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MAJOR DOCUMENTS

**SURVEY OF  
RACE RELATIONS**

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Interview with Ruby Hirose

Ruby Hirose is a Japanese girl attending the University of Washington. She works in the home of Dr. H. L. Smith, a dentist, as a school girl, receiving her room and board and \$2.50 a week. She usually spends Sunday with Rev. and Mrs. Murphy, going to her home near Auburn about once a month and frequently visiting her mother and sister who are both confined at Firlands Hospital north of Seattle. Her mother and sister both have tuberculosis and while Ruby looks healthy enough she says she has to be careful and the Murphy's are quite insistent upon her retiring early every night and getting plenty of rest.

Mr. Hirose, Ruby's father was born in the suburbs of Tokio, the fourth of seven sons, and was brought up by his grandmother. He was a manufacturer of some sort. Ruby said she thought he had something to do with canning food. Ruby's father went through Middle School and married before coming to America.

Mrs. Hirose's people were dry goods merchants. After her husband's failure in business he decided to come to America to look for opportunities and she also wanted to come as they were both ashamed to face their relatives and friends in their poverty. They came to America in 1904 and went to the White River District near Auburn to try their hands at farming. Since then they have lived on several different pieces of property within the same general district. At present they hold fifteen acres of land on a seven year lease. They first leased this place for three years, and then re-leased it for seven years; having operated under the second lease for two years they still have five years to hold and use the land. Ruby says she thinks the lease is in her name. They are trying to raise berries. The first year they spent \$1,000. in clearing the land and they use two and three

times as much fertilizer as their neighbors and still have poor results. "The land is too low," Ruby explained. "It is poorly drained and under a heavy debt so that they cannot afford to install a better drainage system. Mother did not want to go on this place in the beginning but we had no other place to go. The place we were on was good but the owner could not meet a mortgage on it and he had to lose the place and of course we had to move. Other Japanese have tried to farm the place we are on now and they all failed so mother did not see how we could hope to succeed but it was the only place we could find so we took it. We have to pay \$45. an acre rent and that is pretty high for such poor land."

Ruby is the oldest child. She is 19 years old. The second child is Ferni, aged 17, who is in the hospital with her mother. Kimeo is next. He is 15 and is a freshman in the Auburn High School. Mary, aged 14 is also in the high school and Toki and Tomo, twin girls, aged 10, are in the 6th grade in the grammar school at Thomas. When Ruby was in grammar school she was the only Japanese girl in the school and so she had plenty of opportunity to play and mingle with the white children. She felt no discrimination at all either on the part of the students or the teachers but now she says there are a great many Japanese students in the school and the feeling is rather strong. The Japanese pupils play together and the American pupils play together but the two groups do not mix easily. Even the teachers show a marked prejudice in favor of the white pupils. Ruby was also popular in high school where she took part in athletics and sang in the glee club and in the operetta. Her best friends have always been white people and at the university she prefers to associate with white girls to associating with the Japanese girls and boys.

Ruby attends the Sunday School of the First Methodist Church where she is taking a course in teacher's training and is the only Japanese in the class. She often goes to Wesley House, a gathering place near the university campus for Methodist students. She is also secretary of the Japanese Students Christian Association which meets once a month at the University Y. M. C. A. (Eagleson Hall). She says she is also a member of the University Y. W. C. A. She does not like to eat in public and so never goes to a restaurant or to the University Commons. She takes her lunch to school but will not eat in the girls' study hall next to the Commons where most of the girls eat who bring their lunch. She says she nearly always eats at the Chemistry building. The only explanation she would give was that she did not like to have folks watch her eat.

Ruby helps somewhat in the Japanese Baptist Church in Seattle but prefers to attend the American churches. For five years she taught a Sunday School class in the church at Christopher. Her sisters are now teaching there.

Mr. Hirose was president of the Japanese Association at Thomas for four or five years but dropped out of the organization because "he was disgusted with the members who would not respond to his efforts in their behalf." Mr. Hirose can read the English newspapers, but prefers to read Japanese books. He went to night school the first year he was in America but has not gone since. Mrs. Hirose speaks very little English and cannot read it at all. Mr. Hirose is anxious that his children shall have as good an education as possible but he cannot give them much financial assistance. He tries to pay Ruby's tuition and her laboratory fees but she has to provide for all incidental expenses herself. She is a pharmacy major and her ambition is to be

a doctor. Much as she prefers to associate with white people she says she would not consider marrying a white person as she does not believe in inter-marriage.

Mr. Hirose also purchased outright (not leased) two contiguous pieces of land in the name of his two oldest daughters. Ruby said, "I can't see why he bought those pieces of land. Why it is hilly and covered with stumps and it would be an awful task to put the ground in shape to cultivate. I was eighteen when he bought those pieces and so I do not have to have a guardian but my sister does."