

### Relocation

I went to see Dr. Tashiro to have some dental work done yesterday, and he was as usual concerned about the Nisei problem. Said he: "Are the Nisei buying war bonds? (I said that I thought the majority were not buying, or were not saving up on them.) That's bad. It's the greatest chance they've got for security. Right now the Nisei have the best chance they've ever had for saving money and it's too bad if they don't capitalize on it."

"Of all my patients, there are only two or three who are talking of going back to the West Coast. They are people with property back there. I find that most of them are pretty well satisfied with what they've got here and have no intention of returning, at least for the time being. I also understand that the W.R.A. is getting only two or three applications for return every day. The way I see it, the Nisei have a big chance out here; they have a future here and they ought to make the most of it."

Rumor: "Have you heard the ~~heard~~ rumor that's going around the Rohwer camp. It's said that three or four Nisei who went back to the Coast were kidnapped and have disappeared. It's said to be the talk of the camp. Nobody can name the Nisei, and they can't tell you where this is all supposed to have taken place. I guess they'll make up any kind of story to prevent the W.R.A. from closing the centers."

"The past year has been good to me. I found a wife, and I bought a home. (Tashiro has harped on this several times) At least for me, the evacuation was a good thing."

### Milwaukee Resettlers

Louise visited Milwaukee over the week-end and returned with this story. "Rio Kashiwagi told me that the Nisei up in Milwaukee are interested in getting together with the Nisei in other cities of the Middle West, probably at Chicago as the central point, to discuss the question of relocation and the closing of the centers. He feels that the Government should help Japanese businessmen who had business out on the Coast before the war to re-establish themselves. He wants to see some kind of government financing program because otherwise a lot of men who lost their businesses as a result of the evacuation won't be able to get themselves back on their feet again. Rio wants the Nisei to gather to discuss these questions, and see if some pressure can't be brought on the W.R.A. and Congressmen to appropriate funds for this purpose."

"I understand from one of my friends that the project attorney at Granada came back from Washington recently and started looking for another job. He said that the centers would be closing soon, and he wanted to find another position. My friend was interested in starting his business again on the West Coast, and he asked this attorney if the W.R.A. had any policy of financing evacuees who are returning to business, and the attorney said that the W.R.A. does have funds for the purpose but that it can't be publicized because of the adverse political effect it might have if the policy were widely known. Apparently, the funds won't be distributed among those who had no business prior to evacuation, but only to those who had a legitimate business and are attempting to re-establish themselves."



May 3, 1945

*Chicago  
my dear  
Notes on  
journal*

### Honda Becomes an Insurance Agent

As you know, last summer I tried to get in with New York Life to sell insurance as their agent. It was no dice. New York Life hasn't accepted a Japanese as an insurance agent since 1932, and apparently this policy still holds. I also tried Prudential, but they wouldn't take me either. It seems that among these big companies, the people get together and talk over such questions as these to find out what the other fellow is doing, so you get a common viewpoint from them.

The way I got in with the Lincoln National Company was quite interesting. I've been interested right along in getting in with some insurance company, but it seemed pretty discouraging. I happened to be visiting Yatabe at the JACL office not so long ago, and I mentioned my lack of success in getting a position as an agent. Yatabe felt that we should be able to do something about it. He knew a fellow named Fitch (approximate name) who is a broker in the 105 W. Adams office of the New York Life, and Yatabe called this man to ask about the possibility of my getting a position as an agent. Fitch didn't know, but he said he would call the home office and find out. In about fifteen minutes, he called back and said that New York Life wasn't taking Nisei agents, and that he didn't know of any way in which I could get in. Yatabe told Fitch that he thought that was a pretty discriminatory policy. After all, if the Nisei were good enough for the New York Life to sell insurance to, they should be good enough to be considered for a position with the company. Fitch told Yatabe that he would see what he could do.

I was still in Yatabe's office when Fitch called back again. He's a broker and so it seems that he has some contacts with other companies, perhaps he writes for them too, I'm not sure about that, but anyway, he had got in touch with the Lincoln National Company and they were interested in taking on a Nisei. Fitch arranged an interview for me with the manager of the office here, and I went up to see this man about a position.



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After talking with the manager of the Lincoln National Company, I had no trouble getting in with them. He seemed glad to have a Nisei working for the company. I've been with them for a week now, and having been with them for a while, I'm glad now that I tied in with this company. If New York Life offered me a position today, I think I would turn them down, because Lincoln National is a much more liberal company and it has more liberal policies to offer the Nisei. The people I work with are very friendly. When I took the job, the manager told me that I would find no discrimination from the people working in that office, and I've found that what he said is true. I have a desk in the same place and work right along side other agents and the office force, but I haven't once found any indication of an unfriendly attitude toward me.

The main reason I'm happy to be with the Lincoln National is that with them I can write the type of policy which I think will most benefit the Nisei. The New York Life, for instance, will sell Nisei only the Twenty Year Endowment; they can't sell anything else to us. That's because in life insurance you base risks of the company on life tables from the past, and there's no way of judging accurately for the Nisei since they haven't been in this country long enough. New York Life just follows a conservative policy on such things. I won't say it's bad because it's a business proposition, but it doesn't allow the Nisei the opportunity to get the best bargains in the way of insurance policies. Lincoln National, however, is willing to bear a certain amount of such risks because they've found that it pays to do so, and I can write Ordinary Life or Twenty Pay Life, which the New York agent can't do. Did Lawson mention "waiver premiums" to you when he sold you your policy? (I said "No") Well, that's a feature that I would advise for a person in your occupation because the company should be willing to risk it. In the "waiver premium", for a very nominal additional sum, say of a couple of dollars per year, a person who becomes physically disabled in some way and can't



work and can't continue to pay his insurance premiums can wave payment of further payment on his policy and still get the face value of the policy at the end of its term. Considering the very small additional sum involved, it's something I would advise for every Nisei who would be eligible for it. Lawson probably didn't mention it because I don't think New York Life offers that feature to the Nisei. Furthermore, when I sell insurance, I feel I'd like to get the greatest amount of benefit for the least cost to the person to whom I sell.

The thing I like about working for Lincoln National is that I'm free to give my clients what they want. Working for New York Life, I'd always have to feel guilty because the company wouldn't allow me to sell certain features to the Nisei, and I'd have to try to hide that fact from them. This way I'm not bound by restrictions.

I didn't know anything about Lincoln National before I joined it---hadn't even heard of it before. But I found out that it's the twelfth largest insurance company in the country, and rates second, next to John Hancock, in its ability to pay among the 390 odd life insurance companies in the country. By ability to pay I mean the difference between the assets and liabilities of the company---that's the way they calculate it. John Hancock, for instance, would have \$109 asset for every \$100,000 of liability; the Lincoln National has something like \$108, and companies like New York Life and Metropolitan would have, say, \$106 or \$107. So you see, it's a very stable company. The main office is in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Perhaps it's because it's not one of the older companies that its policy isn't as conservative. Lincoln National has been operating only forty years compared to a company like New York Life which has completed its hundredth year. It's a comparatively young organization, but it's also a progressive one for the same reason. The president of the company, Mr. McCandless, is also one of the best recognized authorities in the insurance field in this country. When the Government wanted



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advice on certain insurance legislation which was being considered a few years ago, Mr. McCandless was one of the two men who was called in to confer with Government officials in the writing of that legislation. When he happened to drop into our office the other day, he seemed very glad to know that a Nisei was working for the company. <sup>He</sup> /~~It~~ seemed a very fine person.



complete  
ing long interviews. Each/interview covered roughly 25 to 35 hours over a period  
of several days or weeks, and follow-ups are being made of all cases.

(Add the following sentence on page 4 marked \*)

in part  
The smallness of the sample should/be compensated by the intensity of the case  
the  
documents, and also by/comparison of the present data with notes of casual in-  
terviews kept by the writer in an extensive day-to-day journal, and <sup>with the documents of</sup> ~~by~~ other  
researchers working on the problems of Chicago resettlers.

(Add following)

<sup>undertaken</sup>  
There is also being ~~made~~ a review of the literature pertaining to the im-  
migrants and citizens of Japanese ancestry in America, and to the social wel-  
fare administration of the problems of migrants, particularly of wartime migrants.



REORGANIZATION MEETING OF RESETTLER'S COMMITTEE

The Resettler's Comm. has been inactive for the past several months, and this meeting was evidently for the effort of reviving interest in its activities. It was held at the Y.W.C.A., 59 W. Monroe, and was called for 7:30 p.m., but there were very few persons present when I arrived, and it did not get started until about 8:00 p.m. Those present were: Harry Mayeda, Chr., Mr. Takagi (Kibei or young Issei), Mr. Fujii (Kibei or young Issei), Tom Masuda, Mr. Oguchi (Issei hotel man), Setsuko Nishi, Mr. and Mrs. Matsunaga (Setsuko's folks), George Imagiri, Mas Kojima (Harvard student), and about three other Issei and a couple of Nisei, beside myself.

Before the meeting, Tom Masuda and Mr. Oguchi were talking about the expanding hotel business among the Japanese. Mr. Oguchi was curious to know who were starting hotels or apartment houses, about which Tom is well informed because of his law work, and Mr. O. seemed to know the various hotels which Tom mentioned.

Mr. Oguchi:

"The need now is to get some means of financing these hotel leases among the Japanese. Getting credit is the biggest problem right now. If we could get easy credit terms so that the Japanese can get started, then there's no problem because it's not hard to enough profits at this kind of business to pay off the debts. I don't mean to loan sharks; there's too much risk involved in getting loans from them. But if the banks or some good loan associations which are willing to back the Japanese could be found, there would be plenty of people interested in getting such assistance and getting into the hotel business."

Tom agreed that this was highly desirable and necessary. No mention was made of possible assistance from governmental loan agencies. Another Issei sitting nearby remarked:

"The trouble is that the O.P.A. has ceilings on rents, but there's no ceiling on the value of real estate. That makes it hard. The Government won't allow the operator to raise rents above a certain level, but they have no control over the prices which the real estate men demand of the purchasers of such business."

Mr. Oguchi:

I understood that there was some kind of government control on the prices the real estate companies could charge."



Tom:

"No, I don't think so. I thought there was something about that too, but as far as I've been able to find out, there isn't any ceiling on the prices of real estate. I'll look into the question again, however."

Mr. Oguchi:

"Well, that does make it pretty hard."

I spoke to Tom about his professional business. He said that he was being kept very busy. Apparently, the opening of new Japanese businesses in this area has produced a wealth of clientele for him.

Mayeda called the meeting. He spoke in English, though more than half the audience were Issei. Mayeda remarked:

Mayeda:

"The resettler's committee has been inactive during recent months, and today's meeting was called for the purpose of reviving interest in this group. With the prospect that the centers will be closed this year, there is increasing interest in resettlement into this area. Today I had the opportunity of meeting with Father Joe Kitagawa and Tom Ogawa from the Minidoka Center, and they reported to me that there is a great deal of interest at that center in resettlement into the Chicago area. They believe that a large number of the Japanese in that center will be moving out into the Chicago region after the end of the school year in June, and I have had similar reports from the Gila and Rohwer centers.

There is the acute problem of assisting these people who are coming in increasing numbers to Chicago, and because of the difficult problems of housing, in particular, as well as of employment and adjustment for the Issei resettlers, there is a need for some group such as ours to help prevent difficulties and errors in the difficult resettlement adjustments." In the light of these problems, I feel that some reorganization is necessary so that we may work effectively in assisting these people who are coming out. Plans for a reorganization of this group was discussed at an earlier meeting, and today's meeting will be devoted to a discussion of these plans."

"One other point, the United Ministry which has been devoting part of its time to the assisting of resettlement had been laying plans to terminate its function on the belief that its important contribution had already been made. Some of us indicated to them that the most difficult phase of resettlement was just beginning with the closing of the centers in sight, and there is now some discussion in that agency as to whether or not to continue their work. Dr. Harms and Mr. Roy Smith of the United Ministry are visiting our meeting tonight for the purpose of getting expressions from us of opinion about their closing. I hope that when they come, you will help to impress upon them the need of the United Ministry to continue the work which it has been carrying on in the relocation program."



May 25, 1945

Harry then explained that it was decided at the last meeting of the Resettler Comm. that a reorganization was necessary to make the objectives of the Committee clearer and provide a structure adequate to meet the new needs. He asked a Mr. Takagi who, with George Akahoshi, had been assigned to write the Purposes of the Resettler's Committee to read off the objectives which they had outlined. (The statement of purpose shall be ~~xxxx~~ gotten from Harry, but the substance of it was as follows:) The purposes were:

"The objective of the Resettler Committee shall be to facilitate the resettlement of Japanese Americans and assist in the favorable adjustment of these persons through the following means:

- (a) Solicit assistance from all individuals, agencies, and government organizations interested in the problems of the resettlers.
- (b) Promote the support of the citizens of Japanese ancestry behind the aims and objectives of the United Nations Conference toward the creation of a durable peace.
- (c) Participate with other interested individuals and groups in studying and trying to solve current economic, political and social problems.
- (d) Promote and foster integration.

Mention of the word "Citizens of Japanese Ancestry" raised a question as to whether this group were for citizens only, or was meant to include the aliens. In fact, Mr. Takagi had already raised the problem of whether or not to permit alien parolees (from internment camps) to become members. The question had been taken up with Lessing of WRA, and the latter had suggested that if the purpose and organization of the Committee were written up, and the question were then presented to either the D.A. or the F.B.I., that they would probably approve of the participation of <sup>parolees</sup> ~~internment~~ in an organization with such purposes. The aliens, it was agreed, were to be permitted membership, and the word "Japanese Americans" was thereafter to be used to indicate both citizens and aliens of Japanese ancestry.

The major criticism of the purposes as read came from Mr. Matsunaga (Setsuko's



father) who felt that the statement of purposes was too indefinite: His remarks, made in Japanese, were substantially:

Mr. Matsunaga

"Mr. Mayeda mentioned a little while ago that the dues of the organization are to be 25¢ per year for each member. I do not think it wise to determine membership fees and the organization until clear objectives of the organization have been outlined. In this respect, it seems to me that the purposes as stated, while highly admirable, are not sufficiently definite and practical to be useful. Any organization must have a clear idea of what its objectives are, and the stated purposes cannot be vague ideals but must be specific, concrete aims. Otherwise, the organization will never accomplish anything, and the membership will not be interested.

For instance, I have in mind the need for some kind of an organization that will provide for the "reconstruction of economic life" of the resettlers. This point of the "reconstruction of economic life" I think is of the utmost importance. How are we to achieve this? There is a need of an organization to handle employment offers, and be the source of information of business opportunities. There is a need for an agency to assist in housing, and also for dispensing information on relief and other social services. I have also observed that many Issei bachelors and men who are here without families would like a place where they could get together with others people. There should be a hall for meeting purposes, and a place where newspapers and books are kept so that people may sit around and enjoy themselves. If you have an organization of this kind, then it will be necessary to hire an executive secretary, and possibly one or two clerks. There will be besides the hall rent, various incidental expenses such as telephone, stationery, etc.

Unless an organization has some paid secretary, its success is likely to be limited. People who are occupied with other work cannot spare sufficient time to do all the work that is required in an organization of this kind. But if you organize along these lines, membership fees will have to be larger than 25¢ per year, and there will be a need for soliciting contributions to maintain the office and staff.

The general objectives are fine, but I think you need to clarify what your specific, concrete objectives are. If your plan is to have a small social group, that is one thing, but if your aim is to assist in the resettlement program, I think your objectives should be stated in those terms, and you will have to organize accordingly."

After some confusion, Harry later clarified the point that the 25¢ fee was the amount paid previously, and the fees in the future had not yet been determined. Mr. Takagi also clarified the point that the objectives stated were general ones, stating broadly what the aims of the organization were, and the specific aims would be outlined under them. But Harry seemed somewhat over-



whelmed by the broad organizational plan outlined by Mr. Matsunaga, and he fumbled for ideas. Two things evidently bothered Harry: (a) the plan outlined was in contradiction to the "integration" policy of the Committee, and (b) such a broad objective had not been contemplated for the Resettler Committee. His poor understanding of Japanese may also have contributed to his difficulty in following Mr. Matsunaga's ideas.

Mrs. Nishi (Setsuko)

"This brings up a problem of how the resettler committee fits into the Co-ordinating Council which was discussed at the meeting last Tuesday. I wonder whether such a plan wouldn't conflict with what the Co-ordinating Council is intending for its objectives?"

Harry:

"Yes. I think there is a danger here of overlapping in function with that proposed by the Co-ordinating Council. Setsuko, I wonder if you would explain to the group here what was discussed at the meeting of the C.C. last Tuesday.

Mrs. Nishi:

"Well, it was a meeting called of five Nisei organizations including the J.A.C.L., Y.W.C.A., the U.S.O. girls, Mr. Kubose's Buddhist group, and the Resettler Committee. The immediate problem was the suggestion made by Mr. Finch, who is now in Minneapolis at Fort Snelling, of the need for some service men's center for Nisei soldiers. He is attempting to gain Japanese support through contributions, to which he indicates willingness to make a substantial personal contribution. Out of this discussion, there arose the question of the desirability of having a centralized Japanese American organization here in Chicago to handle problems of this kind which is of general concern to the resettler population in Chicago. It also seemed desirable that the various organizations should attempt to prevent an overlapping of functions, and the Coordinating Council is intended to prevent that. We don't know yet exactly what form the C. C. will take, but there was some discussion of the desirability of pooling the efforts of all the organizations in the resettlement work, through the C.C., since the individual organizations are not in themselves sufficiently able to perform the work effectively."

Harry:

"I think we should consider seriously where we can fit into this picture since there is a possibility that we may overlap in function by attempting something along the line of Mr. Matsunaga's suggestion. It may be that the C.C. is the logical organization to handle such a plan."



There was considerable confusion on the question of whether or not the Resettler Committee were not overlapping in function.

Mrs. Nishi:

"Mas Kojima here knows more about organization than anyone else here. I wonder if he has any ideas to offer?"

Mas Kojima: (Nisei student from Harvard, about 25)

"The first thing you have to decide is, what are the functions of this organization distinguishing it from all other organizations? Every organization has its officers, membership, physical facilities, and so on, and you don't have to worry about them. But each organization has some special attraction to its members, and that is the thing you should determine. What are the objectives of this group, I mean its concrete objectives, which are different from the J.A.C.L., the Coordinating Council, and all others?"

There was some quibbling as to what, specifically, were the functions of the Resettler Committee. Harry mentioned two, (a) integration, and (b) assistance of resettler adjustments, but this failed to clarify the situation. The discussion again arose that the objectives of the group were not sufficiently concrete and practical.

Frank Miyamoto:

"I feel ~~that the~~ difficulty here is that the Resettler Committee has been changing in its function due to changes of circumstance and membership. For one thing, the inclusion of Issei in the group immediately alters the function of this group, for as I recall it, this group was originally formed about a nucleus of Nisei and with the purpose of satisfying Nisei interests. Going over the background historically, I recall that the first meetings were called at the W.R.A. office and there were, among other points, two concrete objectives outlined at the time. One was that the W.R.A. felt there was a need of some group through which it could distribute information of interest to the resettlers. It was also felt that some resettler group was needed which was interested in promoting the "integration" idea more vigorously than any other organization at the time was doing. These objectives, of course, were of specific interest to the Nisei.

However, with the inclusion of the Issei into this organization, an entirely new set of interests it seems to me arise. In the first place, the Nisei don't require as much assistance in housing and job hunting as do the Issei, and they have a social life that doesn't require supplementing. The Issei, however, have practical interests in a resettler Committee for because of their language handicaps, they need assistance from groups other than the WRA and other social agencies in making their adjustments to the city. The Nisei interest in this group might be called a vicarious political interest; but the Issei have a definite practical stake in a resettler committee. Furthermore, the type of people coming out of the



centers now are quite different from what they were two years ago. The Issei now arriving are much more dependent upon assistance from a Japanese group in making their initial adjustments to this city. In other words, if this group plans to assist in the resettlement, it becomes in fact a "Resettler Committee", that is, an organization that assists resettlement much more than it does "integration" or some other such policy. If the Issei are to be included, I think we have to give thought to the new interests which enter into the group.

"I also note the interesting point that the inclusion of the Issei presents a language problem. Right now there is a problem of the Issei trying to understand the English spoken by the Nisei, and vice versa. My guess is that we're going to have to do more interpreting for each other so that the members may better understand what is going on."

Mas Kojima

"I think we should consider for the objectives of this group those interests which are not met by ~~many~~ any other group in Chicago. I imagine that the organizations now existing reach no more than 2,000 resettlers in Chicago. There remains a large population of some 5 to 8,000 who aren't touched by these groups. I think we should set up objectives which will permit exploiting this large mass of unorganized resettlers, particularly of the Issei who evidently have no organizations to attach themselves to. If we do that, there will be no difficulty in strengthening this group and bringing it out of its state of dormancy."

Mrs. Nishi

"But won't an effort of that kind conflict with the functions of the Coordinating Council?"

Miyamoto

"I might say that in my experience I've found that Coordinating Councils are generally no more than what their name signifies. They coordinate, but the actual functions of the community are carried on by bodies organized for a specific purpose."

By this time, there was a lot of interpreting going on from English into Japanese and vice versa. Mr. Matsunaga said that he had misunderstood the intent of the objectives read by Mr. Takagi. Tom Masuda stated that he was in favor of Mr. Matsunaga's original criticism, that more definite objectives were necessary if the organizations were not to fall into discard as it had previously. By this time there was pressure to get on to the speech from Dr. Harms and Rev. Roy Smith, who had in the meantime arrived, for the group had to vacate the hall by 10:00 p.m. Mr. Fujii expressed the view that he too had been thinking



along the lines of a group to meet Issei needs such as the one discussed by Mr. Matsunaga. He told of an Issei group in Cleveland which he had encountered while visiting there, and the success it was having in assisting the Issei. Mr. Takagi likewise said he had been thinking along similar lines. In fact, he had at one time calculated what the costs would be to the Resettler Committee if they had a paid executive secretary and an office, and had discarded the plan because of the great expense and the apparent difficulty of raising funds, at the time, for the creation of such an organization.

It was decided that a committee should be formed to revise the purposes of the Resettler Committee in view of the criticisms raised. Harry selected Mr. Fujii Mr. Takagi, ~~Mrs. Nishi~~, /Mr. Matsunaga, and himself for the committee. The idea was to have both Issei and Nisei on the committee.

Dr. Harms of the United Ministry was then introduced. There was less than twenty minutes for him to talk, and everything was being rushed. Dr. Harms in a very leisurely manner outlined the work the United Ministry had been doing under the resettlement program, and the recent plans to close the resettlement function of the organization. "We thought that when this thing was over, you people were all going back to the West Coast and that our work would be over. But now we find out that rather than leaving, the resettlers are coming out in even greater numbers with even greater problems. At least this is what some of my friends tell me, and we wished to get your view on the desirability of our continuing this work and of what part we can play if we do decide to continue."

Mayeda:

"Dr. Harms, I think I would represent the opinions of most evacuees in this city in saying that you should by all means continue the excellent work you have been doing toward assisting resettlement, and not only continue it, but even double your efforts along this line. In the first place, the indications at present are that we are going to have within the next year, double the number of evacuees who are already here. Furthermore, as you may have guessed from the discussion we've been having here, the problems



from now on are going to be even more acute than those we've faced hitherto. Housing, for instance, is now showing itself to be the most difficult problem of the ~~excessive~~ resettlers. This is so in particular because we are getting family groups coming out, and housing accommodations for them are even more scarce than for individual persons or for couples....."

Tom Masuda:

"I wish to say that I concur heartily with what has already been said, and I think it might be added that the need for organizations such as yours backing up the resettlers will be ~~even~~ more keenly felt in the next year. As the numbers of ~~resettlers~~ in Chicago rapidly increase, we must expect that hostility might increase in a comparable degree and we have to prepare for that. An organization such as yours that represents the large Christian membership of this city could assist very materially in promoting favorable public relations for our group."

There were other similar comments urging the United Ministry to continue its "excellent work" and "even treble" the effort of the organization. Mrs. Nishi was specifically called upon by Dr. Harms for her opinion. We broke up as the ten o'clock curfew arrived, and we had to clear out. Outside the door, Setsuko again asked me whether I didn't think we would be overlapping in function by promoting such a plan as that outlined by her father. I gave the opinion that as far as overlapping with the Co-ordinating Council went, there wasn't any such problem at the moment because the Co-ordinating Council didn't yet really exist. ~~Furthermore, I said, I didn't think~~ At a time when several organizations are evolving at the same time, I commented, I felt that there was no use worrying about what the other organizations were planning to become. Furthermore, I said, I didn't think the Co-ordinating Council would really become an effective group in the perceivable future, and there was no group at present handling the problems of the Issei.



Miyamoto Notes  
August 5, 1945  
Berkeley, Cal.

On July 20, 1945, or thereabouts, East Bay newspapers (particularly one of the Berkeley papers) reported the suicide of a seventy year old returned evacuee, Mr. Tomizawa (?), which occurred at the Berkeley Japanese Methodist Church. The alleged reasons for suicide were that he was a bachelor without a family, and was disturbed by the evacuation and race hatred. The following version throws an entirely different light upon the circumstances leading to the tragedy, and highlights what I consider the god-damned contemptible role of a Rev. Groesbeck who is presented in the news account as a friend of the deceased. At the time of evacuation, Groesbeck, a long-time friend of the Berkeley Japanese, was entrusted with much of the property of the Methodist Church members as well as of other local Japanese, but the following account leads me to question whether he was ever a sincere friend, and certainly casts him in a rather villainous role after evacuation.

By way of a necessary introduction, I must describe the Tsuchida household where I heard the story. I only casually knew the Tsuchida couple, Himeko and Eichi, from Chicago, but when I ran into them here, they were very friendly and invited me to dinner at their home. They are now living at 5910 Potrero Avenue in El Cerrito, and with them are Eichi's mother and father and Himeko's younger sister, Lillian K. Himeko is working as a secretary at the University Y.W.C.A. while her husband, who is an optometrist, is evidently employed in some optometrist's shop in Oakland and San Francisco. On casual acquaintance both of them seem quiet, reserved and unimpressive, but further contact reveals them as mild-mannered, friendly and thoroughly likeable people.



Himeko, about twenty-five, is a thin girl about five feet two inches tall, neither attractive nor unattractive, wears glasses, and appears the type one could depend upon to be a serious and conscientious student. She dresses conservatively, is soft-spoken and mild of temperament, and seems somewhat colorless, but in friendly conversation when she talks of things of interest to her, her face sometimes becomes quite animated and expressive, and she reveals more vitality than one would expect from her. She and her family were old Berkeley residents, and Himeko was entering her last year at the University when the war broke out and evacuation interrupted her studies. The family was evacuated to Topaz, and somewhere during this time, Himeko married Eichi Tsuchida. They relocated to Chicago in June 1943 where Himeko was employed part-time by Dr. Howard Beale as a clerical and secretarial assistant while she completed her studies at the University of Chicago. She gave no major field, but seemed interested in sociology or social work. They were living at 58th and Drexel Blvd. when Eichi decided to return to Berkeley in March 1945 to look into his father's business left here in Berkeley.

Eichi is a very quiet person, also rather slender, about five feet seven, wears glasses, and has rather thin, sharp features. He is less bright than Himeko, does not possess her drive, is extremely taciturn among strangers and lets his wife do the talking for him, and mumbles his words so that one suspects him of being Japan-educated and incapable of conversing readily in English. During a conversation on Nisei accents, Eichi remarked that people have mentioned his wife as having no accent, but, "I know I have an accent because people have told me so. They say, 'Himeko doesn't have an accent, but you do.'" When he is at his ease, however, I noted very little accent.



and concluded that he is simply a poor talker. Neither Himeko nor he know Japanese very well, and grew up with quite a bit of Caucasian contact. Eichi's quietness was later revealed as resulting from a kind of boyish shyness and naivete; perhaps also a sense of conversational inadequacy. He is even softer spoken than his wife, has a very gentle and ~~mild~~ <sup>meek</sup> temperament, and I suspect his wife leads more than he. Both Eichi and his wife are "good" Christians, the kind that take its ethics rather seriously. Eichi graduated in optometry from the University of California <sup>in 1941</sup> ~~just before evacuation~~ and had just established himself in his own shop at the outbreak of war. The Tsuchida family had lived in Berkeley for a number of years, were evacuated to Topaz, and after Eichi and Himeko went to Chicago, his parents followed them out there shortly thereafter. Eichi says of Chicago, "I think I would have liked it better there if I'd been working in my own profession. But I had a factory job which I didn't like, and that kind of spoiled things for me. If I'd been in my own line of work, we wouldn't have minded staying there." Himeko concurred. In March 1945, he came out to Berkeley to look into his father's business, and Himeko came out two months later.

Mr. and Mrs. Tsuchida, the parents, are about fifty-five. There is little by which to distinguish them from other Issei, except that they are devout Christians, probably less antagonistic towards Caucasians than those who have lived closely among Japanese, and have more readily accepted the consequences of evacuation. Somewhat unusual was the easy intimacy of the family, between the parents as well as between them and the children including the in-laws, Mr. Tsuchida has an expressive face that breaks out in a smile easily,



is a rather cheerful soul, has a rather uncomplex personality that is indicated in his industrious but somewhat naive approach to life, and is very friendly, appreciating a good friendship more than is general in our society today. He talked readily, and joked with his family members. Mrs. Tsuchida is a quiet, reserved and self-effacing personality, but is friendly and evidently very kind to the children. Lillian, Himeko's sister, is probably not yet twenty, a healthy girl both physically and mentally. Before the war Mr. Tsuchida operated a dye work and cleaning establishment here into which he had put \$20,000 worth of equipment on which he had just completed payment at the time of evacuation. Part of the present account has to do with the manner in which this establishment was disposed. The Tsuchida family evacuated to Topaz, one of the two sons was already in the Army, so when Eichi married the parents were left to themselves. They relocated first to Nevada and then to Chicago before returning to California.

Mr. Tsuchida offered some brief comments on his relocation experiences. "We first went from Topaz to Nevada. It is not a good state. There is very little there, except gambling. It seems that every other establishment in the towns there are either gambling places or saloons. As you know, Nevada is one of the great silver mining states of the country and the silver dollar flourishes there. I have walked in town and looked into the doorway of some of these places, and I would see people drinking and others sitting at a table with silver money piled like a mountain before them. No, it is not a place for good people. (Christian disapproval) Eichi had already gone to Chicago, so we decided to go out there. That was



in the summer of 1943, and when we moved into the North Clark St. district, there were still very few Japanese in the district. I understand that there are now a great number of Japanese coming into that area. I think Chicago is a very fine place; I look back on my days there with fond memories. I was able to get a position in a girls' student house, and working with me in the same place were two other Japanese from Portland. I wonder if you would know them. They are both from Portland. One was Mr. Katagiri--yes, the father of <sup>Rose</sup>~~Mrs~~/Katagiri-san,---and the other was Mr. Seiki. Both of them were Christian people, we attended church together, and we immediately struck up a friendship. It was surprising how well our interests and ideas agreed. We had very many pleasant hours together. It was enjoyable working with them because we got along so well; in fact, it is a long time since I have enjoyed the association of other people quite so much. There were other Portland people with whom we became acquainted, and some from Seattle too. As you know, Rose Katagiri married the son of Mr. Senda who was from Seattle. Do you know him? He was formerly connected with the Asia Trading Company. I was invited to their wedding, and met a number of people from the Northwest at the time." (The family evidently thinks well of the Northwest people because of their experiences with them, and because of my coming from the N.W., they apparently wanted to communicate their enthusiasm to me.)

"The other day I received a letter from the Katagiris. They told me many things that made me think of Chicago. Only yesterday I sent them a reply in which I told them that while it was good to be back in familiar surroundings again, that there is nothing here



which will replace the kind of friendship which I received from them." (I asked, "I imagine you are glad to be back in Berkeley again? The weather is so fine and the country so beautiful.") "Yes, but Chicago is a good place, too. We made many new friends there and I regret that we can't be with them again."

I would judge that in a place like Chicago, following evacuation and relocation, that friendship did mean a great deal to many Issei. I have observed some who seem lost there, not having their own business to become absorbed in, or the routine of <sup>an established</sup> community life to fill in the spare hours.

~~After dinner, Himeko suggested that we~~

In the spring of 1945, it was decided that the Tsuchida household should return to Berkeley and Eichi came out in March to locate housing. Despite efforts to find a dwelling large enough for five people in Berkeley or Oakland, considerable difficulties were encountered, and Eichi finally gained permission from an evacuee family to use one of their two houses in El Cerrito. Since the location is inconvenient, they are still trying to find a place in Berkeley, and just at the time I arrived for the dinner engagement, Eichi was making arrangements with a real estate agent to look over a house on the following morning. Said Himeko: "We want to find a place in Berkeley because this place is too far out and we're a little cramped. But it's almost impossible to find anything here. I think it's worse than Chicago because there you could at least find something, but here there isn't anything even if you're looking only for a roof over your head. Out here housing is the most important relocation problem. We've found that the only thing to do is



to buy a house, and quite a number of our friends are looking for a place to buy. This place Eichi is going to look over tomorrow is down near San Pablo and Dwight; it's not a good neighborhood and we've heard that robberies have occurred around there, but at least it won't hurt to look the place over."

The owner of their/<sup>present</sup>place of residence/<sup>is</sup>~~xxx~~ called Mr. Nabeta. Mr. Nabeta was described as one of the oldest Japanese greenhouse men in this area, and over the course of years had acquired ~~con-~~siderable a sizeable greenhouse plant and perhaps a couple of acres of land which is now in the center of a rapidly developing residential community. He owns two five room houses, one beside the other, and it is in one of these that the Tsuchida family lives. Himeko said, "The Nabetas are now living in the other house, and we're renting this one from them. But when Eichi first came out here to look over the place, he says it was so dirty he didn't think we could live here. When the Nabetas were evacuated, they rented the place to Caucasian families who were to also look after the greenhouses. The greenhouses are absolutely wrecked now, and the people who rented made no effort to keep these places up it seems. Eichi says that the walls were so smeared with dirt you could almost scrape it off, there were cobwebs and dust all over, and it was generally in such rundown condition it seemed impossible that any humans could have lived here. I was surprised when I came out because I couldn't see how it could have been as bad as Eichi described it, but I guess he had to do a lot of cleaning up before the place began to look as it does now.\* The trouble was that the Nabeta family had expected to



come out early this year, but because Mr. Nabeta had been interned at one time, there was some difficulty about getting clearance to come into this area. In the meantime, the families that were renting here moved out, and the place was vacant for about one month. Some of the damage and deterioration, we think, must have occurred at that time, but we're quite sure they didn't make much effort to keep things up either." The house as I saw it was small but clean, having been newly papered and painted on the inside, and with a new bathroom installed.

Immediately after dinner Himeko suggested, "I wonder if it wouldn't be better to look at the greenhouses now before it gets dark. I think you'd be interested in seeing what's happened to them." Mrs. Tsuchida (elder) agreed, "That's right. I think you should see it. It will make seed for conversation (a Japanese phrase)!" Eichi, Himeko and I went out by the back.

The Nabeta land is on the corner of Pertero and East Shore Highway. Mr. Nabeta formerly owned a larger plot, but with the building of the busy highway in front of his place some years ago, the highway cut into his property and, I presume, ~~was sold~~ that portion was sold to the local government. The two small houses occupy the corner on the streets, and the greenhouses are on the north and west sides of the houses. The boiler-room building is immediately behind the residences. I made out about ten sections of greenhouses, each of them about seventy-five feet long.

The destruction to the greenhouses was considerable. There were broken glasses all over the grounds. I doubt if there were five percent of the glasses remaining intact. The frames of the building, unfortunately, were not reinforced with steel, and the wood-



en structure was in some places seemingly in a state of readiness to collapse. One building had been completely torn down, but I was unable to ascertain whether this had occurred since the evacuation. Weeds were growing all over the lot and inside the greenhouse buildings as high as my eyes. Wooden slats were scattered about the grounds probably from broken trays, of which I saw very few in usable condition. Eichi said:

"When I first came out here, there were thick growths of weed all over this backyard, but I've cleaned up some of it. Kay ~~xxxx~~ (son of Mr. Nabeta, pseudonym, real name unknown) says that each of these buildings was worth \$10,000. I don't know whether he meant by that the buildings alone, or including the plants, but anyway you can see that its worth very little as it is. You can see that they've cleaned up one section. (The glasses had been replaced and the entire building was filled with trays of chrysanthemum.) But the rest of the buildings are going to require a lot of repair. It's no use going all the way down; they're all the same. Dillon Myer came out three times to look this over, and a WRA photographer came with him once and took pictures."

"The people who rented the houses were supposed to operate the greenhouses and keep them up. It seems that they ran it for the season when we were evacuated, and probably sold the plants which Mr. Nabeta had, but they just let things go after that. I guess that kids came along and seeing that the greenhouses weren't in use had a lot of fun throwing <sup>rocks</sup> ~~sticks~~ and breaking glasses. The boiler doesn't work either, and they can't get any heat in the buildings. I guess that's why they're growing chrysanthemums now instead of roses



and the other fancy plants they used to grow."

It was after we had returned to the living room and had settled down to conversation that the whole story of this loss, as well as those affecting a number of other Berkeley evacuee families, came out. Most of the story was related by Eichi.

"By the way, did you hear about the suicide we had here. I want to show you something. I guess this must have happened before you came out here. Mr. Tomizawa, the man who committed suicide, was an old family friend of ours. I've never seen my own grandfather, and so I guess I always thought of him as like my grandfather. Here, read these news clippings of the suicide. You'll see that they give the reasons for suicide as discrimination, evacuation and a lot of other things, but that's not the true story. I know what the real reasons were, and I know I know, because the people involved are those whom we've known for a long time. At least I think I know what happened."

"At the time of evacuation, the families which were members of the Japanese Methodist Church decided to store their furnishings only in the church. It wasn't/the members either; a lot of other people left their belongings there. This Reverend Groesbeck whom you see mentioned there was an old friend of the Japanese. He's still a young man, about thirty-two, but he started teaching in our Sunday School when I was still a boy. We needed someone to look after the property, and since he had been with our group a long time, we asked him to look after things for us, which he did gladly. It wasn't only the church either; there were a number of people who asked him to serve as custodian of other property, their houses, businesses and so on. He helped us quite a bit at the time."



"A problem came up while the people were still in the centers. There was a chance that Reverend Groesbeck might get drafted because, while he was a minister, he didn't have a church. He wrote to some of the members at Topaz and asked if he couldn't be permitted to use the Methodist Church because he couldn't then have his church, but that meant that all the goods stored there had <sup>to</sup> be taken out. He came out to Topaz and there was a conference among all the people who had left their belongings in the church. Not all the people were there---some had relocated, like us, and some were in other centers. But this was a business that had to be straightened out right away, there wasn't any time to wait, so the people at Topaz discussed the question and after quite a bit of discussion about it, voted to let Groesbeck have the church and have the goods transferred to the government storage in San Francisco. The reason was, they figured that if Reverend Groesbeck were drafted, there wouldn't be anyone left here to look after their property, and so it would be to our mutual benefit to see that he wasn't inducted."

"The stuff was moved out to the federal storage, but the funny part of it is that when we came back, we found lots of things missing. For instance, we left our things at the church, but when we picked it up at the <sup>federal</sup> storage building, there were a few things like a vacuum cleaner which weren't there. All the other families are complaining that this or that is missing. We can't figure out what happened to them. Of course, it's possible that in moving the baggage, things got lost, or maybe some people broke in and took what they wanted. That sort of thing has happened all over, so we think that's quite possible. I don't think Reverend Groesbeck was



responsiblae though. Things like that can happen, and I don't think you can blame a man for it."

"Another thing is that because we moved the things to federal storage in San Francisco, it costs quite a bit to bring it back. The WRA paid for <sup>taking</sup> ~~bringing~~ it out, but we have to pay for bringing it back. In our case, just at the time we got back, three families wanted their things shipped out, so we got together in hiring a van and split the cost. Altogether, it cost \$48, so we paid \$16 as our share. We had to have another trip made later, and that time it ~~SHXX~~ cost \$30, so altogether it amounts to about fifty dollars for each family. These transfer companies are paid on an hourly basis; you get a company in Berkeley to handle it, and it'll take a good half day for them to transfer a load, so it's bound to cost quite a bit. Now that the people find things are missing, they feel it was foolish to have moved the things to federal storage, and there's the transfer charge on top of it."

"Well, Mr. Tomizawa was one of the first men to come back, and although he's not a minister, he had always been a leader in the church so he was helping to get the people's stored baggage back to them. When the people began to find things missing, they took their complaints to Mr. Tomizawa, and they wanted him to do something about it. Don't you think that the Issei are awfully small and petty sometimes? I don't know how to describe it, but sometimes they can say things in a way that will hurt a man's feelings terribly. They're so suspicious, and they quibble over little things. Anyway, I guess they kept after Mr. Tomizawa for every little thing~~s~~.



"I don't think anybody ever thought that Mr. Tomizawa had anything to do with the loss of things. He's not that kind of man. He's the type that never thinks about himself, but is always willing to help out the other fellow. Everybody respected him, so I don't think anybody blamed him. What they wanted was for him to go to Reverend Groesbeck and take up their complaints with him. They weren't willing to go themselves, but they placed the responsibility on Mr. Tomizawa. I guess Mr. Tomizawa didn't want to do it; we have no proof that Reverend Groesbeck did anything underhanded."

"The night before the suicide, a trainload of Berkeley people came back from Topaz, and a little reception was given for some of them. I don't know, but some of these people must have said things to Mr. Tomizawa or about him which he overheard. Anyway, he left the party and went up to the room which he had for himself in that home. It was the next day that he committed suicide. Something must have been said which really hurt him. I can't understand it; why should a man take his own life over a thing like that unless something happened. I think the people just kept after him so much that when these people came back from Topaz and said things about him it was the last straw. The fact that they came back just the day before he took his life must mean that there was some connection."

"And there's the will. Parts of it were mentioned in one of the articles; I don't remember where I put it. There were twenty points included, but the first and most important point was that he was leaving \$2,000 for people who had lost articles to divide among themselves in paying for their losses. There were other points but they had to do with the disposition of his body, and such. But



the will makes it clear that this thing was premeditated. He must have thought a lot about it. We don't know, but we guess that the night he left the party and went to his room, he must have sat down to write out this will, and then hanged himself at the church the next day. I don't know whether the people are going to get the money or not because the will has to be probated and there seem to be difficulties about it. I can't understand what he had in mind in taking his life that way."

"I think the Japanese people have been very small about this whole thing. If they hadn't hounded him, Mr. Tomizawa might still be living. Now they're going around gossipping that it was unnecessary to commit suicide in the church. I guess it is awful to have a suicide occur in a church, but then if they understood what kind of a man he was a little better, I don't think they could say such things. He was kind of like a grandfather to me. After I'd graduated from college, he loaned me money to open my optometry shop. He was that kind of person; he'd help anybody who needed help. Of course, my father still owned his dye work and cleaning establishment and had just paid up \$20,000 for the equipment in it, so we were in a position to start making money just at the time the war broke out and the evacuation came. He knew that we were in a position to pay him back, so I don't think he ever worried about it."

"But my father lost his dye work, too. I didn't know anything about it and had thought that we were still the owners until I came back and talked to Reverend Groesbeck and found out what had happened. ~~Reverend Groesbeck was the one who told me.~~ At the time evacuation came, my father was wondering what to do about his business.



Reverend Groesbeck came to see my father and offered to operate the business for him, and since my father had known him for a long time and we all trusted him, he was quite happy to have him handle the thing. Then Groesbeck suggested that it would be better to have my father turn the business completely over to him because of the feeling against Japanese owners, and my father agreed to it. There was \$20,000 worth of equipment in there, but he sold it to Groesbeck, for \$5,000, made out a transfer deed, thinking all the time that when he came back he would be able to buy it back at the same price. Of course, my father was ~~a~~ fool<sup>ish</sup> to sign anything like that because there's nothing we can do about it now. I have a hunch my father realized in camp that he'd lost the business, but he never told me about it. It was after I came back here and talked to Reverend Groesbeck that I got the whole story, but, of course, Groesbeck doesn't want to give up the place now because he feels he bought it legitimately."

"The thing is I don't know whether we can accuse him of having had any underhanded intentions. He's always been a friend to the Japanese people, and at the time of evacuation he helped the Japanese tremendously. He did everything he could to help us. We've known him a long time, and we've never had any reason to doubt him. Of course, Dr. Chapman says that there were good people who helped the Japanese, and then because of the profits to themselves had their heads turned. But we don't know what Reverend Groesbeck's intentions were---perhaps, it's only been a series of misunderstandings---and I don't think it would be fair to accuse a man without having good grounds for saying that ~~xx~~ he had done something wrong. I think, though, that my father ought to press the matter a little



farther. Dr. Chapman has suggested to him that he shouldn't let the matter drop, but I don't think ~~Groesbeck~~<sup>he</sup>/has approached Groesbeck since. At least he hasn't told me anything about it."

Himeko interrupted at this point: "Well, I know he went to see Reverend Groesbeck, because your father told me about it. He went to talk to him several times, but every time Walt (Groesbeck) would change the subject, or anyway he would refuse to talk about it. One time when he went to see Walt and started to talk about the business, there was something on/about President Roosevelt's death and he shifted the conversation to that. He's even asked Walt in front of Walter's mother, and demanded to know whether Walt is going to return the business or not. He asked him several times to say definitely whether or not he would return it, but Walt refused to answer him. I think your father has tried all right."

"You see, we've known Walt Groesbeck so long that it's hard to believe that he would do anything against us. For instance, I'm sure he didn't steal anything of all that baggage which are missing. (Eichi agrees) It's easy to lose things when you've left them stored away for several years, and they've been moved once. Besides, he had a lot of things to look after because a lot of people asked him to do things for them. He was actually doing three things at once: being a real estate man for evacuees who had left property in his care, operator of a cleaning and <sup>dy</sup>ing establishment, and being a minister, all at the same time. I think his mistake was in trying to do/<sup>too</sup>much. For instance, he had promised to look after this place for Mr. Nabeta, but I don't know whether he ever came out here to keep any eye on it or not. Other people are complaining also about the mishandling of funds and so on."



At this point I felt that there was something illogical about maintaining faith in a man whose activities had been filled with incidents that laid him open to question, so I asked, "I don't know Reverend Groesbeck, of course, but wouldn't you say that with all these evidences of questionable behavior that some kind of pressure should be applied to him at least to determine whether or not he has been double dealing?"

Eichi: "It's possible that things went to his head. And as you say, he may be a poor administrator, although he is a good business man in the sense that he's always known to look after his own interest. (Himeko agrees) I did go to the WRA to check up on the lost property, but they wouldn't do anything about it. They'd look into the files and come up with a card; then they'd say, "Here, Mr. Groesbeck is the name of your custodian, you'd better talk to him about it." As if I didn't know the name of my custodian. I had already talked to Walt Groesbeck about it, and he claimed he didn't know anything about it. There was no use seeing him because he claimed he didn't know. I saw him about my father's business too, but he said that at the time he could have taken over any one of several dye work and cleaning shop which other people wanted him to look after. Of course, he might have built up the business while my father was away, you can't tell, but all that new equipment was in there and my father had just gotten to the point where he could have developed his trade."

Himeko interrupted, "Reverend Groesbeck did come to your father offering to take care of the business, didn't he? And he was the one who suggested making out the deed of transfer. It would have been just as well if he had taken over somebody elses' business. I



guess your father wouldn't have lost the business then."

Eichi: "That's true. Well, some day we'll find out what actually happened, maybe. My father was foolish to sign that deed; I don't know what ever led him to do it. I guess he just kept thinking that this was only a temporary thing, and that he could have the business back as soon as he returned. Groesbeck didn't want him around the shop either. My father tried to get a job there, but there weren't any openings. He was pretty broken up about it when he first found out. He didn't have any work to do so he asked me to write letters to some of his old customers inquiring whether they didn't have anything for him to do, around the house and that sort of thing. I didn't know at the time they were his customers, and I felt kind of embarrassed about it, but they were all very kind. He's working every day, now, and gets a dollar to dollar-and-a-quarter an hour for doing miscellaneous housework. Some of them give him street car fare, too, but others don't. When he was first getting started, I remember we had some mix-ups. He would have a job in one place, and then at the same time he would find out about another job that paid better but had to be done on the same day. My father would then ask me to phone the first party to tell them that my father had found a better position and couldn't come. That was embarrassing and I hated to do it, but I found out they were his old customers, and most of them were very nice about it saying they were glad he was able to get something better."

"When he first started working at it, he would come home and lie down on the couch, and wouldn't eat. I guess the work tired him, and he must have been quite discouraged too. I was worried about him then, but he has his pep back now and the work doesn't seem to



affect him so much either. "

"Funny thing, my mother has been like that too. Once when we were walking up the street, somebody made a remark about Japs to us. When my mother came home, she lay down on the couch and wouldn't eat."

While this discussion was going on, I could hear Mr. and Mrs. Tsuchida, and Lillian, in the kitchen singing hymns. Our talk turned to schooling, and Eichi remarked, "I think I took the wrong field (optometry). It would have been all right if I'd stayed here and gone into it right away, but I had to close my shop because of the evacuation. The man I'm working for now has done very well for himself. He was a classmate, although he graduated about two years ahead of me. Some of the other fellows who stayed here have gotten along very well too. I'll have to look around for a place to open a shop; it'll be somewhere in Berkeley. I'd like to go into physics, but it's too late to change now."