

Field Notes  
Tule Lake  
August 31, 1942  
Tom Shibutani

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#### Coal Crew Meeting of Block 4

The resident of the block assembled at 7:30 at the request of the block manager, Ralph Shinbo. Most of the people there were Issei men although a few Kibeis were present. There were only three women present in the audience. Shinbo started the meeting by stating that there was not enough workers to take the coal from the cars to the respective blocks. He said that there were 70 box cars with 56,000 tons of coal to be unloaded. Each block had been asked by the administration to take turns in unloading. According to Shinbo, three men from each block were to work from 7:00 p.m. to midnight and after some time off for meal to work till 4:00 a.m. in the morning. He stated that the reason the work had to be done at night was that there were not enough trucks and that those available were all in use during the day. He promised that clothing will be furnished; pants, shirts, gloves, cover-alls, denim jackets, and shoes would be provided by the W.R.A. The men were to use them, and the women of the same household were to wash them so that the workers of the following night could use the same clothings. Shinbo stated further that there were only 33 trucks, and therefore, some blocks would have to work together. He said that the work had to be done by hand and that all men that volunteer would be excused on the following day from their regular job.

At this point some Issei in the audience objected in a very large voice, "Eight hours is too long!"

To this Shinbo replied, "The office decided the hours. I had nothing to do with it."

Mr. Sakurada then rose and took the floor. He stated, "We didn't come here to this camp because we wanted to. We were brought here against our will. Eight hours is too long to work. Before this the coal workers were putting in only four hours a day. Why do we have to put in eight hours at night? Why couldn't we do the work in two shifts of four hours each and use six men? You block managers are no good. I am told that there had been no written orders from the office. Is it true that what we unload is all that we get for the block?"

Shinbo was stunned temporarily, but he retorted, "Do you want to haul coal or don't you?"

At first there were sharp replies of "no", but gradually after a slight period of murmur, everyone said "yes". Shinbo

then went on to explain that the coal workers that had been working for four hours for twelve dollars a month had all quit. A Nisei rose and asked why the Caucasians should not be made to haul coal. He added further that he did not come to Tule Lake voluntarily, that he had been given very poor food, and that the Caucasians were asking for too much.

Mr. Nakano then rose. He stated, "Why don't we get three 'keto' and let them work for eight hours? I don't like these regulations of the use of trucks. I think the blocks have certain rights to decide how they're going to unload coal for their own use. Rather than working with some other blocks, it would be better for us to take turn and each block work every other night with six men each."

To this Shinbo replied that there were only four good dump trucks and that it was a matter of first come first served.

Mr. Sakurada rose again and stated that the Japanese were too short and too weak to throw the coal over the side of the car. "Everyone should have dump trucks," he declared. He went on to say that it was the same old story. "When we first came here, they told us not to take all the wood and the coal because more would be coming later; then they not only didn't give us any more wood, but they even split up some that we had. Why are these 'ketos' different? Coal workers that are paid should do the work. We didn't come here to work. These 'hakujins' are 'bakatare'. That is why we are losing this war."

Shinbo replied, "It will be harder work to get more coal later on. The winter is going to be cold and we will have to get our own. The W.R.A. has to pay rent for the tracks, and unless we unload the coal, it will be a loss not only to the W.R.A. but also to the people of the camp. It is too late now to figure out any new procedure. The office wants us to haul coal, and if we want the coal, we have to go."

To this Sakurada retorted, "Why isn't the administration more definite? You block managers are too lazy. All you do is take orders from people who don't know anything. That means you managers are 'baka'."

Various other questions were raised in rapid succession. "Why don't we get more cars? Four dump trucks a night is not enough. Why don't we use one car for one night with many men and empty one box car? Why don't we use ten trucks and get it all done? A truck takes about two tons and we can finish in one night. Why don't the block managers take the responsibility and decide? We will use our own drivers. Why do we have to worry about regular truck drivers? Why not devise a better system? The engineers should figure out

a way and make an elevator. There are other dump trucks but they have no drivers."

The discussion went on and on until after 10:00, and after a heady session, it was decided that nothing would be done, but many of the Isseis and many of the young people felt that in spite of the disagreements the work had to be done. The winter would be very cold, and if there was no other way of getting coal, volunteers had to go. Many of the young men expressed their willingness to volunteer. Shinbo was very definitely blamed by the block people for obeying the administration so well.

After the meeting, several groups of seven to ten people gathered in various parts of the block to discuss the problem. Only few of the men were objecting presumptuously, but it was quite evident that no one was happy about this situation.

(Check with the Tule Lake Dispatch, late August or early September issue, for the official announcements.)

Field Notes  
Tule Lake  
October 30, 1942  
Tom Shibutani

#### J.A.C.L. Meeting

The group began to gather about a half hour late, and most of the people present were older Niseis. It would seem that the average age was much over twenty-five. The chairman, Henry Taketa, officially opened the meeting and announced very bluntly that the purpose of the meeting was to get all the J.A.C.L. representatives who had gathered from all points in Tule Lake. They were gathered, one, to select two delegates to send to the national convention in Salt Lake, and two, to discuss the possibilities of draft or volunteering for the Niseis. Taketa announced further that Walter Tsukamoto and Tom Yego had been selected by the National J.A.C.L. to represent Tule Lake. Since Yego was away in Idaho, Tsukamoto was called upon to speak.

He stated that he did not know how much had been accomplished by the National J.A.C.L. He knew that the ten relocation areas were to send two delegates, each to discuss various problems. The first of these problems was of resettlement.

Tsukamoto declared that nothing had been done by the United States Employment Service to find jobs for the Niseis but that Mr. Inagaki of the J.A.C.L. had been doing his work along that line. All that the United States Employment Service did was to get beet field workers. The J.A.C.L. was doing everything possible to take care of those that were already out. Idaho was a good place but Montana was terrible.

Tsukamoto then stated that although he was selected, he would prefer to have the delegates elected. He then went on to discuss selective service.

According to Tsukamoto, when the draft was stopped at the time of the evacuation, the J.A.C.L. felt that it was unfair that our eligible young men should not be able to serve just like any other American. "The question now is, do Niseis want to volunteer or do they want to be drafted? The Niseis may be bitter, but volunteering would indicate our loyalty to our country. This is really a great privilege because no one else is being able to volunteer; furthermore, if we volunteer, we will be able to select our own arm of the armed forces."

"The conference is set for November 17," he went on. "If we are to attend, the Pacific Northwest should be represented, and that is why the delegates should be elected. The expense, train fare, hotel, and meals, must be paid. The train fare costs \$51.00. How are we going to raise the

money? I assure you that the delegates are not going to have a good time."

For some time there was a discussion about the election of delegates, and it was decided that there should be one from the Northwest and one from California. It was decided that Tom Yego should be a delegate from Idaho and that Walter Tsukamoto should represent the Californians in Tule Lake. At this point chairman Taketa called for a ten minutes recess.

When the group reconvened at the end of about twenty minutes, the Northwest chapter decided to select Ted Nakamura. He was referred to as a "block-head", and this led to considerable laughter. When some question was raised about the fellows of the J.A.C.L. members who were not present, chairman Taketa replied, "We don't have to worry about the opinions of those who are not here since they were not interested enough to come."

Tsukamoto asked for the election for a California delegate, but no one paid any attention to him. He was rail-roaded through as a representative. When he announced that the expense for the ten days would amount to \$120.00 per delegate, there were many groans.

At this point Dr. Goro Muramoto of the Sacramento chapter stated, "Since the delegates represent all the Niseis here, all of the chapters should finance the trip. The Sacramento chapter is willing to shell out. I think we should ask for donations, and if we do not get enough, the various chapters should be called upon to take up the difference.

A Northwest delegate rose and stated, "Since we should have a Tule Lake chapter instead of the original sections, the whole group should pay."

To this Taketa replied, "The Tule Lake group had not been formed yet, so the individual chapter would have to pay."

Mr. Komure then rose and stated, "The J.A.C.L. is not highly respected. How about all of us getting together and sell the J.A.C.L. to all the Niseis?"

Henry Taketa then suggested that each chapter select two delegates and have an executive meeting. He stated that the Sacramento chapter was willing to pay all of Tsukamoto's expenses. A motion was made and seconded to the effect that the various chapters start taking steps toward consolidation. Dr. Muramoto objected that there was not enough time. A girl suggested going to the people for more money, but Taketa said, "No". George Takahashi, also from Sacramento, asked how many chapters had money which was assessable. Taketa then stated that the J.A.C.L. had sufficient recognitions from federal

agencies to get co-operation. He said that it was not necessary to pay the expenses of the Caucasian escort.

Dr. Muramoto stated again that he wanted to know how much each chapter was willing to volunteer, so that there would be no kick-back about the size and so forth. He then stated that the Sacramento chapter will pay out the amount that was lacking.

A man representing the Delta chapter stated that most of his chapter was in Colorado, and therefore, he was helpless to give aid. A Y.S.P. delegate stated that half of his chapter was in Colorado, and he had written to them. The White River delegate said that almost all of his members were in Tule Lake and that they would pay. The Wood River delegate also said that his chapter would pay. A representative from Placer that have all of his group was affirmative than the others. With full co-operation to pay, the whole matter was left in the hands of the delegates, and the meeting would be called soon to decide what was to be done. A Tacoma man rose and said that his chapter could stand an assessment.

A man rose from the audience to make an amendment to the effect that each chapter should donate since time was too short for any consolidation. The man who first made the motion renewed his original motion, and the matter was called to a vote. Everyone was in confusion and no one knew what he was voting for. Someone stated that he did not make a motion, and he was asked to make one to the effect that each chapter hold a meeting to decide how much was to be donated. Dr. Muramoto rose and said that each chapter should donate as much as they wanted to and that the expenses should be paid on a voluntary basis. He was called out of order by the chairman and asked how anyone would be able to find out what the decision was. Dr. Muramoto stated that the chapters could report back to the temporary chairman. A man sitting in front yelled in a large voice that if a big camp-wide J.A.C.L. could be formed, the group as a whole could donate. Dr. Muramoto restated his motion that the money was to be paid to chairman Taketa by November 10, and this motion was seconded and carried.

Then the subject of military service came up again. A man in the audience rose and asked whether the question was raised first by the army or by the J.A.C.L. Taketa replied that the army probably brought up the subject but that he did not know. The man then asked why the Niseis were 4-C. To this Tsukamoto replied that all 1-A Niseis were classified as 4-C to prevent their immediate induction into the army. If the army decides to take the Niseis, the 4-C will be given new numbers and will be regarded, shuffled and will be called upon to serve. According to Tsukamoto, the 4-C classification was put in solely for the purpose of eliminating any er-

rors. Several silly questions came up from the floor. Finally Yoneo Suzuki rose and asked, "If others weren't to volunteer, why should the Niseis volunteer?"

To this Tsukamoto replied, "Just to prove our loyalty."

Suzuki went on, "If we are not treated like other Americans, then asking for volunteers would be too much."

Tsukamoto replied that the Niseis were behind in providing soldiers and ought to fill in. "If, as Suzuki said, we look at it from a suspicious angle, all right; if we want to look at it from a bonafide angle, all right. The Niseis won't get all choices in volunteering because some branches are closed. We could expect these things in logical terms. The Chinese are colored people and get the same treatment, although China is an ally. We are denied certain privileges (italics mine) because of ancestry. We must admit, though, that our law is not as bad as the negroes', although we were interned."

George Takahashi asked, "Are the J.A.C.L. trying to force the Nisei men into the army?"

Tsukamoto replied, "You don't know, men. Many young men are willing to serve, regardless of discrimination."

Susumu Hayashi then suggested that the J.A.C.L. gather a house to house ballot in the center and in the beet field and find out how the Niseis really felt. The chairman and the audience agreed that this was hard to do. Then one man rose and proposed that the councilmen gather the opinion of his block people. Taketa stated that the J.A.C.L. ought to get the opinion. Another man from the audience and declared that if few will go into the army and make a good showing, then the way will be open to the others.

At this point John Tanikawa, a veteran of the first world war, asked, "What are the Niseis doing in the army now? I hear that they are doing pick and shovel work. I think that if they use the Niseis in combat duty, then we should volunteer, but if not, the 'hell' with it. I think it all depends on what they will use us for."<sup>1</sup>

Various people rose from the audience and stated that the Niseis were being used as gardener, ditch digger, and ordinary toilet work by the army. A Northwest man stated that he had a brother in the army who was taken off the combat duty and put into gardening work but that he still felt destitute, and as American citizen, they should serve anyway. This remark was followed by an applause.

<sup>1</sup>Tanikawa later volunteered for combat duty.

Tsukamoto then stated that one of the salvation of the Niseis and the Isseis is a good record now.

The discussion turned to the subject of the formation of a project-wide J.A.C.L., and the question was whether each chapter was to maintain its identity or whether the whole group was to be submerged to one organization. Chairman Taketa said that a letter had been sent regards to all chapters, but there was no reply from national headquarters.

A Northwest delegate rose at this point and said, "The Portland, Oregon claims that Isseis rule the camp; therefore, the J.A.C.L. ought to get together and represent the Niseis and avoid criticism from the outside."

A Marysville man suggested that local chapters keep their identity and there be a district council for the whole camp. A Northwest man objected that while some chapters have enough members to keep their identity, others have been separated, and there are other J.A.C.L. members who have drifted from other centers to join their relatives. "These people are not members of any chapter; therefore, the whole group should unite," he argued.

George Takahashi then raised a question about certain combinations in a united chapter, especially with reference to the various treasuries. A Northwest man rose and said, "How about starting all over again? This is one community; we are all together, so we should unite."

A Delta man added, "We should start anew and get every possible man."

A Wood River delegate added, "We should get some with the backing of the entire community and passing out the word as the smartest union."

Tsukamoto declared, "Each center may organize in any way they like. I think we should have one central organization. We should induce more new leaders to take important roles. On the outside there were men who could not serve because they were so busy with their occupation. Here we all have time to serve. The J.A.C.L. is an organization for service and not for personal gain. The motto of the J.A.C.L. is 'Charity Through Unity'."

Various questions rose to the actual mechanism of a camp-wide organization. A Tacoma man rose and stated that the people in his chapters lived on the opposite end of the camp, and they will not go from one end to the other, even if they did. The boys may as well not attend. Taketa replied that it was the same with the Sacramento chapter. Tsukamoto said, however, that when constitutional committee is set up, all of the chapters would have to help. He sug-

gested further that some J.A.C.L. members should be selected from the floor to help on the committee and thus make everything more rapid. A Northwest man said that there would be another meeting on the 10th since the problem of donation would come up and that this other matter should be taken up at the same time. It was decided that the general assembly would meet again on the 12th of November. This was put into a form of a motion and was passed.

The next subject of discussion was absentee ballots. After a brief sales talk on the Pacific Citizen, Tsukamoto went on to say that one of the difficulties of the united chapters was the question of dues. He said that everyone was having difficulties and that it would be difficult to ask for money. He felt, therefore, that the collection should be subscription to the Pacific Citizen. He felt that the other work such as relocation of students could be financed from other sources. \$2.50 a year, he felt, was too high and that he thought an alternative of 50¢ a year could be set up. Since there was no sense of everyone in the family taking the Pacific Citizen, one person could pay the full fee and the others could be associate members. He went on to say that the cards used as identification of the members cost the J.A.C.L. about a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ each; the remainder of the money was used by the national committee for the various conventions; it may be necessary to raise the price to meet the new and large expenses. A Northwest man suggested that the copies of the Pacific Citizen be sent to friends at home to help both the J.A.C.L. and the Niseis.

Tsukamoto then stated that the J.A.C.L. will lean on religious organizations to help in relocation. The J.A.C.L. duties were to explain to the people the causes of the Niseis. He boasted of a case of the J.A.C.L. representative giving such a good impression in the outside community that others were able to resettle in large number. He declared that the permanence of resettlement will depend on the first group, and the chance of staying in the midwest was better than going back to California, for the economic problems are not so great. "Investigators found that the outside was infested by economic pressure group. There may be a lot of truth in that," concluded Tsukamoto.

Joan Tanikawa then stated, "California wants to get rid of us. We moved with understanding that we would be able to go back home. We know now that the states assisted the W.R.A. projects on the understanding that California Japanese will not be dumped there. So our future looks very hard."

Others added that it would be hard to go back home if everyone was dissolute. Tsukamoto added that even if there were no law against going back, it would be hard anyway.

Some one suggested consulting the "wogja board", and

there was a big laugh. Another man in the audience stated that many people would not be able to go home even with freedom. He wished to know how much assistance the government could give in resettlement; he wished to know what the predatory letters of the W.R.A. were. He was very blunt and seemed very resentful. He said further that if the government could give them some hope, everyone would be willing to work harder. He asked finally, "What assurance do we have that the feeling against us will die down?"

To this Tsukamoto replied, "That is what happened after the last war. It is up to us to be accepted as American citizen and not along racial line. If the Niseis want the J.A.-C.L. to ask for anything, they must behave so that those who ask should not be embarrassed.

One man in the audience asked that the delegates contact various professional societies and tell them how the Niseis were being treated. He stated further that a letter which he received indicated that the person writing had no knowledge of the evacuation. There was a motion to adjourn at this point, but no one spoke, but everyone was so tired that they got up and left.

Field notes  
Tule Lake  
Shibutani

Registration

Volunteer Question

February 9

Issei gathered in the men's latrine in block 16 (a.m.). The discussion was about the volunteering of the Nisei. All of the group of about ten Issei were angered. They placed the entire blame on the J.A.C.L. The contention was that the J. A.C.L. had asked for the privilege of volunteering in Salt Lake City. "They say that those who die in action get \$10,000. Who wants \$10,000?"

Lunch at mess hall #4. General tenor of the conversation. The U.S. is getting to be a hell of a place. At one time everyone thought it was good but now they are just doing everything to hold the colored people down. One older Issei remarked, "we were told when we came here that this was a semi-permanent home. Now it is only 6 months, and they are telling us to get out. What is this anyway?" It is foolish to volunteer, although if one is drafted there is not much that can be done.

Social welfare office (made headquarters for interviewing volunteers)--staff almost entire of Nisei women. Everyone was thrilled that the soldiers were coming tomorrow. The talk was that there was to be four interview centers and there were to be three Caucasians and one Nisei. Everyone wanted the Nisei sergeant. The conversation soon changed to the serious question of volunteers. What would happen to the women? Would they all have to go out to be domestics? What if one's boy friend refuses to volunteer? Would that mean that he would be deported after the war.

Later in the afternoon--at the home of Mrs. Aoki. Several Kibei were discussing the volunteer issue. "I hear that Tsukamoto bastard is going to volunteer. I think he had better go after causing us all this trouble. Now he puts us on the spot. I think he ought to go to die for his country."

Miscellaneous comments (picked up during course of the day):

1. One old Issei leader (60, from Sacramento) advised the field worker, "Don't have anything to do with Tsukamoto now because he is in bad with everyone. I know that you have to deal with him in your department (social welfare), but avoid him in public."
2. Liberal Nisei: "All-Nisei batallion. Hell, I'll wait for the draft."
3. Old Issei (block 4, Washington), "We have nothing to say about matters regarding the government. Let them decide."
4. Old Issei (block 4, California), "I hear that 800 have volunteered."
5. Older Nisei woman (married to Issei): "I hear that Kido was beaten up again at Boston."

Repatriation Question

February 19, 1943

1. Hide Najima (21, male): "I know a fellow whose girl friend signed up for repatriation. He says 'she's half my life, so I may as well sign up too.' Gee, I think he's crazy."
2. Mary Nomura (23, female) "I've been there in Japan and I know that I don't want to go back. My parents just don't understand. Until now they've always said that I should be an American. My father's in the American Legion and he is an American citizen. I think it's because everybody is so crazy now."
3. Sumi X (19, female, lived in block 42) "My parents are like all the other Issei. They're just crazy."
4. Mrs. Akamatsu (middle-aged Nisei married to Issei): "I know a girl who had to go repatriate because her husband's parents didn't want him in the Army. She doesn't have dual-citizenship either. She just cries and cries, but it is too late."
5. Pad of paper with doodling on Sumi (3) 's desk. "Why do so many register for repatriation. We're between the devil and the deep blue sea." Sumi was sitting alone for some time and then left to go buy some ice cream. The worker happened to glance at the pad and found the above quotation. She was in a terrible conflict with her parents (her sweetheart is in the U.S. Army and her parents wanted her to repatriate).
6. Teruko (see document 9): "I don't know what to do. I'm going to wait to see what everybody else does and do the same thing."

March 6, 1943

1. The Kibei in the C.C.C. camp refuse to speak English so a translator had to be taken in. The boys are really giving Jacoby a bad time. (common talk in camp)
2. The boys in camp are getting on a cup of coffee and beans twice a day, at 9 and 4.

Field Notes  
Topaz  
Shibutani

April 5, 1943

1. Rumor (information from various Issei to whom I spoke very informally):

Now that the registration has shown the government that many of the people in the centers are not entirely loyal, all of the people now in the centers will be moved to Poston and Gila and camps like Topaz are going to be used to house the wounded veterans of this war. Many of the Nisei are to be released and the others will have to go to Arizona.

Comment: doubt if rumor widespread throughout the camp. Probably taken by everyone with a grain of salt.

2. Big news in the camp.

Chiura Obata hit by crowbar on April 3 as he was coming back from his shower. He fought off his assailant and since he did not wish to shock his wife, he walked by himself to the hospital. He lost much blood. Stories all agreed that he had some stitches taken, but the number of stitches allegedly taken ranged from 2 to 18. Feeling was that the beating had nothing to do with the registration during which Obata did take a definite stand. Reasons given by both Bob Iki and Jimmy Hirano (both leaders of the community but disagreed on most points):

- 1) Obata had too many enemies. His attitude of superiority was sufficient to make people angry.
- 2) Obata was mixed up in politics
- 3) Mrs. Obata was always stealing methods of flower arrangement and taking credit for it.

On April 22, 1943, Bob Iki (in Chicago) gave this reason. Obata was carrying on an affair with a widow, and her other suitor didn't like it. He was the man who hit him.

3. Interview with Bob Iki

Bob, Ted Tokuno and Bacon Imai roomed together in Isleton on the year that Bacon married Teruko. They all worked for the Emsheer, Alexander and Barsoon Cannery. To get to the cannery they had to pass through the Aoki ranch. Bacon was a trucker and Mrs. Aoki and Teruko worked in the cannery. Bacon had an undeveloped penis. He kidnapped her. Ted had taken out Teruko long before Bacon even knew her. Bacon took Teruko to Reno in Ted's car and the two boys bawled him out when he returned. Mrs. Aoki was not "carzy" but a normal woman when he knew her.

Jim Furita has been seen quite often around the Bretheren's Hostel recently. On the afternoon of August 18 he was sitting around the lounge of the hostel with two or three other nisei talking about various job prospects. One young fellow who was apparently interested in finding a well paying job was inquiring about various types of work, and Jim chimed in: "If you want a job that pays well, get into one of those beverage companies. You gotta work hard, but those companies pay well." The conversation turned to job prospects in New York, and Jim seemed definitely interested in the information that was being passed around. Were there any opportunities out there, he wanted to know, and how was the housing situation? As I observed him during this conversation, it seemed that he was musing over the possibility of going out east, but it was quite apparent that he had no intention of making any moves to get out there. He just seemed to enjoy thinking and dreaming about these things. Finally, he surprised me with a statement that I didn't expect from him for from his appearance I thought of him as one of the rowdy shallow type of nisei without any sense of romanticism. But he remarked, "I guess the trouble with me is, I've hitched my wagon to a star, but that star is so far off that I can't make it."

This morning Jim again appeared at the Bretheren's hostel office. He cornered Ralph Smeltzer and Virginia Asaka and asked for help in getting back to Manzanar. It was evident that neither Ralph nor Virginia had much patience with Jim any longer.

Ralph: "What's the matter now? I thought you had a job. What's happened to that?"

Jim: "Aw, I quit that job. I've got to get back to Manzanar."

Ralph: "What's the matter with you anyway, Jim? What's the use of talking about going back to Manzanar? Didn't Mr. Shirrell tell

Miyamoto addenda to Togo's interview  
August 23, 1945

you that you couldn't go back to Manzanar? Why do you keep harping about going back to Manzanar when you know you can't go back there?"

(I missed the answer to that question. I was listening in from the next room, and failed to catch all of the conversation.)

Ralph: "What did Mr. Shirrell tell you? Didn't he say that he couldn't get you back into Manzanar without an okay from Merritt, and that Merritt wouldn't okay your return there in all probability? Why don't you forget about going back there and settle down to straightening yourself out here?"

Jim: How can Merritt stop me if I go back there? Suppose I just took a train and got to Manzanar, they couldn't stop me from going into the camp.

Ralph: "Oh, yes, they can. You just forget about going back there and think about finding yourself something to do around here. (Ralph left Jim with this remark.)

Jim: (turning to Virginia) Suppose I went back to Manzanar without saying anything to Shirrell or anyone else, they couldn't stop me from going into the center could they?

Virginia: You can't go into Manzanar even if you went out there unless Merritt signs an order for your entry. The thing for you to do is to sit down and write to Merritt right away giving him your reasons for returning to Manzanar, and ask for his okay.

Jim: "How about the N's, I hear they're going back to Manzanar. How did they get permission to go back there?"

Virginia: "They're going back on a visitor's pass, and, anyway, they've got good reasons for getting back there. (I missed her account of the reasons for N's return to Manzanar.)"

Jim: Suppose I went out to Reno and then wrote to Mr. Merritt that I wanted to get into Manzanar. Maybe that would be better.

Virginia: "But suppose you went all the way out there and Merritt told you that you couldn't come in. Then what would you do? You write that letter write away and find out before you go out there.

Coke Shima: (who had entered in the meantime and was listening to the conversation) Sure, you'd better write to Merritt and find out whether he'll let you in or not. Manzanar's one of the hardest places to get into. Even if you got as far as the gate, unless you had a permit to return from Merritt, you couldn't get inside the camp. There's no use running all the way out to Reno without the permit.

Jim: You mean to say they wouldn't let me in even if I got to the gates as long as I don't have Merritt's permission?

Coke: "No Sir, you can't get in without the permit. And, besides, you can't get as far as Manzanar without an escort. Merritt won't

assign an escort to you if he doesn't want you back."

Jim: "Kay and his wife are going back there. Why couldn't he act as escort, or have the same escort that takes them in?"

Coke: "You'd still have to have the permit to get through the gate. I heard of a couple of fellows who were going down from Tule Lake to Manzanar. They sent for military permits to travel through the restricted zones, and the permit came and it read, "For travel between Manzanar and Tule Lake." The permit said "between" so it didn't make any difference which ~~they~~ direction they were travelling; it would have been different if it had said, "From Manzanar to Tule Lake," but that's not what the permit said. But when those fellows got down to Manzanar, the guard wouldn't let those boys in because he understood the permit to mean from Manzanar to Tule Lake. They had to camp outside the gates for six hours before they got the thing cleared up, and they could get inside the gate."

Jim: "Yeah, I guess they had a pretty tough time of it, didn't they. What would happen if I went back to San Francisco?"

Coke: "San Francisco?! You can't get into San Francisco; that's in the restricted zone. If they found you out there, they'd throw you in the jug."

Jim: "But they'd send me back to Manzanar then, wouldn't they?"

Coke: "Oh, no, you'd stay in the jug. They'd give you a prison sentence. There's a law about that sort of thing, you know."

Virginia: "Jim, you quit being such a baby, and sit down and write that letter to Merritt. You're never going to get anywhere unless you do something about it."

(A nisei came in with an announcement of a job at decent pay in a nearby factory.)

Coke: "Here's the man to take that job. Jim, there's a good soft job for you. You better go out there and apply for that job right away before somebody else gets it."

Virginia: "It's no use telling Jim about it. He won't go after it. He doesn't want a job. Jim's just absolutely hopeless."

(Jim sat there without comment.)

After lunch a group of nisei were sitting in the lounge, and the talk turned to Jim Furita's case. A nisei from Manzanar who apparently knew Jim from camp was telling something of what he knew about him.

Ed Mori: "I've seen him around here now and then, but I don't know much about his case. What's the matter with him; is he lazy."

Jim's friend: "He's lazy and he's lonely."

Ed: "What was he doing back in camp? Didn't he have a job back there?"

Jim's friend: "He was a policeman, one of the wardens, at Manzanar. Aw, I don't know, he was always like that. He took it easy back there."

Coke: "A policeman, eh?" (laughter)

Ed: "Why didn't he volunteer for the army? The army would do a lot for a guy like that; make a man out of him. I hear they took a half dozen nisei from around here into the army the other day."

Coke: "Sure, that's where Jim ought to be. Oh, here he is now. Hey, policeman. I hear you were a cop down at Manzanar."

(Jim entered without comment. He seemed friendly and not to mind the ribbing. Despite the obvious atmosphere of disapproval directed toward him, Jim only showed complacency to all that was being said about him.)

Ed: "Why don't you join the army. Kill a few of these Nazis; make a man out of you."

Jim: "Naw, no army life for me. Instead of getting rid of the Nazis, they ought to get rid of guys like me first. Yeah, that's what they ought to do. Sure, instead of killing Hitler, they ought to kill guys like me first. I'm no good to anybody."

(Jim made this statement as if he were making an objective observation. After all the others had left, Jim just sat around as if pondering his own fate. He talked a little with a young nisei who was obviously younger than Jim, and the former replied to him with apparent condescension. I wondered that anybody would stand for this.)