

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1942

Oberlin Offers a Friendly Welcome To Seventeen Japanese-American Students

This community will be host during the coming college year to a group of approximately 17 students who, though they are all American citizens, are of Japanese ancestry. Five of these young people have previously been enrolled here, but the others are new to Oberlin. Eleven will arrive here this week-end who are evacuees from the Pacific coastal areas and who have been living in the evacuation camps of the West.

True to its best traditions the Oberlin community bids these Japanese-Americans a completely friendly welcome. They are coming to us with the full knowledge and consent of U. S. military authorities, of the F. B. I., and of our local officials. They were all born in the United States—in California, Oregon, Washington, New Jersey and Hawaii. They have all grown up in American public schools, and many of them have been attending American colleges in the West. They all have excellent records for scholarship, character and citizenship. They have been excellently recommended by friends of Oberlin, and Oberlin College vouches for them.

Oberlin residents will look upon these students, certainly with unusual interest, but with neither prejudice nor suspicion. The war situation makes their lot a difficult one. Oberlin can help by treating them no differently than it treats any of its other 1800 or more student residents.

For an example of how *not* to act we can take that of Parkville, Missouri, where Park College is located. There, in recent weeks, the mayor and city council have been "up-in-arms" over the prospective arrival of seven Japanese-American evacuees as students. Boasting that they were not as "soft" as the F. B. I., the city officials threatened to run these students out of town.

We do not believe there are any Oberlin citizens who are so lacking in common humanity, or whose patriotism is of such an empty, bombastic variety as would allow them to adopt the attitude of Parkville's mayor. If so they surely do not deserve the name of Oberlin, and we wish them elsewhere.

No, in this respect we are still the Oberlin of old. Despite this war and the brutal necessity which makes us long for the time when the forces representing the land of their forefathers shall be beaten back in complete defeat—despite it, we wish for these fellow American citizens an entirely happy and intellectually profitable stay in Oberlin. May their experience here only serve to strengthen their belief, and our belief, in the democratic way of living.