

had dwindled to 7,731, according to the Ryukyu government's 1946 records.

By 1947, however, a hog cholera epidemic had nearly decimated Okinawa's pig population.

On Nov. 12, 1947, Kameji Kakazu and Katsumi Hokama formed the United Okinawa Assistance Association. Within six months, they had collected \$47,196 to purchase 550 pigs. But the pigs needed to be transported to Okinawa. After several requests to the Pentagon by the Honolulu Council of Churches, Gen. Douglas MacArthur finally authorized the request.

With the transportation secured, Dr. Yoshio Yamashiro, a veterinarian, went to F.A. Wellman & Sons, a livestock market in Omaha, Neb., where he hand-selected 550 pigs. The pigs were then transported to Portland. In August 1948, Dr. Yamashiro, along with Ryoshin Akena, Heisho Miyasato, Ushikichi Nakama, Shinyei Shimabukuro, Genbi Tonaki and Yasuo Uezu, set sail for Okinawa with the pigs and the crew of the USS Owen.

Two days into the journey, however, they encountered a severe storm that destroyed the ship's makeshift pens. Some pigs were washed over-board. The men risked their own lives by tying themselves to ship's rails in order to avoid losing more pigs.

The ship returned to Portland and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers helped to repair the pens. On Sept. 4, the Owen returned to sea again.

The Oct. 29, 1948, edition of Okinawa's *Uruma Shimpo* listed in detail how the 521 pigs were distributed throughout Okinawa. Fifteen pigs were sick and had to be sent to the quarantine station.

After Dr. Yamashiro had returned to Hawai'i, the U.S. military sent out an emergency radio request for 100,000 cc of hog cholera serum. The serum was immediately shipped by commercial airliner on Oct. 10, 1948, paid for by Dr. Yamashiro and his associates.

We spoke with 94-year old Seiko Komesu, one of 15 farmers from Ginowan who had entered a lottery to receive a pig. Komesu-san got a pregnant Chester White sow that bore 10 piglets. A designated veterinarian assessed the litter and determined a price for each piglet. Komesu-san was allowed to keep his Chester White, but was required to sell the litter to other farmers on a waiting list for half price.

"Chester was number one quality," he told us. In time, he built a successful business from that first Chester White sow. "I was the first in my village to build a big cement house," he said. Komesu-san and his wife raised six children in that house.

Through a carefully managed distribution and breeding program, the number of pigs swelled and the hog farming industry in Okinawa was revitalized. It helped to solve food shortages and contribute to the postwar recovery.

MILK GOAT BRIGADE

In those postwar years, food shortages and malnourishment were prevalent throughout Okinawa and there was a need for milk for infants and young children. From Hawai'i, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the Okinawa Fukko Renmei and the Christian Relief Group sent 750 milking goats in two shipments. Unfortunately, we were not able to find any documentation on how the goats were distributed.

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

I was struck by three themes while researching this story:

- A March 1942 public opinion poll found that 93 percent of Americans believed that the U.S. government was right to intern people of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast. Discrimination was still widespread across the country right after the war. The fact that other races and ethnicities donated clothing to help people that others may have considered the enemy is a testament to Hawai'i's aloha identity.

- Many older children in Hawai'i took jobs to help their families make ends meet. Ninety-year-old Dorothy (Shiroma) Hoe was one them. "My father made my older sisters, who were 12 and 13, wear makeup so they would look older. He wanted them to get waitress jobs at restaurants, which they did, to help support our family." Hoe said her father "would slaughter a pig and sell the pork. All we ate was the *nakami* (intestines). I never knew what pork tasted like." Despite financial hardships, families like Hoe's were compelled to give. It speaks to our *Issei's kizuna* (ties) to their beloved place of birth — like an umbilical cord to the motherland, never to be severed. It is our responsibility to keep that bond alive in their honor.

- As a producer/researcher for the PBS (Public Broadcasting System) television series, "Family Ingredients," I helped to produce an episode on Okinawa in 2015. In it, we featured segments about the pigs being transported to Okinawa. In one of the segments, we interviewed Zensho Arakaki, then 85 years old, at White



The Okinawa Clothing Relief Committee organizers: (from left) Sadao Asato, committee secretary Mildred Toule, Dr. Theodore Richards and Dr. Gilbert Bowles.

Beach. When the pigs were unloaded at White Beach in 1948, Arakaki-san was 17 years old. At the end of our "Family Ingredients" interview, he turned and faced the ocean, looking out at the remnants of the pier where the pigs were unloaded. With tears streaming down his face, he quietly said, "I can see the pigs now."

Throughout our interviews with individuals who received the relief goods and supplies, we felt a strong sense of gratitude on their part. To them, the items were much more precious than their material value. A set of clothing showed that people in Hawai'i cared. I came away knowing that Hawai'i gave the people hope, and that played an eternal role in the postwar recovery of Okinawa. **HI**

Dan Nakasone is a *Sansei Uchinanchu* from Wahiawa. He is a marketing and advertising professional and most recently served as a producer/researcher for PBS' award-winning food and culture series, "Family Ingredients," which is based in Hawai'i and hosted by Chef Ed Kenney.



One of the leaflets instructing the civilians on how to surrender.

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