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Kuratomu, GEORGE T.

1944

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Interview with GEORGE KURATOMI, Tule Lake Center, July 11, 1944.  
Address: Stockade.

Mr. Besig: My understanding when I came over to visit you fellows was that we were to be allowed a private ~~talk~~ conference with you. I am now informed such a private conference will not be allowed us, that the administration insists upon the presence of these boys with the guns on their hips, to which we object of course, insisting we are entitled to confer with clients privately. And I personally don't wish to participate in proceedings such as this, because I feel maybe you boys wouldn't express yourselves as freely as you would express yourselves if you were alone with us, and unless you have something to say to me, O.K., otherwise, I am not going ahead.

(At this point in the interview, the project attorney, Mr. Lechlitter, came into the police headquarters and wished to know what was wrong--Mr. Besig having previously telephoned to Mr. Best to protest at the lack of privacy and having been told he could take it or leave it--and at Mr. Besig's insistence that he would not conduct interviews with these boys with a policeman in the room, Mr. Lechlitter arranged for the two policemen to sit directly outside the doors of the small room in which the interviews were held.)

A. My name is Kuratomi.

Q. And you have some parents in the Center?

A. No. I have a fiancée.

Q. Oh, you are the boy with the baby. I understand it is a goodlooking baby.

A. I haven't been given a chance to see it.

Q. Your fiancée was around to see us yesterday afternoon and I don't know what I can do to help you here. I understand you are a citizen of the United States. Where were you born.

A. That's right. San Diego.

Q. And how old are you? A. 29, now.

Q. You're 29 now. I understand that Mr. Ennis was around here the other day--he is from the Department of Justice--and that he discussed with you the possibility of renouncing your citizenship.

A. I have not consented.

Q. You appreciate of course that if you consent to renunciation of your citizenship, then you will therefore be treated as an alien and will be shipped out of here. That is the reason why they want you folks to renounce.

A. Now, I read and I have taken keen interest in what your organization has been doing in order to uphold the civil rights of the American citizens and the only thing I ask, which I wish to request, is decency.



- A.(cont.) The treatment we have been receiving to this date I cannot see the reason of my detention, especially over such a long period of time, in the place with the Stockade, with the army guard around, and as you notice the place is blocked off with beaver board. We cannot even see anybody, and the mail has not been coming in.
- Q. You have not received any mail since about the first of July?
- A. And first-class mail has always been censored and has to be opened before it comes in.
- Q. The WRA or Army?
- A. They ~~do~~ won't let it in unless it is open and a third party has to open it and I know it is against a Federal law.
- Q. In other words, mail that comes from outside the Center has to be opened?
- A. It is always opened before it comes in. And then you have heard about the fact that we haven't been given an opportunity to even see anyone during that period.
- Q. I can't see any justification for that. Can't see what in hell basis they would have for denying that. Of course, the claim is that messages might be sent to the Center proper and cause additional difficulties. That is their story, of course.
- A. That is their fear. And we cannot seem to convince them that it is going to be otherwise. That is the main point. As soon as we can convince the authorities that the friction which is existing in the Center at the present time could be dissolved by liquidation of the Stockade, that is to say, that people in here be released back to the Center.--We cannot convince the authorities, especially the high officials here. That is the difficulty we are confronting now. Day after day we are being given the same line saying you might be released sometime soon. That is the only promise they say, which is very indefinite, and we ask for the reason of our detention, and they refuse to tell us, so there is a point and we can't seem to budge that. We are forced at gun point, so there you are.
- Q. What sort of proposition do they come to you with?
- A. They haven't come with any ~~sort of~~ proposition?
- Q. Except last Sunday, when Ennis was here--or when was he here? He was here very recently.
- A. 3 or 4 days ago, 5 days ago.
- Q. Why did he come to you? Did he explain the new bill that was passed?
- A. That's right.



- Q. Did he say he was going to send forms here?
- A. That I didn't hear, but I hear someone was told to that effect.
- Q. And that is apparently what they intend to do, and apparently think they have got it well set up so that the boys will request renunciation. That, of course you understand, is a personal matter with each ~~key~~ person and you don't have to do anything you don't want to do. They won't be herded into any action. I think you boys are capable enough of deciding that issue for yourselves. It's none of my business. *if* Anybody wants to renounce his citizenship, that's up to him.
- What was your relation to this situation here?
- A. I was elected to be the head of this block representatives body.
- Q. You were to be the head?
- A. Yes, I was elected to be the head, which automatically became the head of the negotiating committee, the chairman.
- Q. You were the chairman of the negotiating committee? And who elected these block representatives?
- A. The people at large. The way it worked I have to explain to you from the very beginning. But this thing-I cannot be exact, was the 15th of October I believe, there was an accident in the farm road and in order to handle that situation the people formed the block representatives, they elected one person or an alternate from each block.
- Q. Now, let me interpose a question here. Was that election held with the approval of the administration?
- A. The point is that--
- Q. I mean were these representatives who were duly recognized by the administration?
- A. No, not at that time. The intention was that since the Center was in such a turmoil on account of this segregation and that majority of us were new arrivals and there was no organization at that time to more or less combat or handle the situation and that necessity was urgent at that time that the people elected these block representatives, and our intention of course was that organization to be temporary because we had the feeling, we had the knowledge that in order to work anything out in the Center as representatives of the people we had to have the understanding between the administration; and that since that body was a temporary institution we had to get the approval of the authority in order to form a permanent one, and that formation was more or less ok'd by Mr. Myer during his visit here, November 1st. So naturally, the night of November 4th we were in the process of electing these committees and which committee would automatically be presented to the administration for approval and that was the set-up we had. But I think the whole thing, the whole matter was that the night of the 4th there was a commotion down in the warehouse section, which resulted in the assault upon two Caucasian, Internal Security men. Well, under the circumstances of course these block representatives and the negotiating committee which was attached to it, had nothing to do with the commotion, but I don't know



A.  
(cont.) how the administration attached those two things together, but they evidently got the impression that the block representatives were responsible ~~and~~ for that commotion on the night of the 4th and that was the whole mix-up, and that is what started this thing going in reverse against us, that was the whole situation. And at subsequent hearings and interrogations that we have received we just couldn't convince the persons in power to the effect that we had nothing to do with that or our detention here is illegal. We just couldn't budge the army or the WRA.

Q. Where were you at the time of the commotion?

A. I was in Block 15 Mess Hall. We were having a meeting there. Just as I mentioned awhile ago, selecting this final committee members.

Q. To interview Mr. Myer?

A. No, that was after his departure. You see, this was the night of the 4th and Mr. Myer was here the 1st of November.

Q. I see. And were you immediately arrested?

A. No, I was not arrested immediately, but that one point we still cannot figure out to this day. That is of course after the commotion of the 4th, the Army was called in to quell the disturbance and naturally the army started to fire and used tanks and armored cars and eventually the little commotion which was really a small one was quelled, and after the army had taken over there was no central organization in the colony to deal with anybody administering the Center, so Col. Austin, Lt. Col. Austin, he selected the warden's office to be the only place where there would be telephone connection between the administration and the colony and Mr. Tsuda--I imagine you have met him--he was in charge of the warden's office then and naturally he was informed and he went to see Col. Austin and we went to see the Colonel too to discuss various matters pertaining to ~~returning~~ the return to work of the workers who were kept idle right after this disturbance because nobody was allowed to get inside this hospital area where the main gate is now between the Center and the hospital. We had three or four conferences after that. The point was this that when the army first had taken over, they wanted to return the workers group by group in the warehouse area. I think there are something like 105 persons working, the army only wanted 25 to return to work. Now, the Japanese have a psychology which more or less prompts them to work in a unit. They ~~hate~~ hate to see half of them working and the other part idle for no reason at all, and we knew that feeling so we requested for the army to reconsider the problem. In other words, if the army wanted one group to be back, we wanted all of them to be back. We succeeded in putting the garbage crew and the coal crew back as a body but with the warehouse body we had considerable difficulty. Then during the course of discussions or conferences we have been having with the army officials, the point about the next meeting was brought up to inform on the things which had taken place up to that time. That was around the 8th of November. Then the date was decided to be the 13th for members of the colony, that is, members from all, from the block representatives body, and the Col. to speak at the mass meeting. Unfortunately that previous day, that was the final discussion we had with Col. Austin, at which time Col. brought up the point that we weren't the actual representatives.



I don't know where he got the notion, but he began to say we were using pressure in order to maintain that power to be the negotiating body.

Q. May I ask one question--how many persons participated in this election?

A. Oh, everybody.

Q. To elect the block representatives.

A. ~~Oh~~ Everybody in the Center. Because each block elected one person to be the delegate. So everyone participated. That is, the block meetings were called by the block managers.

Q. Those were free and open elections?

A. That is right, anybody was to participate.

Q. And those over 21 years of age were eligible?

A. I couldn't say the age limit, because I don't think there was an age limit, but anybody who is--at least one person from one unit or one family was present.

Q. So Hartman--or was it Col. Austin, didn't think you were a representative group?

A. Well, Captain Hartman came in rather late, at that time it was Col. Austin. What gave him that impression I don't know. But someone did mention that fact because the conferences and negotiations that we have been conducting with the Colonel had been going on very smoothly up to that day, I think it was the 10th or 11th, he began to doubt our power as a representative body.

Q. I see. Now when were you picked up?

A. I wasn't exactly picked up, because after November 13th--that is, right after that speech the Col. made--that night of the 13th, the people began to be picked up.

Q. And what did the Colonel say in that speech?

A. Well, I have to explain that situation. After I came back from the meeting with the Colonel I had to explain just what he told us, that he didn't exactly think we were the negotiating body, and that negotiation more or less came to a deadlock. Then I also mentioned the fact that there was to be a speech by Col. Austin. But unfortunately at that meeting the motion was made and carried to the effect that it would not be necessary, that the block representatives did not feel it was necessary, to attend the meeting. That was brought up and passed and that situation stands as it was, so although Col. Austin did post mimeographed sheets in each mess hall, I don't believe that the attendance was very large. That I don't know because I didn't go myself. Then the arrests started the night of the 13th and continued on and on and I don't know how many Japanese were picked up, but I imagine over 300. I was more or less in hiding until the 30th of November. Then we managed to contact the FBI because there were many points that we wanted to express and explain to them, and at that time the FBI men were in here in force, I think 10 or 12, I don't know how many but quite a few. We managed to talk with them and had to explain to them about the food situation and various other requests that



the colonists made and its reasons for it --and about the food I think Mr. Sugimoto could give you full information. After we had the conference with the FBI ~~xxx~~, I was put in the small Stockade for 11 days.

Q. For what reason?

A. I can't say. They didn't tell us. But I was placed in there with Mr. Kimura, Rev. Kai--he is in the Stockade here--Mr. Sugimoto and Mr. Higashi(?)--he went to Santa Fe.

Q. And were you ever given any hearing of any kind?

A. Yes, we were given a hearing, but the result of which was never made known to us.

Q. I see, and who conducted that hearing?

A. The first time, right after I made my full explanation to the FBI then nothing was done to us until 10th or 11th of December, 10 or 11 days I was put in the little Stockade. Nothing to do whatsoever during that time. Then the 11th day I was called out to the Internal Security office over in that section and there I was given the hearing there.

Q. By whom?

A. Mr. Mart and Mr. Silverthorn. He was the project attorney here I believe, he left already. Two army boys were present, one sergeant and one corporal.

Q. Were you informed that you had the right to counsel?

A. No.

Q. What did they say? They merely wanted to question you?

A. ~~They merely wanted~~ No, they just kept on questioning.

Q. Questioning you about what?

A. Causing the disturbance, riot and what not. Just to make their own record, I believe. They didn't allow us to have counsel or anything of that nature.

Q. Have you had subsequent hearings?

A. Yes, I was called in to Captain Hartman's office once, which resulted in no action at all. Then I had a talk with Mr. Best two or three times and his answer was that I will be released eventually, he didn't say when, or wouldn't say what reasons we were being held.

Q. Well, apparently they have every confidence that you will be released to Santa Fe, and of course, whether or not you go to Santa Fe is your business. By the way, what is the general feeling in the group on that position?

A. I think they wish to clarify ~~things~~ themselves before ever they do go to Santa Fe--they wish to ~~clarify~~ clear themselves of the accusations ~~that have been~~ they have been put under.

Q. You mean they want open hearings? They want to be tried on charges if there are charges against them. I can't succeed in getting these people to specify exactly what they have against you, of course. Have you any information that might be of further interest to us?



A. The point is this, now, I have been educated most of my life in this country. Of course, I was in Japan for seven years, all that time I was in school, and after my ~~grad~~ graduation and my association with Caucasians I really appreciate the principles of democracy upon which this country stands, and when I had the hearing I expressed to them time and again that after all I have requested myself to be expatriated to Japan but the point is that if I do go back to Japan-naturally, I don't know what some other people might say, but I would like to give a good impression about this country. They won't ~~shouldn't~~ believe that, if I am to be given treatment like this. Maybe I won't say it, but some others may say those things they have encountered ever since the time of evacuation. And I don't see any sense in us being kept ~~like~~ as in a prison.

Q. They say you are not prisoners.

A. But what is it? What is it to have a man marching in front of you and behind you and with a gun, and army guard 24 hours a day? Then another thing, I wish to mention is the fact that we have not been given any financial assistance since our internment here. About two months ago they brought us a sheet saying the persons who take care of the latrines and mess halls would be given the work order by the WRA, which would be \$16.00 a month, and at that time there were around 60 left and out of that I think ten were to be given the work order. But we had refused on the ground that we had never been given such a consideration for that time and that only a small percentage working and the rest would be not equal, so we didn't feel it was right for that small percentage to get the profits. So we refused to accept that offer.

Q. Have you signed any statements for the FBI?

A. No, I have never signed any statement.

Q. Well, you are not required to do so, you know, of course.

A. In fact, I have never signed any statement since my internment here.

Q. How long have you been here?

A. Since the latter part of October. I went to Jerome first.

Q. You came here from Jerome. A. Yes.

Q. Were you mistreated by any of these police officers, besides being placed in the special Stockade?

A. Myself? They have tried the third degree on me, but I laughed and said don't think you are going to do that to me, but some of the boys were hit over the head with baseball bats--Mr. Yemane and Kobayashi. He still has a scar on his head. All that record is being kept in the hospital. They have a record of the injuries the men suffered, because they needed hospital treatment.

Q. How did you answer the registration?

A. I didn't sign No. All I did was put down "refuse to answer." The point is that Col. Austin and Mr. Best have expressed wishes--in fact, Col. Austin came out with a statement saying the negotiation committee would never be released. There is a statement, you ~~g~~ could get in a mimeographed sheet, with his signature, saying the negotiation committee would never be released--December 4th, I believe.



Q. The charge is made, of course, that there are some bad boys among this group put in the Stockade that caused some difficulty. Now, that's possible.

A. That's possible yes.

Q. I don't know you from Adam and you don't know me. There have been difficulties here and it is a tough situation--when you put 18,000 people in conditions of this kind you're bound to have trouble. But my feeling is that unless these people have done something criminal or unless you can prove they have conspired to commit violence or do something unlawful, there is no legal basis for detaining them.

A. And especially, if we were to be guilty we should have been notified to that effect long ago.

Q. You ~~men~~ should have been charged and tried.

A. We've been stuck in here now eight months and if we're to be tried it might be another year - the point is we would like to clarify ourselves.

Q. What sort of a clarification would satisfy you fellows?

A. The only point and what we have been asking Mr. Best, is that when these 19 persons were sent to Santa Fe --their request was that they were members of this block representatives body, they wanted to resign which would suit Mr. Best very fine because he wanted this original block representatives organization to dissolve, and of course Col. Austin expressed that desire to. Another thing is that from the date of the army taking over and subsequent release, I went to the WRA. The people in the Center would be rather curious to know just how this whole problem was handled and to what solution ~~they~~ we came. In other words, until that thing can be effected, I don't think it is ever going to be a peaceful Center again and I don't seem to be able to convince Mr. Best, maybe I am not eloquent enough, I don't know, but that is the only point.

Q. Well, how would you do that?

A. But we have to get out of here before we can tell the people. Now these people were sent to Santa Fe.

Q. In other words, the position you take is that you should be released from here.

A. That is the only point everybody is trying to work, which they haven't succeeded as yet.

Q. The release from here--you say, release from here to Tule Lake?

A. And then it is our intention to expatriate ourselves or not.

Q. Did you ever apply for a leave clearance?

A. I never have.

Q. What is your feeling about leaving the Center?

A. I know a number of Caucasians who will back me up.



Q. What kind of work did you do?

A. I had a produce market in San Diego. Of that, I am not afraid. Also, if I did go back to Japan of course I carry my American education and American ideals with me. I understand the difficulty I am confronting. The point is it still remains to me that I was educated and raised in this country during my adolescent age which is the most important age. This idea of democracy and Americanism is just ~~knocked out~~ locked in my head, it is bound to ~~come~~ pop up some place. But the point is, if I see all these things happen such as evacuation and internment here, which is very unlawful--these things I like to get cleared up, and you have noticed the attitude and disposition of some of these men in charge of this Center, it is really outrageous.

Q. I agree with you.

A. I have fought with practically all of them so far, as nobody was frank enough to release us to the Center. I don't know how soon they can have a quieter Center in here.

Q. Of course, they are fearful.



Interview with SINGER KURATOMI (TERADA)  
Address: 4602-A.

- Q. ~~Did~~ What is your problem?
- A. I am separated from my family, from Mr. Kuratomi.
- Q. What state did you live in before Tule Lake?
- A. Arkansas.
- Q. Did you live in Arkansas prior to the war?
- A. California.
- Q. You were merely in the relocation center in Arkansas.
- A. Yes, in Jerome.
- Q. Are you married?
- A. Not legally. It was just an understanding between parents. It was made impossible because he was detained in the Stockade.
- Q. They say since you are not married to him you can't visit him? I think it may be a little tougher to get you in than the case with Mrs. Mori. You are not married to him.
- A. I have a child by him.
- Q. He wants to marry you? And you want to marry him?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Couldn't the marriage be conducted in the Stockade? Would you want to marry him there?
- A. Not in the Stockade. I would like to have his status cleared first. That is what has made it difficult.
- Q. How long have you been here from Arkansas?
- A. Almost 9 months.
- Q. Are your parents here?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And you have not seen him since he was sent to the Stockade?
- A. I did ask for a visit, for him to visit me at the house and that was refused. Before that I asked several times, I asked Mr. Best. He said, we will see about it.
- Q. He didn't say you couldn't visit him for any particular reason?



- A. He said he would see about it. Then he has just left it. Everything has been that way.
- Q. Did he say you couldn't see him while you weren't married?
- A. No.
- Q. You haven't seen Mr. Kuratomi for more than 7 or 8 months?
- A. Since December 1st.
- Q. He has been in the Stockade all that time?
- A. I haven't seen him except once. The day I was discharged from the hospital.
- Q. How did you happen to see him then? Did they bring him over?
- A. No, they wouldn't. I saw him through the fence.
- Q. Were you born here in California?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Are you from Los Angeles.
- A. No, Loomis, near Sacramento.
- Q. Have you requested expatriation?
- A. I have.
- Q. And your parents have requested repatriation, I assume?
- A. Yes.
- Q. <sup>Is</sup> ~~and~~ Mr. Kuratomi a citizen?
- A. I believe so.
- Q. He was born in this country.
- A. Yes.
- Q. Does he have any relatives here in the Center?
- A. Not at this Center. Maybe distant, but no direct relatives.
- Q. Does he have ~~an~~ sisters or brothers in one of the centers, or a mother or father?
- A. They are all in Japan. The father is deceased, the mother is in Japan and the brothers are in Japan.
- Q. He has asked for expatriation?
- A. He has.
- Q. Has he ever seen the baby?



- A. No, that was refused too.
- Q. You correspond regularly with him?
- A. That depends on the service they give us.
- Q. But through the WRA you correspond.
- A. Yes.
- Q. He doesn't deny that this is his child.
- A. No.
- Q. He wants to see you.
- A. Yes.
- Q. Would you like me to see him and to talk to him?
- A. Yes.
- Q. In order to clarify his status, it might be a good idea if I talk to him and find out what it is from his end. And then I'll talk to the WRA and maybe I can arrange something. While I was over at Mr. Bests' office talking about Mrs. Mori, they incidentally mentioned you. The Project Attorney says he wasn't so sure whether he would be in favor of your visiting. I said I don't know anything about that case I haven't discussed it, so I don't know what the situation is, but at that time Mr. Best stated that he had said, well, if they want to get married outside the Stockade in my office here I'll permit them to get married in my office. Do you know anything of that kind?
- A. There was an incident. It wasn't a marriage incident but a misunderstanding, merely that.
- Q. Misunderstanding where? About the arrangement he made? Are you both willing to get married in his office?
- A. As far as I was concerned I was interested in seeing the people released from the Stockade before we went into our affair. That was my first objection. I want them released from the Stockade before I settle my personal affairs.
- Q. His affairs are your affairs.
- A. It is not only his affair I am concerned about. He has reasons of his own, too, I guess.



- Q. You have no knowledge of why he is in the Stockade at the present time?
- A. No, I was just told that he was relocated in a different section of the Center.
- Q. Have you resided together as husband and wife?
- A. We were not together in the same unit.
- Q. In other words, they did not recognize a family unit in your case.
- A. No.



Mr. Ernest Bisig  
Dir. No. Calif. Branch  
American Civil Liberties Union  
San Francisco, Calif.

AUG 1 1944

July 30, 1944

Dear Sir:

In due consideration of  
Mr. Yoshiyama's suggestion, please  
include my name to the forth-  
coming test case.

Details will be discussed  
at a later conference.

Hoping this arrangement  
will be satisfactory to you.

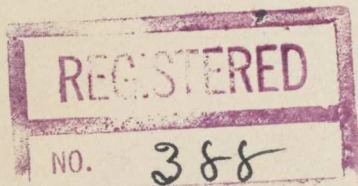
Very truly yours,  
George Toshio Kuratomi



Geo. Kuratomi  
Base Hospital  
Lake Lake Center  
Newell, Calif.



Mr. Ernest Beeig  
Northern Calif. Branch  
American Civil Liberties Union  
216 Pine Street  
San Francisco, - 4, Calif.









Base Hospital  
Tule Lake Center  
July 31, 1944  
AUG 1 1944

Mr. Ernest Besig  
Northern California Director  
Am. Civil Liberties Union  
216 Pine Street  
San Francisco 4, Calif.

Dear Sir:

After my talk with you yesterday, I have discussed the entire situation with Mr. George Kuratomi; and he has agreed to my wish. I sincerely hope that his name will be placed along with mine as I have requested you.

To signify his consent, I am having his signature below mine.

Very truly yours,  
Tom S. Yoshizawa  
Geo. T. Kuratomi



4602-B  
Tule Lake Center  
Newell, Calif.  
August 8, 1944

Attorney Wayne M. Collins  
Mills Tower  
San Francisco, California

Dear Mr. Collins:

We have been informed by Mr. Ernest Besig on July 30 and by letter August 4, 1944 that Mr. Collins have taken the court action of 14 men confined in the stockade at Tule Lake Center.

We would wish to express our appreciation which cannot be said in words to your sincere attention given to the people confined in the stockade for over 9 months without any charges to INNOCENT AMERICAN CITIZENS. We will do our best to furnish you with the information you wish.

Under separate page and cover please find the names and newspaper of Tule Lake Center, printed within the camp. We hope there are materials whatever you can use in this case. On June 8, 1944, Mr. Best, Project Director, has made statement on the last paragraph the following: "where the selfish ambition and aspiration of the individual is subordinated to the highest good of the whole population." Does this mean anything to the people confined in the stockade?

The description of the stockade, looks and how it operated will be sent to you as soon as possible in a separate cover by Mr. Tsuha, 906-A, Mr. Bob Hayashida, 2316-A, and Mr. Fujio, 4716-E. Hoping these person will express themselves well in their letters.

Thanking you for your kind attention and realizing how busy and important your time is, I remain

Sincerely yours,

*Utako Kuratomi*

Utako Kuratomi, Chairman



Following are the names of the boys who are now confined in the stockade:

1. Kuratomi, George, Joji
2. Uchida, Isamu, Sam
3. Kai, Shizuo
4. Yoshiyama, Tom, Satoshi
5. Yamane, Tokio
6. Sugimoto, Isamu, Andy
7. Shimonishi, Toshio
8. Yamamoto, Mikio
9. Kobayashi, Yukio
10. Kobayashi, Yoshio, Tom (single)
11. Kazama, Tomio
12. Ishigame, Shigeo
13. Hamamoto, Takeo
14. Abe, Tetsuo



TULE LAKE CENTER  
NEWELL, CALIFORNIA

Aug. 15, 1944

Wayne M. Collins  
Attorney-at-law  
Mills Tower  
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Mr. Collins;

May we again trouble you with our worries:  
Loaded with anxiety and misery we are ever looking  
forward to our case being brought to court action  
at the earliest date possibly. Is there any possibility?  
We would be more than grateful if our case can be  
brought to court action immediately. Or does there  
still remain information or other duties for the pre-  
paration? If so, can we be of any help?

Praying for some immediate attention, we are,

Gratefully yours,

Mrs. Utao Kuratomi  
Mrs. Utao Kuratomi, chrm

4602 B



TULE LAKE CENTER  
NEWELL, CALIFORNIA

Aug. 16, 1944

Wayne M. Collins  
Attorney-at-Law  
Mills Tower  
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Mr. Collins;

We have been trying our upmost to contact <sup>you</sup> since  
the 4th of this month but of no avail. Also we have  
had no words from Director Mr. Besig and we are very  
worried that something may have happened to both of you.  
You have not taken ill by any ill-fate, have you?

As you know the stockade people are ever looking  
forward with great anticipation for their court action;  
they can not but wait. Then to, the life for them in the  
stockade is a strain on their mind and the late fast was  
beyond inhumanity.

Thanking you in advance, we are praying for your  
immediate action.

Gratefully yours,

*Mrs. Utako Kuratomi*  
Mrs. Utako Kuratomi,  
4602 B



WAYNE M. COLLINS

ATTORNEY AT LAW

MILLS TOWER, 220 BUSH STREET

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

TELEPHONE GARFIELD 1218

August 18, 1944.

Mrs. Utako Kuratomi,  
4602-B,  
Tule Lake Center,  
Newell, Modoc County,  
California.

Dear Mrs. Kuratomi:

I am in receipt of your  
letters, ~~of the 16th and 15th of August.~~

If Mr. Kuratomi desires  
me to commence ~~habeas corpus~~ proceedings on  
his behalf I should like to receive a letter  
from him authorizing me to take what steps I  
may wish to obtain his release.

*proceedings  
to be  
for the  
Stockade*

*his residence  
before execution*

It will be necessary for  
me to have information pertaining to his case  
after receiving this authority from him. I  
must know where and when he was born, whether  
he is a citizen, whether he has ever signed  
any formal documents expatriating himself,  
what charges, if any, were brought against  
him, when the charges ~~were~~ were preferred  
against him, by whom preferred, whether he had  
a trial or hearing and before whom, whether he  
was represented by counsel thereat and was  
informed of his right to counsel, whether he  
had the right to compulsory process to obtain  
witnesses in his defense, whether any witnesses  
appeared against him and whether any appeared  
on his behalf, who ordered him to The Stockade  
and when, how long he has been confined there,  
and whether he was informed at the hearing, if  
any, of his right to counsel, whether he was  
compelled to testify against himself and whether  
he waived any of these rights.

*voluntarily*

I have spoken to Mr. Cozzens  
here and Mr. Bernhart, and expect to talk to Mr.  
Glick and Mr. Best who are in San Francisco  
sometime tomorrow.

I would like also to know  
whether Mr. Kuratomi is held incommunicado or  
whether he is allowed visitors and if so who  
are allowed to visit him.



1 WAYNE M. COLLINS,  
2 Mills Tower,  
3 San Francisco, 4,  
4 California.  
5 Garfield 1218.  
6 Attorney for Applicant.

7  
8  
9 IN THE SOUTHERN DIVISION OF THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
10 FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
11 -----

12 In the Matter of the Application of )

13 GEORGE T. KURATOMI )

14 For a Writ of Habeas Corpus, )

15 Applicant, )

16 -vs- )

17 RAYMOND R. BEST, Project Director,  
18 Tule Lake Segregation Center, )

19 Respondent. )  
20 -----

21 ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE

22 GOOD CAUSE APPEARING upon the reading and filing herein of  
23 the Application For Writ of Habeas Corpus of GEORGE T. KURATOMI:

24 IT IS ORDERED that RAYMOND R. BEST, Project Director, Tule  
25 Lake Segregation Center, respondent herein, appear before this  
26 Court, Room \_\_\_\_\_, Post Office Building, 7th and Mission Streets,  
27 San Francisco, California, on \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
28 \_\_\_\_\_, 1944, at the hour of \_\_\_\_\_ M. of said day,  
29 then and there to show cause if any he has why a writ of habeas  
30 corpus should not issue as prayed for in said Application and the  
31 applicant be discharged from detention by the respondent, and that  
a copy of said Application for Writ of Habeas Corpus and a copy



1 of this Order To Show Cause be served upon said Raymond R. Best,  
2 the said respondent.

3 August \_\_\_\_\_, 1944.  
4

5 \_\_\_\_\_  
6 UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE.  
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Wayne M. Collins,  
Mills Tower,  
San Francisco, 4, Calif.,  
Garfield 1218.  
Attorney for Applicant.

IN THE SOUTHERN DIVISION OF THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of

GEORGE T. KURATOMI

For a Writ of Habeas Corpus,

Applicant,

No. \_\_\_\_\_

-vs-

RAYMOND R. BEST, Project Director,  
Tule Lake Segregation Center,

Respondent.

APPLICATION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

TO THE HONORABLE THE SOUTHERN DIVISION OF THE UNITED STATES  
DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA:

The Application of GEORGE T. KURATOMI for a writ of habeas  
corpus respectfully shows:

I

The applicant is now and at all times herein mentioned has  
been an adult male civilian and a native born citizen of the  
United States of America and of the State of California and here-  
tofore resided in San Diego County, California, his domicile.

II

The respondent, Raymond R. Best, is the Project Director of  
the Tule Lake Segregation Center, a concentration camp situated



1 and maintained, under color of authority of the United States, in  
2 the immediate vicinity of Newell, Modoc County, California: as  
3 such project director he has the custody of all prisoners detained  
4 in said concentration camp and of all prisoners detained in "The  
5 Stockade", a prison set up and maintained within the confines of  
6 said concentration camp by the respondent wherein the respondent  
7 now unlawfully detains and ever since on or about November 30,  
8 1943, unlawfully has detained the applicant: said respondent is  
9 not a judicial officer of the United States of America or of the  
10 State of California and there is not and never has been any power  
11 lawfully conferred upon him to arrest, try, imprison and detain  
12 the applicant or to do any of said things.

13 III

14 On or about November 30, 1943, respondent, professing to act  
15 under color of authority of the United States, caused the appli-  
16 cant to be arrested within the boundaries of the aforesaid con-  
17 centration camp and to be incarcerated in "The Stockade" afore-  
18 said: at no time during or since said summary arrest and imprison-  
19 ment has the respondent or anyone for or on his behalf or other-  
20 wise informed the applicant of the nature and cause of any accusa-  
21 tion against him, confronted him with any witnesses against him,  
22 given him the benefit of compulsory process for obtaining witness-  
23 es in his favor, informed him of his right to counsel or offered  
24 him the assistance of counsel for his defense, granted or provided  
25 him with or offered him the right to a fair public trial by an  
26 impartial jury or by a lawfully constituted court of competent  
27 jurisdiction, none of which said rights and privileges of national  
28 and state citizenship were waived by the applicant, but deprived  
29 and continues to deprive the applicant of each and all of said  
30 rights and privileges guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of



1 the United States and, in particular, by the provisions of the 4th  
2 and 6th Amendments and the due process clause of the 5th Amendment  
3 of the Constitution: ever since said date the applicant has been  
4 and now is unlawfully confined and detained in the said "The  
5 Stockade" by the respondent against the applicant's will and de-  
6 sire.

7 IV

8 The aforesaid unlawful arrest and detention of the applicant  
9 by the respondent were not and are not in accordance with the Con-  
10 stitution and laws of the United States and the same are and each  
11 of them is null and void but, notwithstanding the same, the appli-  
12 cant unlawfully was and is imprisoned, restrained and deprived of  
13 his liberty against his desire and will by said respondent who  
14 professed and professes to act and to detain the applicant in the  
15 aforesaid "The Stockade" under color of authority of the United  
16 States.

17 V

18 The applicant is now imprisoned, restrained and deprived un-  
19 lawfully of his liberty by the respondent, under color of authori-  
20 ty of the United States in violation of the Constitution and laws  
21 of the United States, in the aforesaid "The Stockade" which is  
22 situated within the jurisdiction of this Court and within the geo-  
23 graphical confines of the aforesaid concentration camp.

24 VI

25 The Congress of the United States has not proclaimed martial  
26 law applicable to any portion of the continental United States or  
27 authorized martial rule to be enforced over the applicant or any  
28 civilian citizen therein and has not suspended the writ of habeas  
29 corpus: the President has not authorized or attempted to authorize  
30 the institution of martial rule within the confines of the contin-  
31 ental United States and has not authorized or attempted to author-



ize the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus therein: the Congress and the President have not, and neither of them has, established or authorized the establishment of a military or provisional government over the applicant or over any American citizen engaged in civilian activities within the boundaries of the continental United States: continuously and without interruption all our federal and state civil authorities, including the federal and state courts, long prior to, on and ever since December 7, 1941, have been and now are open and functioning normally and in accordance with the duties entrusted to them by law: no real or apparent threat or danger of invasion to the continental United States exists.

## VII

There does not exist and there never has existed any lawful reason or justification whatsoever for the arrest, imprisonment and detention of the applicant in the said "The Stockade" by the respondent or for the respondent depriving and having deprived the applicant of the kind and type of fair public trial guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States and, in particular, that safeguarded by the provisions of the 6th and 5th Amendments of the Constitution, or for the respondent having unlawfully seized the person of the applicant in violation of the provisions of the 4th Amendment of the Constitution and there does not now exist any lawful reason or justification for the said detention of the applicant in the aforesaid "The Stockade" by respondent.

## VIII

No other application for a writ of habeas corpus in this matter, upon the grounds and facts hereinabove alleged, has been made to this or any other court by the applicant or by anyone for or on his behalf.

WHEREFORE, the applicant demands that a writ of habeas corpus



1 or an order to show cause issue herein directing and commanding  
2 the respondent to produce the body of applicant before this Court  
3 at a time to be specified therein and to show cause, if any he  
4 has, why he arrested, imprisoned and detains the applicant and  
5 then and there to do what this Court shall order concerning the  
6 detention of applicant, and that the applicant be ordered dis-  
7 charged from imprisonment and detention in the aforesaid "The  
8 Stockade".

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10 

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Applicant.

11  
12 Sub  
13 Wayne M. Collins,  
14 Mills Tower,  
15 San Francisco, 4, Calif.  
16 Garfield 1218.  
17 Attorney for Applicant.  
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1 STATE OF CALIFORNIA, )  
2 COUNTY OF MODOC. ) SS.

3 George T. Kuratomi being first duly sworn deposes and says:  
4 that he is the applicant in the foregoing Application named;  
5 that he has read the foregoing Application and knows the contents  
6 thereof and that the same is true of his own knowledge except as  
7 to the matters therein stated upon information and belief and as  
8 to such that he believes it to be true.

9  
10 \_\_\_\_\_  
George T. Kuratomi.

11  
12 Subscribed and sworn to before me  
13 this \_\_\_\_\_ day of August, 1944.  
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