the resources in British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies in order to maintain, and in their minds ideally finish, the war in China. While these British and Dutch territories in a vacuum may not have proven particularly difficult to capture, what with the war in Europe holding down the British and Dutch, these powers were allied with the United States. Japan knew that the USA was unlikely to stand idly by should the Japanese seize these territories. Therefore, picking a fight with any of these powers meant picking a fight with all of them. The fear amongst Japanese commanders was not of war, but of a long war. They were aware of American industrial production, and they knew that the longer a war lasted, the more likely Japan would lose.

So Japan planned a lightning campaign that would evolve in three general steps. First, quickly and without warning destroy the ability of the Western powers to perform offensive action. Second, with western strength crippled, establish a strong defensive perimeter around the newly gained territory. And third, bring the United States to the negotiating table as quickly as possible. The hope was that the Japanese could present the Americans with a *fait accompli*, and that the Americans would balk at the idea of a long, expensive campaign in the Pacific to regain the Philippines, and instead prioritize assisting their allies in Europe.

This plan by the Japanese was altogether not a bad one. American war planners had long neglected the Philippines, and the defense of the Pacific hinged instead on protecting three major points: Alaska, Hawaii, and the Panama Canal. American war planners assumed since the 1920s that if the Philippines were invaded, they could, at best, fight a delaying action. This belief would become a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts. Because the Americans assumed that the Philippines would be lost, minimal effort was put into reinforcing and equipping American military installations in the Philippines. This lack of proper supplies and equipment will become important later on in our story.

For those west of the International Date Line, the “date which will live in infamy” came on the eighth of December, 1941. While Pearl Harbor is the best-remembered attack, it was quickly followed by simultaneous Japanese attacks on British Malaya, Singapore, Guam, Hong Kong, Wake Island, and the Philippines. Word of the attack on Pearl Harbor reached the Philippines at 2:30 in the morning. A state of war was announced immediately and American and Filipino troops were ordered to battle positions. Those living in the Philippines had been dreading this day for months if not years, and knew that Japanese forces would likely target the Philippines. As one soldier in the Philippines described, the news of war was met with “a grim, thoughtful silence.”

Five hundred miles north of Manila, Japanese Army and Navy air forces waited on the island of Formosa, modern Taiwan, for the chance to destroy the Philippine defenses. One hundred and eight Japanese bombers accompanied by eighty-four Zero fighters left in formation for the Philippines, and arrived at Clark Airfield near Manila at a perfect time for themselves, and the worst possible time for the American air forces stationed there. American anti-aircraft defenses were woefully out of date. The 3-inch guns used ammunition

manufactured nearly a decade beforehand, and only one of every six shells exploded after firing. Those that did explode missed their targets by nearly a mile, simply unable to achieve the altitude of the Japanese bombers. The American air fleet stationed at Clark Airfield had been patrolling the skies just hours before, but had been called down to refuel and repair in preparation for offensive action, and were now caught impotent on the ground. A few American planes attempted to take off before being bombed, but only three succeeded, and another five were destroyed during the attempt. By the end of the hour over half of the American bomber force had been destroyed, leaving only seventeen B-17s operational. Fifty-three P-40s and three P-35s were destroyed, along with thirty other aircraft of various designs. All of these surviving planes were heavily damaged. In this attack eighty Americans were killed, and over 150 wounded. The Japanese only lost seven fighters.

Attacks similar to the attack on Clark Airfield occurred throughout the Philippines at other, smaller airfields. American forces were caught unprepared, and by the end of the day American air superiority had been destroyed. The American Navy faced a similar fate. Now in control of the skies, Japanese aircraft could bomb Navy outposts at will, targeting the small and spread out Asiatic Fleet. The fleet near Manila consisted only of five destroyers, two of which were under repair, twenty-seven submarines, three of which were being overhauled, twenty-eight small patrol boats, a handful of utility planes, and ten utility boats.

These attacks destroyed the offensive capabilities of the American and Philippine forces, and the attack on Pearl Harbor dashed any hopes of reinforcements. Japanese landings now began to occur throughout the Philippines unopposed, and the Americans began to prepare for a siege. The main theatre of the Japanese invasion of the Philippines occurred on the island of Luzon, the largest of the Philippine Islands. To help you

understand where this fight is occurring, hold up your right hand, with the palm facing away from you, and your thumb splayed out. This is roughly the shape of Luzon, with the capital city of Manila located where your thumb meets your wrist. Japanese landings occurred at the northernmost point of Luzon, essentially the tip of your middle finger, and along the western coast, or the outer side of your pointer finger. The Japanese then began to advance southwards towards Manila. To slow the Japanese advance on Manila, the American general Douglas MacArthur ordered that seven lines cutting Luzon from east to west be formed. The army defended the northernmost line as long as possible, and once it became too difficult to hold, the army retreated to the next line, destroying bridges, roads, and encampments as they moved southward. This process repeated itself over the course of December, and as the month reached its end preparations for the final siege were made. The final siege would take place on the Bataan Peninsula, a name that would become infamous in American history. Overlooking Manila Bay, the Americans could deny the Japanese the use of the bay for as long as they controlled the high ground on Bataan. As they prepared to hole up on this rocky outcropping, food, ammunition, and medical supplies were brought in to supply the army. As the final retreat to the peninsula began, Manila was declared an open city on December 26th, allowing the Japanese to occupy it without resistance.

Now that Manila has been declared an open city, I want to step back in time for a moment and quickly cover these events from the point of view the civilians in the Philippines. In early 1941, increasing political tension, conflict in China, and rumors all raised concern for those in the Philippines, yet to those living in Manila, the United States did not seem to be taking precautionary action. Washington was still hoping for peace with Japan, and far too focused on the conflict in Europe. This lack of action led many Americans to take matters into their own hands. In January of 1941, a group of American

businessmen and officials met in the Elks Club of Manila to discuss what actions they could take to prepare for war. They were focused on protecting the welfare of American civilians in the Philippines, and sought to work with the U.S. Army, Navy, and U.S. High Commissioner's office to help protect civilians and their interests. This group of men came to be called the "American Coordinating Committee." Meeting once a week, they planned locations of air raid shelters, evacuation areas, and instructed civilians to stock up on food, clothing, and medical supplies. The committee urged anyone who was "non-essential," mostly talking to women and children, to return to the United States.

When war finally came on December 8th, Manila time, those still in the Philippines congregated in Manila. Last minute attempts to leave the islands for the United States, India, or Australia proved fruitless. Captains refused to go to sea for fear of being bombed or torpedoed by Japanese forces. Ships that had attempted to leave Southeast Asia poured into Manila Bay, increasing the population of foreigners still further. They were stuck in the Philippines.

By December 20th, it was clear that Manila would be taken by the Japanese. Knowing that any Americans caught by the Japanese would be interned, the American Coordinating Committee took matters into their own hands. They approached the officials of Santo Tomas University, asking if the campus could be used as an internment camp for the civilian population should the Japanese require internment. The authorities readily agreed, and a letter was prepared and sent to the United States High Commissioner's office informing him of the university's willingness to host the Americans.

On the second of January, 1942, the Japanese arrived in Manila. A battalion of Japanese soldiers on bicycles streamed through the city, followed by trucks and official cars.

Quickly establishing their presence in the city, all of the major buildings were occupied, and throughout the city cries of “Bonzai!” could be heard from the city stadium. As civilians waited in their homes to see what the Japanese occupation would bring, the soldiers went from door to door, searching homes, requisitioning anything useful, and seizing valuables. When the Japanese Commander, a General Homma, arrived in Manila, he was greeted by officials from the U.S. High Commissioner’s Office, and presented with the letter prepared by the American Coordinating Committee. General Homma sent a group of men to inspect the location mentioned in the letter.

The next day, January 3rd, the Manila Tribune was distributed, a special edition written under the supervision and directive of the Japanese. The paper confirmed that the Japanese now controlled Manila, and warned citizens to behave. The Japanese warned that for each violation of Japanese orders, a ten-to-one reprisal would be doled out. Large posters were plastered throughout the city, listing rules for all civilians, ordering them to “salute Japanese soldiers when you meet them” and to place Japanese flags in doorways. Certificates of residency and other official papers should be carried at all times, and a curfew was enforced. In addition to these orders, all Americans and Europeans were instructed to present themselves for registration. Told that it would be a short term affair, they were told only to bring three days’ worth of food and clothing. Brought to various locations throughout the city, the internees would linger in limbo for some time while they waited to be registered.

On January 4th, all foreigners who had been placed in “protective custody” by the Japanese were instructed that they would be transferred to Santo Tomas University to finalize their registration. Brought in with buses, around three hundred civilians were

brought to the university that first day. Another 1700 arrived on the fifth, and by the middle of January the camp's population had risen to nearly 3500 people. As more and more people crowded into the camp, and nobody left after the promised “three day stay,” it became clear to even the hopeful that this would not be a short term situation.

Up until now the story I have been telling has relied on accounts other than the scrapbook. Beginning next episode, we will dive into the story that the scrapbook offers, and see what life was like those first few months at Santo Tomas Internment Camp.

Episode Four: Santo Tomas University

In our last episode we covered the invasion of the Philippines and the subsequent creation of Santo Tomas Internment Camp. Today we will talk about the first month or so of the camp, and first begin diving into the scrapbook.

We left off last week with the first groups of internees arriving at Santo Tomas University, when the Japanese still claimed that their internment would be a short term affair in order to register the civilians. In fact the Japanese did not even classify the civilians as internees, but instead as being under their “protective custody.” But what is this place that the internees would soon learn to call home, and who are the people inside the camp?

Founded in 1611 as the “Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Santísimo Rosario,” the university is the oldest university in the Philippines and Asia. Over the centuries the university underwent a number of name changes. First renamed to the University of Santo Tomas, after the Dominican theologian Saint Thomas Aquinas, it was later bestowed with the title “Royal” by King Charles III of Spain in 1785, “Pontifical” by Pope Leo XIII in 1902, and the appellation “The Catholic University of the Philippines” by Pope Pius XII in 1947, and is now known by its modern name “The Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas, The Catholic University of the Philippines” but more simply just the “University of Santo Tomas.” Situated two miles East of the coast of Manila Bay, and a mile north of the Pasig River, Santo Tomas was the academic heart of the Philippines.

The university was chosen as an internment camp for its spacious campus, large buildings, and most importantly, its iron fence. In the scrapbook Frank and Mildred have saved a map of the campus, illustrated shortly after the camp is freed. Located on a large, square city block, the campus houses five buildings, the gymnasium, the education building, the isolation building, the annex, and finally, the main building, which dwarfed all the others

in size. You can still see several of these buildings today. If you google Santo Tomas University you can tour the campus as it looks today through google streetview, if you want to get a sense of where the internees will be living for the next three years of our story.

On the same document that has the campus map, there is also a census of the camp. In all, some six and a half thousand people will be housed at camps in Manila, nearly four thousand of which will live in Santo Tomas, making it the largest internment camp run by the Japanese during World War Two. Of the nearly four thousand civilians, nearly three thousand were Americans, another seven-hundred and forty five British, one hundred Australians, sixty-one Canadians, and an assortment of other nationalities to fill in the rest, including Dutch, Polish, Norwegian, French, Spanish, Egyptian, German, Swiss, and Slovak, oh my. All of these people were now crammed together into halls of Santo Tomas.

One of the first items in the scrapbook is a copy of the form that internees were required to fill out by the Japanese. Under the title "Personal Report," Frank Miles has filled out the form in its entirety, and from this we can learn more about both Frank and Mildred, and what the Japanese wanted to know about enemy aliens in the Philippines. When he filled out the form it had been fifty-one years since Frank was born in Meadow Grove, Nebraska. He and his wife had been living in the Philippines for twelve years, and at the time of internment he worked as an executive of a public utility, from another document we learn that it was an ice producer. He had brought sixty pesos with him into the camp, and had another nine-hundred in the local bank. This form included other small pieces of information like which room he had been assigned to, and included strict instructions that each internee must fill out the form and return it by noon on Friday, January 9th, 1942.

These first days were hectic for the internees. Some still hoped that they would be freed in the coming days, allowed to return to the city once the registration was complete. The internees were isolated behind the iron fence of Santo Tomas University, and they lacked the food and supplies necessary for a long stay inside the camp. There wasn't nearly enough food for the thirty-five-hundred internees, and many people had spent the first few nights sleeping on the concrete floor, having not brought beds with them. None of this could be found inside the camp, and the Japanese were unwilling to help. The internees had to seek outside aid in order to feed and supply themselves.

In the scrapbook there is a small yellow pamphlet, a piece of paper folded in half with a drawing of a mother, daughter, and grandmother embracing, titled "Folks At Home." The pamphlet explains that the Americans are using the Filipinos to "pick their chestnuts from the fire" and that the Americans are the true aggressors in the Pacific War. Drawing from the troubled history between the Americans and the Filipino people, it claims that the Filipinos have been "abused, exploited, [and] neglected" by the Americans, and that while inside the internment camps the Americans continue to "scorn" and "make fun of" the Filipino people. The pamphlet sought to isolate the Americans from the Filipinos.

Next to the pamphlet the Miles wrote "Propaganda used by the Japanese to turn the Filipinos against the Americans. They had little success in this." Despite the efforts of the Japanese propagandists, the Miles family had confidence in the Filipino people. The experience of the Miles family while in the camp helps explain why they had such faith in the Filipinos. Throughout the stories told about Santo Tomas, the writers make sure to highlight the generosity that the Filipino friends, co-workers, and servants showed towards the internees.

In these first days of the camp, the Filipinos people proved themselves to the Miles family, and to the rest of the camp. Each morning the iron fence of the camp was packed with Filipinos. Barred from entering, they brought food, clothing, newspapers, notes, soap, and other basic necessities for their friends and employers inside the camp. The Japanese did not approve of this, but there was little they could do. “[The fence] was so crowded that ... they held up placards with their names written on them.” Once the recipient was found, the goods were pushed through the bars of the iron fence.

Eventually the Japanese wove palm fronds and split bamboo into the fence, preventing anything from passing through it, but then the Filipinos simply took to throwing the items over the fence. The Japanese attempted to stop the smuggling by creating a ring of bamboo fences one meter inside the walls, but still the Filipinos persisted and items went through. Finally the Japanese opened a package inspection line, allowing food and other necessities into the camp after proper inspection for contraband. In the later years of the camp even this privilege would be revoked, but for the time being it was a major source of food and information in the camp.

Though in charge of the camp, the Japanese largely left the camp to run itself, and established the Executive Committee as the internal government of the camp. Headed by Earl Carroll, an insurance executive before the war, the committee was filled with businessmen who had been living in Manila before the war. Many of the men were part of the American Coordinating Committee mentioned in episode two. The Executive Committee would be the internee government for the duration of their imprisonment. They set about organizing and running the camp, spawning committees, each with its own sphere of influence. They covered anything and everything that needed organization in a densely packed camp like Santo Tomas, “Sanitation and Health” to manage bathrooms and

cleanliness around camp, “Building and Construction” to repair leaks and coordinate construction of small buildings, the “Patrol Guard” to police the camp internally, a “kitchen” committee to coordinate the communal food, and even a “Library” committee in charge of maintaining and distributing the universities vast collection.

By the end of the first month the camp had begun to settle into a routine. In the scrapbook there is a photograph titled “First Year in St. Tomas.” In it a circle of men and women are sitting in wooden lawn chairs, a shady tree overhead, the Main Building looming in the background. They seem relaxed, two women appear to be knitting, and a couple of grinning men have noticed the camera. It doesn’t look like a photo of an internment camp. The internees had settled into their routine, this was their home for the time being and they were relatively comfortable.

This comfort did not last long before the internees were shocked by a sudden turn of events. On February 12th, just after roll had been called and internees were preparing for bed, three men escaped from the camp. Blakely Borthwick Laycock, Henry Edward Weeks, and Thomas Henry Fletcher had managed to sneak out of the camp and travel northward, with the intention of joining the men trapped in Bataan. They were caught by the Japanese the next day and dragged back to the camp, where they were interrogated and severely beaten while their room monitor and camp officials were made to watch. The Japanese commandant was furious with the camp. He believed himself to have treated the internees fairly, and felt betrayed at the attempted escape. He stated that “any recurrence will result in death for the escapees and very stringent restrictions for the Internees.”

After being held in the camp jail for a day, the three men were taken to face a Japanese military court martial. There, all three were sentenced to death. The camp was

shocked. Many had thought the beatings were the punishment, but those were simply part of an interrogation, used to force the men to say “We deeply regret our actions - we know that we made a mistake and we urge that no one ever attempt it again.” The internees pleaded with the commandant, but he explained that it was not under his authority that the executions had been ordered. When he was presented with a petition to alleviate their sentence, the commandant agreed to take it to the proper persons, but made no promises about whether the men would be spared.

In the end all was for naught. The Japanese court did not budge on the sentence, and on Sunday, February 15th, the three men were taken to Manila North Cemetery. Earl Carroll, Chairman of the camp Executive Committee, the room monitors C. E. Stewart and R. H. Pedder, Reverend Griffiths, and Ernest Stanley (acting as interpreter) accompanied the commandant and other officers to the cemetery. There the three men “were made to sit with their legs hanging into the grave itself” after which they were shot.

Next episode, we will see how the camp reacts to the executions, and how the handle the following years of imprisonment.

Episode Five: Camp Life

In our last episode we covered the initial weeks at Santo Tomas Internment Camp, and began examining the items that Frank and Mildred included in their scrapbook. Today I want to move us a little faster through the years spent at Santo Tomas, focusing on topics explicitly mentioned in the scrapbook.

We left off with the executions of Blakely Borthwick Laycock, Henry Edward Weeks, and Thomas Henry Fletcher for their attempted escape. The camp remained silent for days after the executions. Camp morale took another massive hit when news arrived that Singapore had fallen to the Japanese on February 15th. Radios were forbidden in the camp, but news filtered through, and the Japanese were happy to talk about their success. Angry, frightened, and looking for a place to put the blame, a rift opened between the British and American internees. The Americans looked down on the British for giving up Singapore so easily while the Americans were fighting tooth and nail in Bataan. The British blamed the Americans for egging Japan into war in the first place, and not supporting their allies. The Japanese happily encouraged the discontent. In the scrapbook, a copy of a survey produced by the Japanese can be found. It is titled “Investigation of Public Opinion” and asks “Which is more responsible for the outbreak of the present war among Japan, America and Britain. America or Britain?”

In this survey, the Japanese also asked how long the internees believed the war would last. Some were convinced it would be over in a few months, others were more pessimistic. One man had managed to bring three years of vitamin supplements with him, based on his estimate of how long the war would last. Despite their disagreement of the exact length of the war, the internees were all aware that they would be in the camp for much longer than the three days originally promised.

Details about the rest of 1942 are scarce in the scrapbook, with one major exception, Christmas. As December approached, the internees prepared for the holiday season. Many had missed Christmas of 1941 due to the chaos after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and they intended not to miss another, even if it would occur behind the walls of an internment camp. In the scrapbook, an article can be found titled “Christmas in a Japanese Prison Camp.” In the article the author Raymond P. Cromin, describes the events of Christmas 1942. Groups of adults collected scrap wood, cloth, and metal, and bought whatever was available, and funneled it all to a team of “Santa’s Little Helpers.” Carpenters, engineers, seamstresses, anyone who could craft worked together to make toys and gifts of all kinds for the 3500 internees. The workers made scooters, trucks, puzzles, toys, stuffed animals, dolls, complete doll wardrobes, and for the adults, hand carved pipes, cigar and cigarette holders, bamboo beer mugs, whatever they could manage. One mining engineer named Weigel made thousands of bamboo knitting needles for the internees, who then used them to knit fresh clothing and blankets. As Christmas approached, the internees hosted a toy fair, where the workers showed off what they had made, trading, buying, and selling whatever extra they had. Filipinos donated broken toys and Santa’s Little Helpers repaired them. Americans still living outside of the camp due to illness or old age sent in gifts, one couple named Cliff and Kate Billings donated toys for a dozen children. Donations of food by the Filipinos filled internee stomachs, scores of roasted turkeys and pigs, as well as ice cream, cakes, and candy.

In mid-December, the Japanese ship Teia Maru arrived in Manila carrying Red Cross Comfort Kits, one for each internee. The comfort kits were huge and heavy, filled to the brim with things the internees hadn’t seen in months. In the scrapbook a photograph shows a massive crowd of internees waiting in line to receive their kit filled with canned food, butter, vitamins, medicine, and even chocolate. These kits proved a godsend in the coming

years, and were saved by most. As Christmas neared, the camp grew more and more festive, filling up with little trees and paper decorations. By this time the camp grounds had been filled with small hand made shacks that internees used to get something resembling privacy, despite the fact the shacks were required to be completely open by the Japanese. Nearly every shanty had its own little Christmas tree, and some even had decorations that had been left from last year. One internee even made a cardboard nativity scene for all to enjoy. Even the Japanese participated, the commandant and first lieutenant giving gifts away to the internees.

The hardship that the internees had faced made Christmas all the better, and it was one they would never forget. As one internee recalled “That Christmas Day will remain with us always. With Japanese soldiers on guard at the gate, Santa arrived. He needed no pass. He went straight to our giant Christmas tree, brought in from the Baguio Mountains, and distributed the hundreds of gifts with words of cheer for each boy and girl.”

After Christmas came New Years, but for the internees the New Year came on January 4th, as it was January 4th, 1941 when the camp was first opened. The day gave the opportunity for the internees to reflect on their full year of internment, and to wonder what awaited them this coming year. Dave Harvey, camp entertainer in chief, produced a radio play titled “Our Time: 1942” and a full copy of the script is in the scrapbook. The play works its way through the months of the camp, recalling “one of the strangest periods of our lives.” Giving glimpses into “the unpleasant times, the constant and galling restraint, the uncomfortable and crowded quarters, the incessant and inevitable round of work and routine, the strain upon our minds and bodies.” Yet it commends the internees for “[coming] through with colors flying.”

Despite the hardship the internees had faced in their first year in the camp, and the uncertainty about their future, despite “the chow, the work, the weather, the snorers, our Uncle, and all the rest,” the play is hopeful. It encourages the internees to keep doing what they’ve done already, to “laugh it off and go right on doing the things we have to do.” The internees did not know how much longer they would be in Santo Tomas Internment Camp, they did not know what the New Year would bring. But they were resolute that they “simply will carry on; steadily, bravely, a bit complainingly, perhaps, but proudly and honorably.”

And so the internees did carry on, right into their second year of internment, 1943. This year brought new challenges for the internees, and we get a clearer glimpse of the conditions inside the camp due to a letter that Frank and Mildred saved in their scrapbook. Remember how I mentioned that in December of 1942, the Japanese ship *Teia Maru* had delivered Red Cross Comfort Kits? Well that wasn’t its only mission, it was also a part of a prisoner exchange. After negotiations with the Japanese, the allies had managed to arrange for one hundred and fifty internees to be repatriated. Those who were particularly sick due to anything from a lack of proper nutrition, to tropical diseases, were given priority to be on the list of people sent home. This was the first opportunity for information about the camp to reach the west. The repatriates were not allowed to bring any papers with them, and so designated spokesmen were chosen, and they spent their last nights in the camp memorizing anything and everything that the internees wanted told to family members and government officials. It appears that a family member of the Miles reached out to one of the repatriated internees, a Marjorie A. Davis, and the letter is her explanation of camp conditions. In the three dense pages she explains what the situation inside the camp is like and how the internees live day to day, as well as providing specifics about the Miles family, who she appears to have been close with.

Davis spends a good deal of the letter describing the food available to the internees. Two meals are served in the camp kitchen each day, except for children who receive three. Fresh fruit and vegetables are brought in by Filipinos designated to purchase food for the camp, and when meat or eggs are available they are sold in the camp canteen. Breakfast consists of cornmeal served with a spoonful of sugar every other day, as well as a cup of black coffee. Bread made of rice and cassava flour is prepared and served alongside the dinner meal, which is usually a bean stew, though sometimes it has meat. Davis explains that prices for many commodities such as sugar, meat, and fruit have gone up substantially, the price of a banana being fifteen times what it cost before the war broke out.

By the time Davis left Santo Tomas nearly six hundred shanties had been built across the university campus, offering a retreat for people to enjoy their meager meals. It was also where much of the cooking was done, as Davis explains that many of these shanties have small charcoal stoves. The living arrangements in the buildings had gotten worse as the camp population increased, with “an average of about 20 people in a room 35’ x 17’ which makes room for a bed only, and all one’s personal belongings have to be kept underneath.” In order to free up space, the Japanese had granted certain men permission to sleep in their shanties.

Davis does not only talk about the general conditions of the camp, but makes sure to describe how the Miles family themselves are doing. She explains that the Miles family has received no word from outside the camp, only two-hundred letters having been admitted into the camp. Despite not being able to communicate with their family in the United States, she explains that the Miles have lots of Filipino friends who help them, and she is “sure they will always have plenty of food.” She isn’t sure what jobs either Frank or Mildred have taken up in their free time in the camp, though she is sure they have taken up some kind of work,

but she explains that their time is limited as “washing and cooking and mending for a family keeps one pretty busy all day.” When not working the Miles’ enjoy playing bridge while listening to records broadcast over the camp loudspeaker.

From this letter we also learn that other members of the Miles family are living in the camp. Davis explains that Frank and Mildred are in good health, but their daughter Janet and her husband Bert Searl have been have had a rather crazy health situation. “[Bert] was not well when war broke out, having ulcers of the stomach and ... nervous tension,” both of which were exacerbated by the lack of proper nutrition. Since entering the camp Janet has “lost a lot of weight and was highly nervous due to a hyper-thyroid condition.” Despite these health troubles, the Searl family had a new member arrive a few months before Davis left. At some point after entering the camp Janet had become pregnant, and was allowed by the Japanese to live in her home until the summer of 1943, when all Americans were required to be in some camp, at which point she moved to a smaller camp on the outskirts of Manila. There she and her husband awaited the baby, who would also be named Janet, and were joined by Mildred Miles just before the birth. A few weeks after the birth the family was brought back to Santo Tomas, where Davis says they still were living by the time she left.

With this wonderful news, Davis goes on to assure the reader that “the morale of the camp is excellent” and that the Miles themselves are “always grand.” She says that those living in the camp want their friends and family not to worry, “for we are all right.” Though she stresses that the internees urged her to not “give them the impression that we want to stay here all our lives.” The community in the camp was strong and working well together, even if they sometimes “get on each others nerves.”

This sense of community had been strengthened by the hardships that the camp endured together, but it also grew from the friendships, competitions, and entertainment that the internees shared. Though each person was expected to work, the average work day was no longer than an hour or two for any individual. Personal chores and work were done outside of this, such as washing clothes, preparing personal meals, and waiting in line, but the internees still had a large portion of their day with nothing to do. Needing a way to fill this time, the internees found ways to entertain themselves. Games of all sorts were played in the camp, such as chess, checkers, go, poker, cribbage, and more. Some picked up hobbies, such as drawing or carving. These activities created their own clubs and organizations, further strengthening the sense of community inside the camp, and by far one of the most popular forms of community entertainment was sports: American football, soccer, cricket, volleyball, and of course, baseball. Of the many items in the Miles scrapbook, they made sure to include the 1943 baseball schedule which was produced by the Baseball Committee, and sold to internees for 20 centavos each. The ten pages included a game schedule, team rosters with batting averages, and a practice schedule. The men's league boasted eight teams and the women's league four. The games were clearly popular not only because of the number of people playing, but the enthusiasm from those watching. The baseball schedule includes pages dedicated to short quotations from various fans cheering on their favorite teams.

Though the camp was cut off from directly contacting the outside world, news continued to filter in through various means. Filipino friends continued to sneak notes into the camp about the war situation. Rumors circulated that a secret radio had been smuggled into the camp, and that certain internees were in contact with the American military through the device. This secret radio was not just a rumor, it was a reality. The idea was first brought

up by Luis de Alcuaz, a local Filipino scientist who served as secretary to the Rector of Santo Tomas University, and Geroge Newman, after hostilities began but before their internment. Using equipment from the physics department of the university, smuggled components, and raw material available inside the camp, construction began on May 15th of 1943. It took several months to complete the device due to a lack of material and the need for absolute secrecy, as the five or six men working on the project were sure that execution awaited them if they were discovered.

In the end two receivers and two transmitters were constructed, though only the receivers were tested, as the transmitters were not tested for fear of being detected by the Japanese. Once completed, the devices were dismantled into small components so that the pieces could be hidden around the camp to avoid detection. These devices would occasionally be reconstructed to listen to radio broadcasts of war news, and through this the internees learned about American military progress in the Pacific.

Though only a few knew about the radio, the information learned over the radio was shared discretely to help share the news whenever possible. Rumors would circulate through the camp, and camp leadership would find ways to confirm them. A common way this was done was through the music played on the camp loudspeakers. A daily source of entertainment, the loudspeakers played records from the large quantity on campus. Often the music would be chosen to fit the times, such as playing “Singing in The Rain” during three long rainy weeks in July, or “Nothing to Spend But Time” when the Japanese confiscated all currency and replaced it with their own printed money, which would earn the nickname “Mickey Mouse Money.”

In the scrapbook there are several pages titled “War News via Music.” These pages

record the music played at the 6:30 am reveille on the camp loudspeaker, and the world event that the camp leadership was confirming to the internees. As the war both in the Pacific and Europe escalated, the rumors circulating in the camp were confirmed through the camp loudspeakers. When in June of 1944 the Americans won the Battle of the Philippine Sea, “The Yanks Are Coming” could be heard throughout the camp, followed by “It’s a Hap, Hap, Happy Day.” News about Europe filtered through as well. Shortly after the Allies invaded Southern France on August 15th, “Midnight in Paris” was played for all to hear. News wasn’t always ready at hand, and a lack of news brought songs such as “What’s New?” and “This Doubting Is Getting Me Down.”

As the American forces pushed to the Philippines, more and more news managed to arrive in the camp. On October 20th, an announcement was made before the first song of the day, the camp broadcaster apologizing for being delayed in playing the music, saying “better Leyte than never” followed by the song “Lulu Has Come To Town.” The Americans had landed on the Gulf of Leyte.

Next episode, the Americans return.

Episode Six: Liberation

In our last episode the internees had settled into camp life and endured the first two years of their confinement. Finally, news had arrived that the Americans had returned to the Philippines, with landings beginning in Leyte.

Back at the beginning of 1943, the Japanese leadership changed. The camp commandant, a man named Kodaki, was being sent home to be replaced by another Japanese officer, but before leaving Kodaki gave a farewell address. In this address he made a promise to the internees, saying that “so long as Japan is winning you will be treated magnanimously.” This promise would prove to be true. As the war entered its third year in 1944, Japan was losing the war, and any sense of magnanimity disappeared.

As the American military came closer and closer to Manila, the restrictions on internees increased accordingly. As 1944 progressed conditions inside the camp steadily worsened. In the scrapbook, a bulletin produced after internment shows a record of the food supplied to the camp. By 1944 the Japanese had taken over the supply, no longer allowing internees to hire Filipino agents to purchase food for them. In February this supply dropped to just under fifteen-hundred calories a day per internee. The Japanese were struggling to get supplies to the Philippines, and the rations available to the internees steadily dropped from month to month. By October, each internee only had access to one-thousand calories a day, and only twenty-four grams of protein. Internees were losing weight, on average men would lose fifty-one pounds by the end of their internment, women thirty-two pounds.

As the American pushed into the Philippines, the internees could hear the war approach them. Sounds of airplanes, gunfire, and artillery became increasingly common, though the Japanese denied any “rumors” that they were losing the war. A comic produced

inside the camp shows a man pointing to the sky shouting “Look! Another rumor!” The Japanese forbid internees from looking at airplanes as they passed overhead. When three men were caught doing so, they were ordered to stand in a field for several hours, looking straight up. As the war -- and its end -- grew closer, the Japanese grip on the camp grew stronger.

Frank and Mildred clearly saw themselves as part of the larger story of the war. In their scrapbook they not only preserved material from inside the camp, but newspaper clippings describing the war as well. These clippings are arranged such that they tell the story of the American push towards Manila, and the great effort the Americans put towards freeing the internees. Early in the scrapbook, newspaper articles outline the American drive across the Pacific and finally to the Philippines, an article titled “100,000 Yanks Landed Along Lingayen Gulf” proclaiming the success of the American campaign. A following article describes how MacArthur’s forces begin to expand this foothold on the beaches of the Philippines, using armored columns to seize roads and junctions, pushing six to eight miles inland along the twenty mile beachfront by January 12th, 1945. An article from the very next day shows the exceptional progress being made, most columns making it twelve miles inland, and the Sixth Army now twenty miles inland.

This storytelling through article clippings only continues, the next page describes the crossing of the Agno River on January 15th, marking major progress towards Manila. Alongside this article another describes a captured diary of a Japanese soldier on Luzon, in which the soldier describe the devastation of American aircraft and artillery. A third article on the page describes the efforts being made on the Japanese homefront, including a new

labor registration law meant to bolster war industry, and the Japanese Premier admitting that the Pacific situation “does not warrant optimism.”

The articles and clipping included early in the scrapbook focus on the war in general, and after each page the story closes in on the Philippines and the establishment of beachheads on Luzon. Then the articles begin to focus on the drive to capture Manila, such as a newspaper graphic titled “Razzle-Dazzling Japs on Luzon Island” which shows the army columns that pushed from Philippine beaches to Manila. The next page includes an article describing this four column push on Manila, and how the army had surrounded the city. Several articles show how the capture of Manila would be an emotional victory for the American forces and not simply a strategic one, such as one article titled “Yanks, Even Sick, Vie To Be First In Manila.” The next article in the scrapbook is titled “We Will Reach Manila Today, Says M’Arthur” dated February 3rd, 1945.

In the scrapbook there is a document titled “The Liberation Bulletin of Philippine Internment Camp No. 1 at Santo Tomas University.” This document is a treasure trove of information about the camp, we have already referenced several times when describing the camp map and the census, and also includes a timeline of major events in the camp. The entry on February 3rd, 1945 reads: “10 U.S. Planes parade to Santo Tomas, drop goggles and message of good tidings into East Patio ... continuous machine-gun fire can be heard.”

As the sun set on February 3rd, the internees started moving inside for roll call. Suddenly American planes flew low over the camp, showing off the stars on their wings. The Japanese tried to get the internees to ignore the planes and ordered them to their rooms, but a few internees had noticed that something dropped from one of the airplanes. An internee dashed into the East Patio to find a pair of pilot goggles with a note attached to it: “Roll out

the barrel.” This was a reference to a popular song with the lyrics “the gang’s all here”, a signal to the internees that the army was on its way. What they didn’t know was that General MacArthur had ordered a special attack just to retrieve the internees. Fearing that the internees might be executed by the Japanese before the Americans could reach them, MacArthur ordered the 1st Cavalry Division to dash twenty-eight miles behind enemy lines and free the internees. Outrunning their supply lines, this “flying column” of men and tanks knocked down the front gate of the camp just hours after the goggles had been dropped into the camp. The 1st Cavalry Division arrived shortly after 9 pm, and it was dark throughout the camp. An article titled “The Liberation of Sto. Tomas - As I Saw It” by Bessie Hackett takes up a page in the scrapbook. In it, Bessie recalls the “great roaring sound and ... the rumble of tanks” outside the camp. The internees were confused but hopeful, not entirely sure if it was American forces making all the noise outside, one girl cried out “I heard one of them say ‘Hell yes!’” A man shouted from the third floor “Are you Americans” as the dark figures moved up the center pathway towards the Main Building. The tank stopped in front of the building and “huge, giant forms began climbing out. There was no longer any doubt in the tremendous shout ‘Americans! The Americans are here!’”

The internees in the Main Building rushed outside and embraced their liberators. For a moment, there was excitement, sobbing, and shouting. But the ordeal was not over. The Japanese guards holed up inside the Education Building, with several hundred internees as hostages. As the night turned into the next day, shooting between the Americans and the Japanese guards occasionally broke out. A Japanese officer who was particularly hated by the internees attempted to throw a grenade at the Americans, but was shot before he could do so. Eventually negotiations were made, and the Japanese soldiers were allowed to leave with their weapons. The hostages made it out of the situation with only minor injuries.

The internees were finally free. Over the coming weeks and months the American hold over the Philippines would strengthen, and preparations made to move the internees back to the United States. The U.S. government heavily pressured Americans to return to the United States, but Frank and Mildred Miles refused. An article written after the war titled “Couple is Thankful Jap Nightmare Over” in the scrapbook interviews Frank and Mildred, who were visiting family in the United States at the time, though the date of the article is unknown. In the article Frank and Mildred express their gratitude that they “came through alive, in good health.” Their gratitude came with the memory of those who were not so lucky. In the back of the scrapbook, two pages are filled with a list of the men, women, and children who had died during the internment. In all, three-hundred and fourteen people died at Santo Tomas Internment Camp.

When I first began this project, I asked myself why someone would make a scrapbook about their life inside a prison camp. Scrapbooks are for reminiscing and forcing grandchildren to learn about when you were young, not remembering a tragedy that left hundreds dead, and brought thousands more to deaths door. But as I dug deeper, I realized that the Miles had made this scrapbook with that exact intention. Frank and Mildred chose the photographs, letters, articles, and documents enclosed in the scrapbook for a reason, so that they could tell their story, and while they are no longer able personally assist in telling it, their scrapbook remains as a means through which the story can be heard. The items we have learnt about, and the stories they tell, share the experiences of thousands of men, women, and children caught in the middle of a situation they had no hope of controlling, but faced with honor and strength. A scrapbook serves as a tool of remembering, as a visual aid for those who are learning the story for the first time, and the Miles thought their story was one worth remembering.

I have tried my best to share the story that Frank and Mildred told through their scrapbook, and I hope you have enjoyed this podcast.

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