Marlene Mayo: This is the University of Maryland oral history project on the allied occupation of Japan. Today is December the 20th and I am ______ and I am beginning my interview with Virginia Beauchamp of the University of Maryland at College Park. Virginia since we last talked with each other about half a year has gone by and I wondered if anything occurred to you that you would like to include about your experience in the Philippines before we continue on with Japan.

Virginia Beauchamp: Yes, I kind of blanked out or at least hadn’t been able to respond to your question concerning Japanese atrocities in the Philippines. And I think I first really became aware of them in a personal way after I moved to Betanjas???? We had an employee in our red cross club, a canteen worker who had been one of two survivors of a massacre in the town of Leifa???? All of the men from the community, each twelve and up had been herded into the Cathedral and then had been machine-gunned. He had survived and played dead and got out that way so I was quite aware of his story. At a later time a group of us, sightseers went to Leifa???? and were taken outside the town to very deep ravine overgrown with tropical foliage and told at the bottom of this ravine were many skeletons of people who had also been massacred there. Standing at the edge of the ravine looking at the bodies would fall in. I tried to look down but I really couldn’t see anything because of the overgrowth at that time. Another incident that was kind of an eerie reminder of the same
thing concerned a goldsmith who sold a good deal of jewelry in the area where I was and I think ask one time where he got his gold and he said lots of gold Leifa??? which I took to mean that it had been salvaged from the teeth of the skeletons probably in that ravine or elsewhere around. Philippians always use to use a lot of gold to decorate their teeth, even when they didn’t need dental work done. So this is the things I think of. I did at some later point and I can’t remember when I spent a weekend in Mila??? and went sightseeing at Karagadoor???. We went all around the Island and walked the trails and saw the big cave which was boarded up. We could not get inside. So of course I was aware of all those things.

Marlene Mayo: That was the _____ that was converted into __________, I am not really sure.

Virginia Beauchamp: I suppose it is, I wouldn’t think they would overlook that. But I have no idea.

Marlene Mayo: There was a program on television a few nights ago about the Katonga???

Virginia Beauchamp: I saw that.

Marlene Mayo: Let’s move back again to Japan. Once again explore the circumstances of your assignment in Japan and your arrival in Japan. Your impressions of the Japanese. I am really
quite interested in what notions you might have carried with you over to Japan having been to Philippines having __________ some of the atrocities, war-time occupation of the Japanese.

Virginia Beauchamp: But you will remember that I had personal experiences with Japanese prisoners and got to know a dozen of them on a personal basis by name. And seen them ________ a great deal through that experience so that I was not all together expecting a sinister kind of experience. I don’t know what I was really looking for exactly. One of the things that struck me incredibly was how much more organized things were in Japan than they were in the Philippines. In part I am sure that is because it was theater headquarters and army’s military were bureaucratized in a way that was not true of the Philippines. Also they had more resources. But I think an awful lot of it had to do with the Japanese people themselves who were orderly in a way that the Philippians were not. I can’t exactly recall where when we were talking the last time. I think we were talking about all my baggage having been lost.

Marlene Mayo: That’s right and about getting another uniform to wear.

Virginia Beauchamp: Alright, which I got in the PX. I worked for a couple of weeks in the main red cross club in Yokahamma?? which was an assignment I got because my baggage had been lost. That was a beautiful beautiful building. It had been a
restaurant of about seven stories, each floor representing a different kind of culture. The basement in which I worked where we had a craft shop was Egyptian in motif. It was reproductions of Egyptian paintings on the walls and so on. One of the higher floors was the sight of the offices and that was Japanese. It was set up to look like the exteriors of Japanese buildings with gardens in between and little stepping stones and little pools and that sort. And these separate little buildings would be offices which were used by the staff. The club a lot of personnel, people to do everything so that the such of things that we were doing in the Philippines scrounging for supplies and ourselves doing posters, ourselves handling the tools and working with the GI’s and so on. All those kinds of jobs were done by the Japanese. We had more of a supervisory role. I might design a poster and sketch it out casually but a local artist would actually complete it. That was extraordinary to me after that whole year of relative privation.

Marlene Mayo: What is the legend of the building you were in? It was so beautiful, what was the general _____ of your _____ employment? Were you _____?

Virginia Beauchamp: An awful lot of it had been totally destroyed. The areas between Yokahoma??? and Tokyo were totally raged but cleaned up. Just nothing there no buildings there.

Marlene Mayo: You ______________ these rebuilding????
Virginia Beauchamp: No I can’t recall that I saw signs of rebuilding. I think I started to tell you about the quarters that the red cross were in Yokohama which was a large Tudor mansion that belonged to Standard Oil people. In the back of it on the same premises was a Japanese house. A large _____ which I understood the family lived in during the summer and was ______ in the Tudor mansion during the winter. So they had moved entirely into the Japanese building to vacate the premises for the red cross headquarters.

Marlene Mayo: How large of a contingent did the Japanese give to you? Was it ___________ ????

Virginia Beauchamp: I have no idea. The first day I arrived I went into a very very large room with theater personnel and the people there perhaps in the quarters, I am just trying to remember having breakfast for example, we had a long table rather like this and I think people sitting around something like that. They were very short-handed. They were extremely short-handed. When I was, well at a later point, it was decided I would be sent to the morgue. The red cross sympathizers recreation _________________ had come down to Yokohama and I was introduced to her and she got down on her knees and ____ and said "praise the Law" three times. Embarrassed me no end. I had no idea what this meant but I later learned that they were just so terribly short-handed that anybody who was treasure -- I by the way got away early because our red cross club in
Tenmarsalena?????? had closed down completely -- it didn't have to be staffed. Whereas all of the other clubs had to be restaffed and so until you had staff coming in from the United States they were not releasing people to come to Japan so I came much ahead from all of the other red cross personnel.

Marlene Mayo: This is an anticipated question because I wondered what the background, where the red cross personnel came into Japan, whether they had got the more experiences in _______ or whether they were coming to Japan __________???

Virginia Beauchamp: Yes, I think most of them moved in from elsewhere, an awful lot from the Philippines. They may have come from Okiwana???

Marlene Mayo: You mentioned sitting around the one table at meantime. Where you well-fed?

Virginia Beauchamp: Oh yes, yes.

Marlene Mayo: American food?

Virginia Beauchamp: Yes. entirely. And, of course, the whole occupation was supported by the United States who never allowed, and that was true in the Philippines as well. To live off the local economy in any way. So we had standard GI food but when you are at the top of the break-down of food. You get, at
theater headquarters you get very good food.

Marlene Mayo: Before we go off elsewhere in Japan and to America I would still like to ask a few more questions about orientation to Japan and local _____. Were you able to go off a few times to Tokyo for excursions? Were there organized activities to acquaint you with the Japanese?

Virginia Beauchamp: Nothing of that sort at that time. I don’t remember going anywhere at that time. Of course fraternization was not allowed. At some point I saw the House of the Emperor -- but I think that was much later -- that was when I was on a trip to Kyoto?? That was just at the end of my tour of duty. Really we didn’t do anything at the time.

Marlene Mayo:

Virginia Beauchamp:

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