

Field Notes: Free Association  
Oct. 21, 1943  
Shibutani  
Document CH-107

Gilbert Kuramitsu  
4507 N. Clifton St.  
RAV 9791

"I've been in an uproar all week. I just found out that my family is coming here. My wife and two kids are coming out here on Saturday so I took a week off to look for a house. I have to look for a house now because I have to have one. I've been here all the time now and never thought of it until now. I called up the buy at the Ink Shop and told him that I would come to work after I found my place and wouldn't show up until then. All day Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday I looked for a place and I took a lot of insults too. First I tried the real estate companies. I called them up on the phone and they said they had places for 20 bucks and 30 bucks and told me to come. But when they saw me they told me that they had nothing for people of my ancestry. Finally after three days I got a dirty place out on the north side. I didn't want to take this because we were used to standards much better but since there was nothing else I decided that I may as well take this one. I haven't tried the southside because it's too far away from my work but I've gone all through the west and the north. Since there was no other place I moved in there last night.

"I'm going back to work at the Ink Company. It's called the Eagle Printing Ink Company and it's really a dirty job. I work all the time and haven't done anything but see one baseball game since coming here. I make at least \$54 a week, usually more. I put in a lot of over time. I get 80 cents an hour and overtime begins at 40 hours. Some guy told me when I was working there before that there was a better job at the Electric Corporation of America. The guy said they would pay 80 cents and since there was plenty of overtime I could make more money. But hell, I went on Monday and



we worked only 8½ hours. Tuesday and Wednesday was the same and on Friday we hardly did any work at all. All week we had only two hours overtime. Hell, a guy can't make enough money working like that. The first day I was there, I put up a pack in 8 minutes, but the other guys took it easy and took 25 minutes. I had to slow down because they didn't like it if I worked too hard. I don't want to work for a place like that because you get in a bad habit. You get lazy like the other guys. Christ, I could run a place like that and do more work with only four men.

"I thought of working at a co-op because I worked in the co-op at Gila. I was running the whole damn thing there! I went over to the Hyde Park and talked to a guy named Burke. This was about July and he told me that the reaction against the Japanese was too strong so he couldn't give me a job. He was nice about it and said that he would call me back. I waited for about 2 weeks but nothing happened so I figured it was no go. I went to a wholesale co-op too but didn't have any luck. Then I went over to the Ink Company and started working. I quit working at the electric company and this Monday I'm going back to the ink shop.

"The thing that bothered me is that I'm not sure of what I want. That's why I want to talk to a psychologist. That's what you call them, isn't it? I want to take one of those tests to tell me what I am best fitted for. I like to work as a buyer but there's not much future in it because Japanese probably won't run big places, and hakujin won't hire us. There's too much antagonism against us. I'm really not sure of what to do. Chicago is full of opportunities. That's the only reason why I stay here. I went to see a palmist and paid her \$3. She read my palm but didn't tell me anything. I went to the library and read all about them and about



astrology but it didn't make any sense. So now I want to see a psychologist.

"I'm not sure what I want to do. But I want to eventually start my own place. I want to have a house of my own and my kids can live. I want to get together enough capital and then just open a place to sell things to the Japanese here. All the nisei are now buying shoyu and rice from the Shina-jin. They have to because that's the only place where they could buy it. But that's not right. Each nationality should have its own stores. All the other people here have their own little towns. There's plenty of opportunities around here. Lots of people I know tell me to go ahead but right now I tell them I have no money and I have to save. When I get enough, maybe, me and three or four other fellows can go into together. All the other nationalities live together and have stores for their own people. I was thinking of starting, maybe a boarding house but I hear the WRA is against it.

"I don't like the kind of job where you just sit around all day. I like the kind of work where you're on the go all the time. I took bookkeeping once in a school in Hawaii but it was no good. Arithmetic was too hard for me. I guess I just am not suited for that kind of thing. Language and history were okay but not arithmetic.

"This WRA here is the shits. They wrote me saying that my wife and kids were coming and told me they wanted to ask my permission. I went to see them and told them I wasn't ready for them yet unless they found me a house. The guy I talked to told me to go ahead and send for them because he would find a house for me before they came. He said he would find a place and would call me on Friday. He didn't, so I called him up and he told me to talk to



a guy named Blake or something like that. Maybe it was Black. I didn't want to take any chances so I took a couple of hours from work and went to see him. This guy Blake gave me an address he clipped out of a newspaper. I went down there and found that it was wa a five-room unfurnished place that was too big and too expensive for me. The lady was kind of nasty anyway. I went back to the WRA and told them and this guy said that he was sorry but that was the best he could do. I told them that I couldn't see why they were sitting around in the office and doing nothing when there was so much they could do. I think they should go out to see. I took one hour off from work to go to the WRA and just wasted time. Those guys aren't doing anything. They're not getting any propaganda about the nisei getting out. Like I went over to the real estate agency and it was all discrimination but the WRA won't do anything. I asked a girl who worked there and she said the WRA won't do anything about discrimination or propaganda. Hell, anybody can read the newspaper. I can't understand why they get paid for sitting on their ass and doing nothing. If I ran the place, it would be different. I hear the Friends office is better. All you get at the WRA is the run around.

"I've been working for a long time, and I've done all kinds of things. They used to call me jack of all trades. The first job I had was working in a ~~sea~~ soda water bottling company. And I worked as a plumber and in a bakery. I ran the co-op at Gila and used to work hard all the time. I learned a lot in camp. Trucks used to come in from L.A. at night and nobody was around to unload them so I had to go out there to work. It was just hard physical labor for four or five hours. It was okay though. After I was in the center, I got to thinking that there ought to be some chances out here. There



are a lot of chances but I'm not sure what I want to do.

"Everything I worked for all my life was taken away at evacuation. I had a share in a produce market but you know how issei are. They're tight and stingy. After the war started, citizens had more to say so I demanded my share. But they just told me either to take what they wanted to give me or get out of this. They had to sell and I only got a small part of what was coming to me. It wasn't much and that's why I was flat broke when I came here. I had to work like hell, and now I have a little bit saved up but not enough yet. I lost everything in evacuation.

"Chicago is full of opportunities but people don't live here like human beings. They don't give a damn about anything. They ignore everybody, but just the same it's hard for a Japanese, especially when you go look for a job or a house. There's too much hostility here against us.

"Lots of times I wonder what's happening to the nisei. I see a lot of fellows around here at the hotel. They're making good money, more than they ever got before but they don't save nothing. I know what's the matter with them. I play the ponies too much. Guys making more money than me come ask me for money and I tell them I work for my money, why don't you? I've been called nasty names but I don't care. I'm not crazy like they are. Lot of these guys are good for nothing anyway and a lot of them, I think the center did something to them. In the center they got a room at 6 o'clock they go out to eat. So they get so they don't care about anything. I think it's just a few like that thought, because most nisei think about money and save.

"Buying in a produce market is okay. I used to buy for the Gila Co-op. You just sense what the people want and some people used



to say that I was crazy. But, everything turned out all right. I haven't had much experience though. But I think it's like the stock market, you just sense things. I used to play the stocks myself a little bit, you know.

"I have to see that guy over there because I was going to Florida for the winter to work in a hotel. I figured it would be kind of cold up here. But now that my family is here, I'll have to tell them that I'm going to stay.

"I don't know about working at the co-op because I don't know a thing about retail selling. I have wholesale experience only and don't know anything about decorating or anything like that. I can order a little bit but don't have too much experience. The co-op is okay but they don't pay very much and I want to save up to open my own place. I have a family to take care of and I have to think of the future."



(COPY)

CH-107

BEHRENDT-LEVY INSURANCE AGENCY

Insurance Agents and Brokers

September 13, 1943

Professor Lewis Wirth  
University of Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois

My dear Professor:

We have a good friend in common. In fact he is living at my house now, Dr. Leo C. Rosten, and it is at his suggesting that I am writing you.

I have an old acquaintance, a Japanese American, who has never been to Japan who is in trouble. I am enclosing a copy of a letter written to me by him, and knowing your reputation for the aid and comfort and counsel you have given to minority groups, would you be so kind as to counsel and perhaps help this man? I recommend him without hesitation. He is a tragic victim.

Dr. Roseten requests me to send his kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,

/s/ Genge Behrendt

GB:b  
encl.



Y M C A H O T E L  
826 South Wabash Ave.  
Chicago, Illinois

Sept. 9, 1943

Dear Mr. Behendt:-

Here I am in Chicago after going all the way to Cleveland and other cities. I stopped in Kansas City and Chicago enroute to Cleveland, my first destination. Upon arriving in Cleveland over a month ago, I was more than disappointed and decided to come to Chicago. The job I had promised me in Cleveland was just a ruse to get help as I told my employer the work was what I wanted but the salary wasn't what he promised. Here in Chicago, I walked and canvassed quite a number of places and finally got a job in a printing ink factory. It's not what I want, but since I had to eat I took the job. It's pretty dirty, compounding different color inks and mixing bases for the grinders. I get along at present but so far there's no response to all the advertisements I answered. Maybe it's because I wrote Japanese-American in all the replies. Some day I hope the right party will find me. I'm hoping for the best.

Alice is still in camp with the two children and I get so lonesome for the family, sometimes I wonder if it's worth trying to make a go of life. She must be so lonesome, cooped in camp for so long I feel guilty leaving her there. I came out on relocation ahead hoping to call her as soon as I got relocated. So far I have been a miserable failure and she must remain in camp till spring. It gets cold here so she decided not to come. Housing is very poor in Chicago and I'm afraid I won't do justice to the family on my present salary to support them.

Defense factories at present are not hiring Japanese and the man with skill can get a good paying job, but being in a produce market for so long, I find I am classified as a laborer, and I can't get in the wholesale market because Japs are taboo both in the market and in the union. So I'm starting life anew, wondering what I am best fitted for. My past experiences are nil and so I must labor till I find the right work which is business transaction.

Hope to hear from you and regards to the Mrs. Maybe time will heal all our heartaches.

Yours sincerely,

/s/ Gilbert M. Kuramitsu



Evacuation and Resettlement Study  
Chicago, Illinois  
Shibutani, 11/23/43

DOCUMENT CH-107

RANDOLPH ISHIMOTO

I. Introduction

Randolph Ishimoto, a 36-year old nisei from Hawaii, is primarily concerned with the selection of a vocation. He could see no future in the work that he was doing and desired vocational guidance. This document is based primarily upon the information gathered in two interviews--the first on November 9, and the second on November 13. Material from a free association interview of October 21 has not been used at all. Mrs. Ishimoto was interviewed on November 19.

Ishimoto first came to the attention of the Study when the following letter, written to a friend, was forwarded to Professor With at the University of Chicago:

Sept. 9, 1943

Dear Mr. Behendt:-

Here I am in Chicago after going all the way to Cleveland and other cities. I stopped in Kansas City and Chicago en route to Cleveland, my first destination. Upon arriving in Cleveland over a month ago, I was more than disappointed and decided to come to Chicago. The job I had promised me in Cleveland was just a ruse to get help as I told my employer the work was what I wanted but the salary wasn't what he promised. Here in Chicago, I walked and canvassed quite a number of places and finally got a job in a printing ink factory. It's not what I want, but since I had to eat I took the job. It's pretty dirty, compounding different color inks and mixing bases for the grinders. I



get along at present but so far there's no response to all the advertisements I answered. Maybe it's because I wrote Japanese-American in all the replies. Some day I hope the right party will find me. I'm hoping for the best.

Alice is still in camp with the two children and I get so lonesome for the family, sometimes I wonder if it's worth trying to make a go of life. She must be lonesome, cooped in camp for so long. I feel guilty leaving her there. I came out on relocation ahead hoping to call her as soon as I got relocated. So far I have been a miserable failure and she must remain in camp till spring. It gets cold here so she decided not to come. Housing is very poor in Chicago and I'm afraid I won't do justice to the family on my present salary to support them.

Defense factories at present are not hiring Japanese and the man with skill can get a good paying job, but being in a produce market for so long, I find I am classified as a laborer, and I can't get in the wholesale market because Japs are taboo both in the market and in the union. So I'm starting life anew, wondering what I am best fitted for. My past experiences are nil and so I must labor till I find the right work which is business transaction.

Hope to hear from you and regards to the Mrs. Maybe time will heal all our heartaches.

Yours sincerely,

/s/ Randolph Ishimoto

Professor Wirth wrote to Ishimoto offering his assistance, and received the following reply:

Oct. 5, 1943

Dear Mr. Wirth:

I am again bothering you and asking for assistance. Things aren't as I expected ~~them~~ to be and I'm wondering if it is possible for me to talk to you personally. Time and again, I am asking myself, just what is best fitted for me and I'm lost. Perhaps a good psychologist is the answer.

Could I call you at night? I am always working and we really don't know when our day's work is



done. Sometimes it's 5 o'clock and at other times 9 o'clock. Quitting time is so irregular, I'm afraid I'm never in before 9:30 p.m. On Sundays I'm free so I would appreciate very much to hear from you.

Thanking you for all the troubles I've caused, I am,

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Randolph Ishimoto



## II. Life of the Individual

I was born in 1907 on January 27 in Honolulu and left Hawaii in 1926. I was in Los Angeles to the time of evacuation.

The first job I ever had was in a soda plant as a help. I had to go to work because I had to help support my family. There were a lot of kids so I went to work in the plant of a friend. I was going to school too. I guess I was about 8 or 10 years old. I remember that I could barely lift the boxes up on to the trucks. I used to go to school in the morning from 9 to about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Then I went to Japanese school from 3 to 5 and worked from 5 to 8. I got about \$3.00 a week. It was general work and it wasn't so bad but I wanted to go out and play ball. That used to bother me quite a bit.

The next job I had was in a koji plant. We made miso and sake. I used to drive a truck for them. I was 12 then, but I told them I was 15. I was big so I got a license to drive the truck and used to deliver. I was still going to school and worked there only six months. It was just temporary help. I used to start work early in the morning delivering. After school I played a little-- not much because there was an 8 o'clock curfew for all kids in Honolulu.

About that time my folks went to Japan, and I went over to my uncle's place on the island of Hawaii. I went to school then because I was still pretty young. In 1922 I graduated from the boarding school where my uncle sent me. I finished the eighth grade. Then my uncle sent me to a sugar plantation. I was 16 then, and they put me to work full time. I had to work in the cane



fields for two months. I did irrigation work. God, I used to hate that. I wanted to go into a machine shop and I wanted most of all to be an engineer. But they told me I would have to go to school for that. After two months I ran away and came back to Honolulu. I was under contract and was supposed to pay room and board. But I paid nothing. I went to Honolulu and went back to the soda works. I didn't like that kind of work. I'm not suited to it. From the first day I got to the plantation, I planned to run away. I figured out how much it would cost in train and boat fares. I kept quiet and just figured it out for myself. I figured it would take two months to earn that much money, and then I beat it. I was forced to take the job. My uncle sent me to school, and he expected me to repay him. He didn't do anything when I ran away. I guess he was glad to get me off his hands. I had only two brothers in Hawaii. All the rest of the family went to Japan.

In the soda plant I stayed for another half year. I did the same kind of work, only it was full time. Then I quit and worked as a plumber's apprentice. They told me it would be better if I learned some kind of trade. They told me there was a future in plumbing, but I didn't care for it. After eight months I quit. I just didn't like it. It was too heavy.

Then I went to work in a machine shop in a cannery. I guess I was more a night boy. I used to sharpen knives for pineapple cutting. I guess I was there for a couple of years and worked off and on. In the summer I worked in the cannery full time, and in the winter I worked in the box factory. It was really just a three months' season, and the rest of the time I set up machinery or I worked in the box factory. I used to just stack the boxes. You



see, a long time ago, they used to put all the cans in boxes. It was all in the same company. There was no future in it, though, and I could see no chance to get into the machine shop.

I always wanted to fool around with a lathe. I used to see people work on them when I was a plumber. I thought that it must be a lot of fun. I always wanted to use one and even today I want to use one. But in all my life, I never got to use one.

Then I went to work in a bakery as delivery boy. I was 17 then. I worked full time, and I liked it a lot because I got to drive a truck. I stayed there for a year and then got laid off because they moved the plant.

Then I went to work as a brick layer's helper. I stayed there for three months but I couldn't stand the work because it was too heavy.

I went to work as a carpenter's help and I stayed there for one month. Then they told me, "It's no use, you'll never make a carpenter." I went back to the Koji factory for two months.

After I quit work as a carpenter, I got a letter from a friend of mine on the coast. He told me there were lots of chances to make money. I jumped at the opportunity and worked for two months in the Koji factory to save enough money to come out.

At that time I lived alone. It was near my cousin's place. I lived in a Nihonjin (Japanese) home and paid rent. I used to like to read a lot and spent my time either at the library or the YMCA. I liked songs and music. Music comes natural to me. I used to like to play the steel guitar, the violin, and the saxophone. I used to like to play basketball a lot, and I was the best swimmer at the "Y". I tried to specialize, like when I played basketball, I used



to read up all about it. I used to go fishing all the time too with my friends. They were all Nihonjin and I knew very few Hakujin (Caucasians). I used to read. You see, when I was fishing I used to read about fish. When I played baseball, I read about baseball. It was my childhood ambition never to play second fiddle. I always wanted to be at the top. When I was a kid, I was a gang leader. That was from the time I was 9 to the time I was about 12. Yah, I guess I used to be pretty tough. But I wasn't satisfied until I was the leader.

I used to get up and eat and then deliver the bakery goods. I was through about 7 or 8 at night and I stopped at the YMCA. I went to the gym and played basketball or swam. Sometimes I played pool. I did one of those three things. I was a pretty good pool player too. I worked all day Saturday and on Sundays I used to go fishing. I always went with the same friends. We all grew up together.

I missed family life quite a bit. I didn't write much to my folks. I never did write much to anybody. I graduated Japanese school with honors. In fact, I graduated from both schools in Hawaii and Honolulu with honors. I never even took an exam except for arithmetic. I tried awfully hard to master that, but I just couldn't. My teachers used to tell me that I was good in English. It ~~was~~ just came natural to me. But I was poor in arithmetic. I used to study extra in that and I tried like anything but I just couldn't catch on. English and geography and stuff like that was okay but I was always poor in mathematics. It's the same way even now. They told me that I would never be a machinist because it was all mathematics.



There were a lot of clubs I could have joined, but I had no time. There was one educational club at the YMCA. We used to get together and sing and listen to lectures. I never was an officer; I refused time and again because I had no time. I used to be a good boy, they say, except for being a gang leader. I was respected because I worked hard and used to study.

I never had much time for church. I worked all week and was raring to go out on Sundays. I was a Buddhist and that was the only church I went to until I joined the "Y". I took religion pretty seriously though. My friends were Methodist, but they didn't go to church very much.

Before I came over, I had a saxophone. I wanted to be a sax player, and I wanted to write stories. I wrote some stories and sent them to the Palmer Institute for Scenario Writing or something like that in Hollywood. I used to get rejections all the time. They told me I had imagination and was creative but had no background. They told me to read up on certain books, but I didn't even go to high school and it was kind of tough. My main what-you-call-it was to write stories and movies and things like that. I remember now, I wanted to be a writer.

On the boat I had a lot of trouble. Three of the boys had been over before and they got in trouble with the steward. We had a tough time. And I was seasick for three of the six days it took. I had a friend who said he'd meet me. He worked in a produce market and said he thought a job was open. I thought I could work there and write too. That was the general idea.

It struck me funny when I came to the coast. In Hawaii we used to work 10 hours a day. But this place, Jesus Christ! When I came



here, I came on Saturday and on Sunday night I went to work. I went to the place called Bay City Produce and we put in 13 to 15 hours every night. I made \$75 in two weeks and I thought it was pretty good because I used to make only \$18 a week. I didn't mind the hours, when I thought of how much I was being paid. I worked from May to September. We worked all night. I didn't do nothing else. I had no time. That's why I quit.

My friend was going to school then. He's a doctor now. I was staying with him and his family. I paid for my room and board. They treated me like one in the family, and I didn't mind. But pretty soon they moved to a farm and I had to leave, because I don't like it on the farm. I've stayed in a hotel ever since.

When I quit in September another house heard that this company was letting me go so they picked me up right away. I worked just as long as before. I had to change; they were going to lay me off anyway. You see, after summer, there's not much doing anyway in the wholesale market. I was doing everything, receiving, selling, loading, floor work and trucking. The new place was a wholesale and jobber. It was what they call a "second jobber". It's a firm with steady customers who don't want to get up early in the morning. They sold only good grade stuff and they repacked everything to check the grade. That was the Diamond Produce. I was there for two years. It was a lot of fun. I liked to work with a hustle. There was never a dull moment. Then the company moved. The market changed buildings around, and the fellow I worked for started a suit against the market. He kicked like hell but he lost out. So he sold the store and went back to Japan. When I was working there, a fellow at the H & F Produce found out about me and so I went to work



for him.

About 1929, I went to work for H & F Produce and I stayed there until evacuation. It was always market work. That was just before the stock market crash. I saved up a lot of money to go to Hawaii. I guess I had about \$3500. The fellow I worked for told me to invest it so I started playing with stocks. In the '29 crash, I lost everything. They lost too, but they borrowed from the bank and kept going. That changed everything. But I think they made more money in the depression than they did before.

I often wonder what I would have done with that money if I didn't lose it. At that time I wanted to go home and show off to my friends all the money I had. Yah I often wonder what I would have done with that money.

I used to work 12 hours a day and I didn't have much time for anything else. Then, the unions came in about '35. It was the AF of L. After that, we had lots of time. I was one of the members of the arbitration board. I was in favor of the union because the hours were too long. After the unions came in we worked only six hours. Times changed overnight. We had better trucks and facilities and everything was better.

I played golf and went to shows but spent most of my time watching baseball games. I bought a box out there and went every day. I used to watch basketball and football games too. I used to go alone. There was another fellow who worked with me who used to go along sometimes. After the stock crash, I gambled a little. I tried to recover what I had lost. I went to the Tokyo Club to try to get my money back. I was always in the hole. I played "21, Black Jack, and got into a crap game now and then and I played the



horses a little bit too. I used to go every day to the track. I went, not for the sport, but it was a money making proposition for me. I came out ahead in racing but behind in everything else. I never made a third pass in a crap game.

There was only one man that I trusted. The other guys are all right when I got money, but not otherwise. They're not real friends. There was one man about my age and we went out together quite a bit.

I was satisfied with my work. I noticed in L.A. that a lot of guys who graduated from universities all came to work in the market when they got out. When I saw that, I figured that there was a good future in it, so I stuck-around. That was in the '30's.

Then I met my wife. I knew her brother a long time and I met her one night in L.A. That was in 1938. We went around together for three years. She heard I was rambo so she kept my money for me. My wife's different. She wants to play poker for one-tenth of a cent chips, but I don't like it that way. I want to either make or break. I want to do things on a big scale. I guess the market got me. When you're in the wholesale line, you don't like these small time guys who buy only a few things.

I was in the market for 15 years. My routine varied from time to time. But I used to get up at 9 at night and work all night to about 10 in the morning. Then I used to stick around the pool hall and play. We used to play pay ball. I used to be a good player and sometimes we played all day. That's just about all I did sometimes. Then I go to sleep. I lived in a hotel then. I read a lot too. I like detective stories quite a bit because I liked to solve the mystery. After I met my wife I had to cut out the good times,



and started planning for the future. There is no more pool hall for me, and less bowling. We had more and more time to ourselves as work went on, especially after the unions came in. We had more time to play. I guess meeting my wife changed my outlook toward life. It changed everything. I felt at the time that the produce business was something to set my goals to so instead of playing pool I started taking up golf. The work was the same. There was so much to be done, and that didn't change. Most people have a hobby to keep them busy. But I never had one. I had a very important position, I was tops in my market. I was floor manager. Yep, I guess meeting my wife made things different.

I've never met Louise Suski but she used to call me up on the telephone for golf schedules and results. I was secretary of the market golf club. It was an organization of both issel and nisei. All of us worked at the produce market and had our own club. After I decided to settle down, I decided to play golf because that wasn't as wild as some of the other things I used to do.

December 7th was kind of funny. We went fishing the night before. The family used to go every Saturday afternoon. That time a friend of ours, a widow, went along. We used to bring a tent but that time it was cold so we slept in the car. We had a little gasoline stove and we fished all night. We got more fish than we ever got before and we couldn't believe it. We thought there was something wrong because we caught enough for a week. About 2:30 or 3 in the afternoon we started for home. We turned on the radio in the car and got the flash that Pearl Harbor was attacked. I thought it was just propaganda or some kind of a play. I couldn't believe there was a war. When I got home there were some telephone calls,



and then I was convinced that it was true. When we first heard it in the car, the others said that it was too bad. My wife thought of her folks the first thing because they were in Hawaii. I didn't go to sleep that night. I couldn't get over the fact of the attack until two days later.

That night I went to work and the market was closed. The FBI already picked up some Japanese nationals, and we didn't know until the next morning when we were going to work. We didn't do a thing. Everybody was out of work. We all stuck around and had a meeting. The Junior Produce Club got together and decided at the meeting that the president of the club should have a conference with the JACL officers. Things moved kind of fast and I don't remember very much of what people said. We were interested in getting the place open. Everybody was talking about war. The nisei had the controlling share; the old men used to use their sons' names. Three days later the place opened again. It ran as usual. We had the same customers, both hakujin and nihonjin. I asked the old man if I could quit to go and run my own business. So many places closed down that it was a good chance for a nisei. When I said that, he started talking about a bonus. We made quite a bit ~~that~~ that year and we had been talking about a bonus for a long time. After that, everything was quiet and normal again. On Christmas, we bought presents for our friends and on New Year's Day we visited our friends as we always did. We talked about the war, no matter where we went. I never thought of what would happen to the Japanese in this country because my only thought was of starting my own business. The issei were out and it was a good chance. I wanted to go ahead but I didn't have enough capital. I figured on hauling from the farmers



to the market and reselling. Hauling offered the best possibilities. The overhead was low. We had long hours but the license was cheap and there was no commission broker to pay.

The February 15 move didn't affect us at all. All I remember was that every morning I talked to the people who were hauling. They were saying that they couldn't do business. The stores were closing and the issei were in jail. That's all I thought about. I thought of borrowing some money from people in Hawaii, but my wife was against that. She didn't want to borrow money and told me to wait. I needed at least \$3000. I had just a little bit to go, but my wife was against borrowing it.

I first heard of evacuation when Mike Masaoka came to L.A. and addressed the crowd. The Junior Produce Club was against evacuation. We were against everything that Mike said. I figured he had nothing to lose but we had everything to lose. He told us to be patriotic and all that and said that evacuation was the only answer. I didn't like that fellow anyway. He didn't have a business of his own and he didn't know what it meant to lose what it took years to build up.

I think the JACL had a good and bad side. I was a member ever since it started, way back when Mas Igasaki started it. I guess nisei will always be that way. They always talk about the bad side but I think those fellows worked awfully hard. I think they made a mistake on evacuation. They should have fought that. But you can't tell though. Fred Tayama told me that the JACL would have fought only there were no people to back them up.

I used to be House Representative in the Junior Produce Club. It wasn't a club to make money. There were many who never paid



attention to the club until the war broke out. People don't think in ordinary times but when they need help they expect you to help them all at once. That's the way most nisei are.

The market had a lot of nisei working together. We sponsored a radio broadcast with a fellow named Knox Roth of the ACLU. He worked hard on the evacuation and he tried to bring out all the good points. We felt it coming though. Even today I have a conviction that it wasn't voluntary. It was forced. We were saying, let the jeeps come and pick us up. I read in the newspapers about the FBI raid but I never believed the newspapers anyway. We were in touch with the FBI and knew those reports were not true. Roth, he used to come down for a get-together every morning, and we used to sit around and bring out some of the good points.

I can't understand why evacuation was necessary. The way I figure, there was some dirty politics mixed up in it. I think DeWitt was responsible. He didn't know what he was doing. I think he is incompetent. I think those big Jews who controlled the market and the big business men were behind the evacuation. A Jew syndicate took over the market after we left. I don't know about the price they paid, but I hear it wasn't very much.

About 15 of the boys were with me on the evacuation. I told them to stick it out even if we have to go to jail. I told them they couldn't turn us out because we were loyal citizens and they taxed us. We committed no crime to go to jail for. What we think was right. Most of them said that they would stick until the time of evacuation came and then they all left. I was the last one to go and I thought it was hopeless. I used to go to the restricted areas all the time. Nobody stopped me or anything.



I gave up the idea of having my own business when they started pulling in the Japanese farmers. I didn't know what the future was like and I didn't know what a camp looked like. I heard from the boys who left for Santa Anita and Manzanar. They said to bring a lot of clothing and bring everything in portable form. We sold our sewing machine and bought a portable one. We sold our stove and bought a hot plate. We bought a lot of warm clothing and food. We had about a hundred dollars worth of canned food. We sold everything else, our car and everything except what we took.

About three weeks before evacuation we moved in with a friend of mine at 1935 Eagle Street in L. . . We had to move over there because we sold everything and didn't have no place to stay. There was another family there too, a fellow named Onishi and his wife and two kids. We stayed there until the day we evacuated--that was May 17.

We were sent to Turlock Assembly Center. I heard a lot of stories about how dusty the centers were. I never thought about it though. I figured on going to the camp and resting up. There was one thing I figured, and that was one reason why I sold everything. I figured the war would last a long time, at least five years, and I had no plans of going back to California. I felt that the people of California were responsible for the evacuation.

We got there late at night. I blamed the government quite a bit. I was pretty bitter. It was hot during the day and cold at night. We wore coats and sweaters on Fourth of July night. I didn't go to work until a couple of weeks later. They needed a manager for the canteen so I applied. There were 50 of us trying, and I was selected, I guess, because of my qualifications. The only



trouble we had was that people didn't want to work. We had lots of labor trouble, and it was a tough job. I had to study each individual. The administration was okay. The government set the policy, and there was nothing we could do about it. It was okay with me. My wife didn't mind the camp either.

I guess the Turlock center was okay. The administration was all right. The way I look at it, it was pretty good when they let us play ball and see shows. They tried to make everything as comfortable as possible. It's hard to say anything about the evacuees. Some were bitter but the smart ones were all right. I figured this way: even if they killed us, we couldn't do anything about it anyway. Just like if they killed Americans in Japan, we wouldn't know anything about it. I don't think that I felt badly about the hakujin. In a way, we can't blame them for doing what they did. I used to get nice letters from them, and I had a Chinese friend who used to send me anything that I wanted.

One thing that got me was the lavatory. It was dirty and it stunk. We just had out-houses. We never had no showers because there was no hot water. We just can't get it because so many people used it. Most people used to take their shower in the daytime.

Three months later I pulled out for Gila. That was on July 19. I went with the volunteer group. I didn't want to volunteer but the supervisor said for me to go. He said this camp was closing up and that I was a good man so I should go ahead, and set up another canteen. At the time I left I thought it would be another government canteen, but when I got there I found out different. It was run by the individuals. I thought it was a good opportunity for me. I did all the buying. I hired the help and set up the policies. I



was general manager. I don't know how I ever did it. I expected to find the same thing only a little bigger.

When I first got there I got sick. The place wasn't ready. There was no water, no lights, no gas. We had to sleep in half-finished houses and they had to bring water in a truck. We couldn't put on the lights even if we had some because it would bring all the bugs in the house. Most of the houses were ready but there were no pipes. There were ditches all over the place, and they were working like hell to finish up. We just ate sandwiches for two weeks. There was no gas so we couldn't cook, and we couldn't wash our plates because there was no water. We had some trouble right from the beginning. They were going to pay \$12, \$16 and \$19 wages, and the third day the mess hall went on a strike. It was hot as hell, 110 to 120 degrees every day. The mess hall boys said that they wanted \$16 or \$19, and so they raised the wages to 16 bucks. The heat really got me. I was busy working and my mind was occupied. We didn't worry too much about food because we brought along quite a bit.

We had community enterprises until March. The main trouble was that we couldn't supply the demand. The principle was the same as in the market. You know, the supply and demand stuff. We had a lot of complaints. Most people said our prices were too high. Some people said we didn't have enough candy. We tried to educate the public through the papers. There was one bad thing about Gila that made it tough for us. It was in a state that was anti-Nihonjin. I had to buy supplies from New York or California or somewhere out of state, because the Arizona guys wouldn't sell to us.

My days varied. But I was always the first one to work. I had



all the keys and I had to open up the office and the three warehouses before 8 o'clock. I checked the warehouses every morning. That was the routine. Around 10 I used to get all the mail, and I checked the invoices and letters and distributed the invoices to the different departments. Then I gave the answers to letters to the different stenos. I used to write a sketch of the answers myself and let the stenos fill it in. Sometimes salesmen used to come in and I did some buying. At 12 I went to lunch, and then after that I took care of salesmen or made the rounds of the canteens. I just looked around to see if everything was okay. I knocked off about 4:30 and played ball to 5. We usually had a softball or a hardball game going.

I couldn't live a happy life, though, because my time wasn't my own. The trucks used to come in any time. They came a long distance, a lot of times from L.A. We had to unpack them right away or else we would have no merchandise. I liked it though. I think the experience was good for me. We did a \$100,000 a month business and I was the boss. The people in the barber shop, radio shop and everyone had to get my okay. People appreciated my work quite a bit.

At night we used to get together and talk. I liked to read the comics, but I didn't get much time for anything else. On Sundays I played ball. Sometimes we had to unload, and they used to wait for me to finish the game and started unloading.

They beat up a fellow in Gila, but other than that we didn't have much trouble. We didn't get any clothing allowance in Gila, and this fellow Tada promised to get it. He didn't, and so they beat him up. I don't think they were justified in doing it, but you know how it is; people hear of things, and then they get mad.



I saw myself, kids who had no clothes. It was pitiful. Tada tried to help but they beat him up. He used to be with the L.A. Chamber of Commerce, and I hear he's teaching now at Camp Savage. He liked to be in the public all the time. Those guys take a lot of what-you-call-it. They take the good and bad. I don't think there's much appreciation for their work. That's the way with all the people in the public. There's no appreciation for their work. People used to say I made lots of money out of the Co-op, but I never touched the cash. I always told them to look at the financial report. All checks were counter-signed by the supervisor and he was pretty strict. He wouldn't sign one check ahead.

I got along pretty good with my workers. The only thing was that I was strict on the hours. They didn't mind though. They knew how I wanted things run. There was some resentment at first, but I wanted them to put in their required hours. People thought I was a good manager, though. But they think I was too strict. But I figure this way; if the head is no good the whole outfit is no good. You know, if the head shikkari shitenakattara, the whole gang is no good.

I left Gila on July 19, exactly one year after I went in. I had all kinds of ideas. My buyer who went out, came back from Chicago, St. Louis, Salt Lake and Denver, and when he came I asked him how it was on the outside. After I talked to him for a while, I decided to come out alone to see what was going on.

When the Co-op came in, there was a lot of conflict with me. Most of the board members were business men and they were old-fashioned. Conditions have changed since the war started, and there were only two men who knew what was going on, and they backed me up.



But when the board voted, we were always outnumbered. I told the board at their meeting one day that all the work that I did up to that day and all the actual training that I had just didn't count with them. The big beef came with the idea of setting up a bakery. I was against it. I wanted a bakery, but we couldn't get any sugar. I went over to the regional OPA to beg for sugar but they said no. I fought them but it was no use. Then I went to the board members and told them it was impossible but they said that some issei had a place in L.A., and he would have his machinery brought out. It was that and a beef about a dry cleaning shop that got me into trouble. I told them it was impossible. I don't think they got it in yet. I guess they know now what I meant. I resigned in May but they didn't accept it so I stuck around for a while. I sent in another resignation and gave my reason as relocation. When I quit, five others quit, and they were all the key men in the outfit--the cashier, the assistant cashier, the bookkeeper and the head stenos. They all quit. I had a fellow in charge of sporting goods and publicity. He quit too. He was my pet. I kind of felt sorry for him. He had a lot of artistic ability. He could draw and write. When he came out, he told me one thing, "You're free." I talked it over with my wife and we decided that I would go out first. I was prepared to do anything. I can do practically anything.

I used to look at all the papers from Chicago and I figured from them that there was so much work available that there would be no trouble in getting a job. It never occurred to me about the wages. I picked Chicago because a fellow said to me that Chicago could accommodate 3000 or 4000 more Nihonjin. I figured in a big city there was never a worry about jobs. He said housing was tough,



but I lived in hotels before so I figured no matter how tough it was, a single man can always find a room.

At first I was going to Cleveland, but I stopped here for one day because my friends were here. All the boys I came with stopped here, and they went to a hostel. I went to the ball game and saw the Cubs play. That night I left for Cleveland. I went there for a Co-op job. It wasn't really the job, but since I didn't have the Eastern Defense Command clearance, Cleveland was as far as I could go. I was trying to go to New York, but when I went to Cleveland I changed my mind. I stayed there for three days and went to the WRA office. I talked to Fistere there, and they offered me a job in the machine shop. At that time it didn't occur to me that maybe I might like the job. I talked to a couple ~~boy~~ of boys working there and they said they were having trouble ~~with~~ the other help. Right there and then I made up my mind to work in a small place. The reception in Cleveland was terrible. It made me sick. The WRA was pretty bad. I guess I must have been homesick. Fistere said to me, "You mean to say that you came all the way out here and don't want the work?" But it wasn't the kind of work that I wanted. He told me that it was up to me so I told him that I wanted to go back to camp. He said, "No, you can't do that." I told him I paid my own way and I could do what I want, but he said that I had to get an O.K. from both the project director and him. He said to me, "You're just homesick." I guess I was. But the reception they gave me was terrible. Now that I think of it, I guess it was partly my own fault. Fistere was sick that day when I went in. Everybody was so cold. There wasn't even a hello or anything. I went to inquire about a hotel, and they didn't even care to talk to me. So I came



back to Chicago on a bus. I could see a lot of possibilities here for any man. I don't care what kind of line or what kind of work you do. There is so much at present.

I came into Chicago on the bus. The station was right near the "Y" Hotel so I dropped in and just stayed there until October. I didn't go to work for two weeks. I inquired around and was pretty disgusted. Some of my friends were making 60 to 65 bucks a week, but I couldn't do so well. I got hold of a telephone directory and looked in the classified ads. I went through all the companies and I made my plan out. I made a list of all the places I was going to go to ask about a job. It took me two days to make the list. I guess I wanted to drop in and talk to them. In the meantime I saw Burke of the Hyde Park Co-op and I also saw this fellow Franklin Morgan who has a big wholesale grocery store. He told me he'd let me know but that was the end. So you know, I started out on Friday morning and I saw an Ad in the paper about an ink factory who wanted help. I phoned them up and they told me to come over. I went over and saw the boss. And the first question he asked me was, "Do you drink?" I said no. Then he asked me, "Do you smoke?" And I said yes. Then he told me that the work was dirty but that there was plenty of over time so I told him that I'd take the job. I asked him, "Do you mind having a Japanese around?" He said that he didn't give a damn and he didn't think that the fellow employees would mind either. So I started working. That was in August, some time. I guess it was about the middle of August.

The first day, God, I never thought I'd work again. All my hands were swollen all over. My back ached and I couldn't even grab a toothbrush the next morning. I didn't quit though, but I sure



like it. Then the old Yamato Damashi came in and I knew that I couldn't give up. I said to myself, I can't give up, I can't let a job beat me. So I stuck it out. They told me my hands were no good for this kind of work because my bones were too small. I had a tough time. I don't mind it so much now, but I really feel it though. It's really hard work. A man can't even smoke. You have to hide from the foreman to take a puff from a cigarette. It makes me feel bad when I see the other men looking around the corners just to run outside and take a couple of puffs and then come in again. I don't like to do things on the sly, so I walk in front of the guy and tell him I'm going to take a smoke. I get along okay with my fellow workers. They invite me to go fishing and bowling with them, but I don't have any time. The other fellow I'm working with feels just like I do and he is going to quit too.

I quit once in October when they didn't have much over time. Hell, it's no use working in a place like that if you can't make no money. I went to work as a shipping clerk but it was just as bad. I had a friend who was working there and he told them I was a Hawaiian. All the other fellows I worked with thought I was Hawaiian and they talked bad about the Japs right in front of me. That got me sore. And once I almost took a poke at a fellow, and then I figured it was no use working in a place where I have to lie. I stayed there two weeks and then I quit.

I didn't get my paycheck from the ink factory so I went over there after it. The fellow told me I'd better come back because there was lots of over time again. I remember the day that I quit my second job. It was a Jewish holiday. After that I went right to work in the ink factory again.



I didn't have much spare time while working here in Chicago. On Saturdays I shopped for the family and sent stuff back to Gila that they couldn't get there. Then I either take in a show or go to a ball game. Sundays I just visited friends and wrote letters to friends in camp. I wrote to my wife about twice a week. I tell my friends in camp that if they have a large family they better stay there. Married couples and single men, I tell them to come out if they are not afraid of hard work. If they're family men, I tell them never to come out because the wages are not enough.

The WRA gave me the run around here. They got a teletype saying my wife was coming. Then I got a telegram from my wife on Oct. 13. I wired right back and told her to come on the 20th because I had to have some time to get a house. I went to see this fellow Olson at the WRA who was supposed to be in charge of housing. I brought a friend with me to verify what I had to say. And Olson said to me, "Our responsibility is to see that all families are housed." That was on Saturday. He told me to call up Wednesday so I called him up to see if everything was ready. When I called up Olson, he says for me to talk to Mr. Brenten because Mr. Brenten has charge of all housing now. I asked him, "Didn't you do anything about mine?" He just told me to speak to Brenten because Brenten know everything. So I took time off from work to go see this fellow Brenten, and he said he didn't have no idea about me except a little card that Olson left for him. He said that he'll try to help me. But the only way he had to find a place was to look in the classified ads in the newspaper. I asked him if he ever canvassed the territory where he was trying to find housing but he told me he had no time. Then he gave me one address and he called up the landlady.



I went out there but it was not the kind of place I wanted. It was unfurnished and it cost \$35. I told him I can't stay there because I only had a small family and the place was too big. He told me he'd try everything he could, but I didn't bother him any more. All he did was look in the classified ads and I could do that myself. I found the place for myself. After I'd looked around a little, I figured that if I was in Brenten's shoes, I could find hundreds of places with the WRA backing me up. If you have a government agency behind you, you can get a lot of places. But he sits in his office and telephones. How can he find anything? I asked him if he checked up with the real estate companies, but he said he didn't know anything about them. I don't see how they pay a man like that. I don't see how they can keep a good-for-nothing like him in the office and pay wages like they do.

I met my wife at the depot. She had another woman with her who came from camp to look after the kids. This girl looked after the kids on the train. When they got here, we took a cab and dropped her off at around 2000 Kenmore or something like that where she had a job. When we got to our apartment, my wife was really surprised. She had to go up three flights of stairs. She said it was all right and that it was better than camp. She wasn't pleased but she didn't show it to me.

You can talk to my wife if you want to. She'll probably tell you I'm the never-stay-home type. She's looking for a flat whenever she has time off.

I think the future of the nisei depends on the individual. For myself, I think I fit in pretty good. Some boys don't care. They think they are going back to California but that's out of the



question. I don't think the nisei will end up like the Negroes though, because I think they'll get wise to themselves pretty soon. The nisei have what it takes if they only knew what they were doing.

I think this is a good experience for most people if they don't forget what they went through. I think the majority of the nisei will forget. They're making good money here, and now they don't care anymore about anything else.

A lot of nisei around here are money crazy. All they do is work like hell to buy expensive clothes. A lot of them never had clothes before. But they work long hours and they make all the money they can. Most of them are worried about the post-war. I guess a lot of them are figuring on all the nisei getting canned after the war. The future is uncertain, but I don't think the nisei will be canned. They are proving themselves capable. In a lot of places they have a tough time at first but they make good. Like the whole-sale place where I applied, the other day I got a call to go to work. At first they were skeptical but now they want all the nisei possible. National Tea is that way too. There's a difference between the nisei and hakujin when they work. The nisei are more industrious. I guess because they were brought up in American schools and are Americanized more than most of these foreigners around here.

The nisei are money crazy. They got jobs that pay a lot but I wonder about their future. I think they'll be able to hold their jobs after the war but they won't get anywhere working in the kind of jobs they got.

One thing I don't like is these damn unions. At the place where I work, they asked me if I wanted to be an elevator boy. I



asked him, "Do I have to join the union?" And they told me I did. They said I have to pay an initiation fee of \$50 and then \$10 every three months. They said that was for all the benefits I get for the union protecting my job. But I figured that there's a lot of dirty politics in there so I didn't take the job. I'm all for unions but some of them are crooked.

I think the drafting of nisei will be a wonderful thing. I don't mind going. If I have to go, I'll go. I never even thought of ~~defense work~~ defense work. That was the first thing they told me when I came here. But you have to have clearance and I don't care to work with hundreds of other people anyway. You can't get nowhere. You can't get up because you always stay where you are and only the best in hundreds can be foremen. I guess a lot of nisei are worried about the draft. They don't want to go, and I think they're being selfish.

That Tule Lake riot was too bad, but I don't blame the people. You have to look at things like this both ways. They're prisoners of war and they have a right to ask for their rights. I don't think that it will hurt the rest of us at all. It has no bearing to the resettlers. I think that they ought to raise a big rumpus because then, the hakujin will think that all the bad ones are in one camp. If there is no trouble they will think that we're all bad. When we were in camp, there was no trouble. Now that they are all in one place, if they make plenty of trouble they will boost us up.

I think different from most people about this. I figure the Dies Committee did more to help relocation than we realize. Without that publicity nobody knows about us. After they came out, all the more people sympathized with us; and if they did more, it would have



been easier for us.

I don't know about the zoot suit boys. I've never seen one, but I hear there are plenty of them around. They're all young though. I guess you can't blame them. It makes it tough on the other nisei. But I figure this way: out of all bad there always comes a good, and I figure no matter how gloomy it looks now it will end up okay.

My father always told me two things, and I have always remembered them. He said, "Always remember you're a Japanese. You have yellow skin and you will always be Japanese." I've never forgotten that. Another thing he told me was, "Never work for money. Let money work for you." He told me to enjoy life when you have money. It's no use just slaving all the time.

I figure this way, about life. It's like gambling of a Chinaman. I used to go to the boats and watch them play. They never sit around and play all day. If they feel lucky, they go and play a few rounds and when they win a little bit, they go home. The Chinaman will go in with a thousand dollars, and he'll put \$500 of it away. Then he'll play \$100, and if he loses he'll put up another hundred. But when he loses five hundred, he goes home. The nisei guys start playing small, and when they lose it they try to win it back and play big, and they lose everything. When I go to a club, I wait around and watch to see how things are going. Then I play a few times and if I win, I leave. By a law of averages, a man is bound to have a lucky streak sometimes and he's got to cash in on it when it comes. Once in a lifetime comes a time when things go your way, and if you don't cash in and miss your chance, it may never happen again.



There are a lot of good opportunities for starting business here. I hear this is a graft town and you can get away with murder. That means business ought to be pretty good.

I intend to stay here as long as I can. I want a house here and I wouldn't want to go back to California for anything. People say they want to go back to California but that's because they're new here. They're not used to it. I want a job that will last. At my age and with my experience, I can't stay at the bottom. Even at the ink factory, I started out with a scaling job. But, they changed me after one week. They told me I was too valuable. One day I told the foreman that usually after two months I get a raise. He told me, "You get 80 cents and you stay at 80 cents." I figured it's no good because you get better and better in your work but your pay stays the same. I don't like work like that. It's too heavy and they don't give enough pay. The hakujin people know they can get a anywhere so they just quit. But we can't do that. We nisei have to build up a reputation first. I don't like the place and I'm going to quit pretty soon. Usually a man should be able to decide what kind of work he wants to do. I was in the market so long that I never thought of it.

If I had enough money and could do anything in the world I wanted, I'd want to live the life of Reilly. I like to get up in the morning and play golf and then go fishing and maybe in the evening see a boxing or wrestling match. Then I'd call it a day. That's the way I want to live.

Right now I want to know what I'm fitted for. That's the only thing I'm worrying about. I always think about it. Once I get the hang of it in any line, I hate to play second fiddle. I want to be



up there. When I don't know anything, I'm curious and I ask and ask until I get a sane answer. I always used to hound the people I work with until I find out what the work is all about.

What got me to thinking about this ink factory job was: my wife says to me, "You slave and slave and what will you be in six months from now?" I'll still be in the ink shop. She wants me to learn, but I don't know what I should learn.

The place I'm working now is no good. Generally, when I get a job, I usually read up on it and get ahead. But that place is nothing you can do to get ahead.

The foreman is a slave driver. I don't know how long I'm going to keep working here. I've seen men like that before. They're tough but they are good inside. But this guy is just a dirty bastard. He don't have no heart.

I told the guy where I work that I am going to quit. There are only two of us there and the guy wants me to run three machines at once. I'm not a slave and I can do only so much. So yesterday I told the old boy that I was through.

My wife says for me to go to school and learn something. I thought I'd take up some mechanical work. Auto mechanics or something like that. If I can work in a place where I can learn something, I'm willing to work 12 to 14 hours for four bits an hour. I get good pay now, but all the money I'm earning now won't do any good because 10 years from now I'll be doing the same goddam thing I'm doing now. If I can get into a place where I can learn, I can work twice as long and learn in half the time. I figure this winter will be pretty cold and we'll be cooped in anyway. I could quit work and go to some day school for maybe a month. After New



Year's I could go to work and start at 60 cents an hour. My wife says it's okay as long as we can get by. I could try for a while and can tell whether I'm fitted for that kind of work or not.

There is one thing I know I can't do. Farming is no good for me. Because for some reason, I just can't stand chickens, cats and dogs. I can't handle them, that's all. I just can't touch them. I can't grab them or come near to them. I guess I'm afraid. Maybe it's because I have artistic hands. I'm good at using my hand. People say I have the movable type of hands. I noticed when I was working in the Co-op at Gila that I wanted to keep moving all the time. I don't like jobs where you just sit all day. I never did have a sit down job except at the Co-op.

For work I'd like to have my own business. In any line, I don't care. I think there's a big future in construction work. That's big work. I wrote my brother in camp to polish up on his carpentry. He could make a dollar and a half an hour any time because he has his own tools. I'm funny. When I work, I like to stick and I hate to quit. Most guys look up to me. All of them who work with me and the people in the camp came to me for advice. I figure I'm giving out more than I am looking out after myself.

This damn job I got now, is no good. The foreman is a helluva guy and sometimes I don't get to eat lunch until 7:30. I remember once a Jew told me at the market to be nice to a customer until you sell the merchandise and then tell him to go to hell. That's why I worked hard to build up my reputation and then I quit. But they begged me to come back. I'm tired of that work, though. I knew buys like that before. The guys there yell like hell but inside they're kokoro ga yasashii. They're like a barking dog. They say



one minute, "No use killing yourself," and the next minute they say, "Get to work." We're not supposed to take him seriously but this foreman is different and I figure there's no use slaving away.

I always wanted to have my own business. I guess I just wanted to be my own boss. I'm taking these jobs now just to save up my money so I can get started. I want to learn now even if I have to work at low wages and then when I get good enough I can start my own place.

I really should know what line of work I want to go into now, but I'm not sure. I talked to a friend of mine who studied astrology quite a bit and he told me that no matter what I did, if I was born on a certain day, I would get ahead. I don't know anything about it and he wouldn't tell me how I was going to come out. I know I've been figuring that if I need money badly enough I could start playing the horses again. I always win on horses because I'm not dumb. I go out to the track, look over the horses, look over the record and find out who's riding it and I only place a bet on the races I'm pretty sure of. Some dumb guys get on every race. When I bet, I bet on them to show. I'm satisfied with 10 or 15 bucks profit but some guys want to clean up a thousand bucks, that's why they go broke. I don't lose on the ponies, but my wife won't let me. She said she don't want me to.

My wife wants to go to Milwaukee. She doesn't like it here. But I tell her she'll get used to it. The transportation is not so good in Milwaukee. You can get used to Chicago. You can go fishing or bowling but you just have to find out about it, that's all.



III. Mrs. Ishimoto's Story

We're pretty well settled here in Chicago now, and although I am not satisfied, I feel that this is as well as can be expected. Our baggage has not arrived yet, but, when it does, I want to sell a lot of things because I don't want them around when we move. It's too much trouble.

I have no reason for doubting anything that Randolph said. He is a good family man. He came out primarily to earn money, but I don't think that is enough. I wish that he could learn a trade. I want him to learn but he doesn't know what he wants to do. I don't know what he's fitted for either. He like things in which he can move around all the time. He can think and move around very fast.

We haven't thought about this for a long time because he was very happy in the produce business. Now that's all over, I'd like to see him in some kind of trade. I thought of refrigeration and air conditioning. I don't know of any other nisei in it and I think there is a future in that field. I want to make sure and I don't care what he decides to do just so long as he has some training. He's pretty good at math. I don't see why he told you that he wasn't. I don't see why mathematics should stand in the way in selecting a field.

He used to gamble a lot, but he hasn't done that at all since we got married. He's a good husband and he doesn't spend his money. When we got married, I told him that he had had his chance to have his fun and that he should settle down. Ever since that time, he gives me his pay check as soon as he gets it. I know where every penny goes in this family. I knew he gambled a lot and I took a



chance that he would change. That was a big chance and I won. You see, Randolph doesn't like to do things in a small way. He wants to take one big chance and either make the grade or go broke and start all over again. I'm that way too. That's why I married him.

There are all sorts of things I would like to see for our family but I'm being very practical and not expecting all of them to come true. I want to bring up my children in an American neighborhood. That's why I want to work in a family as a domestic. If I work as a domestic, we can save money for the future. Another thing is that I can be with my children all the time. I want to see them grow; I want to see their interests grow. I want to send them to college and I want to be able to advise them what they are fitted for by knowing what kind of children I have. I want to send them to college because neither of us had a chance to go. We need capital for that and I'm willing to work in a family until we save up enough to start our own business. If Randolph learns a trade, it will be easier for me, because then I could spend more time raising my children. I don't care what line of business we go into, but we'd like to have our own. And that's what we're saving for.

I don't ~~care~~-I think I'd care to stay here in Chicago. Eventually I would like to go back to Hawaii to retire. I guess I'd like to bring up my children in the country. It's cheaper there. If I don't work in the country, I'll have to take another job and won't be able to be with the children. It's just that you have to have money and since I have to keep house anyway I feel that I may as well do a little extra as a domestic. Others do it and we can too.



Randolph hasn't quit yet. He's still working with the ink factory. I wish that I could get the names of all the defense work schools in Chicago so that he could apply. The future is so uncertain, that I really don't have any definite plans. If he gets drafted, I'm going to Honolulu with my children. If he can get into some kind of work here, I suppose I'll stay. He was saying that he wanted to be a mechanic, but I don't want him to work in a garage. I would rather have him work on airplanes or something like that. I'm always afraid that he will not like a job like that because he gets upset too easily. He is 'gatcha gatcha'. One thing about him is that he likes competition. He likes to beat his opponent. I think that is because the market is in his blood.

Yes, we want to save for a future business of our own, to have our home so that we can retire when we are old. I think the best thing for us to do is to work as a domestic. I know he won't like it but we have talked it over already. He's already tried to get some jobs because there is good money in it.

When I was looking for an apartment, I was really hurt when people discriminated against me. I always told them I was Japanese because I don't want to live in a place where I know the people wouldn't want me if they knew what I was. It's not just the hakujin though, the nisei are that way too. San Francisco people are nice and they are easy to get along with. But I never could get along with the L.A. nisei. In Hawaii the people are more informal and human. It's easy to get along with them because they don't hide anything from you. I think the worst nisei in the country are those from Seattle. They think they are so good that sometimes it makes



me boil over. They just walk around with their noses up in the air and they act as though they thought they were hakujin. They are no better than we are and I don't see why they should put on those airs. I think that they are the kind of people who wear nice clothes on the outside and are very dirty underneath. None of my friends like them either. I don't have to worry because I know that Randolph will never be one of them.



(COPY)

CH-107

Y M C A     H O T E L  
826 South Wabash Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois

Oct. 5, 1943

Dear Mr. Wirth:

I am again bothering you and asking for assistance. Things aren't as I expected them to be and I'm wondering if it is possible for me to talk to you personally. Time and again, I am asking myself, just what is best fitted for me and I'm lost. Perhaps a good psychologist is the answer.

Could I call you at night? I am always working and we really don't know when our day's work is done. Sometimes it's 5 o'clock and at other times 9 o'clock. Quitting time is so irregular, I'm afraid I'm never in before 9:30 p.m. On Sundays I'm free so I would appreciate very much to hear from you.

Thanking you for all the troubles I've caused, I am,

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Gilbert M. Kuramitau



(COPY)

BEHRENDT-LEVY INSURANCE AGENCY

Sept. 23, 1943 (14)

Professoor Louis Wirth  
Department of Sociology  
University of Chicago  
Chicago 37, Illinois

My dear Dr. Wirth:

I cannot thank you enough for your kindness in helping Mr. Gilbert Kuramitsu. I certainly appreciate it.

Leo is working hard on motion picture stories. His whole family are now in Los Angeles. For your information, they are living at 313 South El Camino Drive, Beverly Hills.

Kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,

/s/ LEO S. BEHRENDT

GB:b



Evacuation and Resettlement Study,  
June 3, 1943. DST.

SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL RESETTLERS

Date of interview Nov. 3, 1943 Interviewer Shibutani

1. Name Kuramitsu, Gilbert 2. Sex, (M) F 3. Married stat. (M) S D W O

4. Present address 4507 N. Clifton

5. Later addresses \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
" \_\_\_\_\_  
" \_\_\_\_\_

6. Birthplace Hawaii 7. Birthdate Jan. 27, 1907

8. Alien or citizen citizen 9. Nisei, Kibei or Issei nisei

10. Addresses between Dec.1, 1941 and evacuation

(a) 409 Estudillo Ave., Los Angeles Date to 3 wks bef. eva.  
(b) 1935 Eagle St., Los Angeles " to May 17, 1942  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_ " \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) \_\_\_\_\_ " \_\_\_\_\_  
(e) \_\_\_\_\_ " \_\_\_\_\_

11. Assembly Center Turlock Date to July 19, 1942

12. Relocation Center Gila Date to July 19, 1942

13. Addresses between time of leaving Relocation Center and present

(a) Cleveland Hotel Date to July 27, 1943  
(b) YMCA Hotel on Wabash, Chicago " to Oct. 20, 1943  
(c) 4507 N. Clifton " \_\_\_\_\_

14. Persons living in household on Dec.1, 1941. Relationship to Re-

(a) Self settler  
(b) Alice wife  
(c) Judy daughter  
(d) \_\_\_\_\_  
(e) \_\_\_\_\_  
(f) \_\_\_\_\_  
(g) \_\_\_\_\_  
(h) \_\_\_\_\_  
(i) \_\_\_\_\_  
(j) \_\_\_\_\_  
(k) \_\_\_\_\_  
(l) \_\_\_\_\_  
(m) \_\_\_\_\_

15. Persons living in household on evac. day  
(If same as 14, enter symbol, e.g. 14(a).) Relationship to Re-

(a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) #14 a, b, c  
(c) Onishi, wife and 2 children friends  
(d) \_\_\_\_\_  
(e) \_\_\_\_\_  
(f) \_\_\_\_\_  
(g) \_\_\_\_\_  
(h) \_\_\_\_\_  
(i) \_\_\_\_\_  
(j) \_\_\_\_\_  
(k) \_\_\_\_\_  
(l) \_\_\_\_\_  
(m) \_\_\_\_\_



SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL RESETTLERS, page 2.

15. continued	Age	Sex	M.S.	Birthplace	Grade compl. Amer.school	Educ.in Japan	Occupation Dec. 1, 1941	Relig. Affil.
(a)								
(b)	28	F	M	Hawaii			Hsewife	Buddhist
(c)	3	F	S	L.A.				
(d)								
(e)								
(f)								
(g)								
(h)								
(i)								
(j)								
(k)								
(l)								
(m)								

16. If immediate family (parents, siblings, children or spouse) were not included in household group in 15, because of different residence or because deceased, give details regarding them)

	Name	Relationship to resettler	Residence (if deceased write "dec.")	Age (if dec. age at death)	Sex	Mar. Stat.
(a)	Gail	daughter		6 months	F	S
(b)						
(c)						
(d)						
(e)						
(f)						

16, continued -

	Birthplace	Grade compl. Amer.school	Educ. in Japan	Occupation Dec. 1, 1941 (for dec. last occupation)	Religion
(a)	Gila R.C.				
(b)					
(c)					
(d)					
(e)					
(f)					

17. What members of household and immediate family evacuated together to Assembly Center or Free Zone (give symbols used in 15 and 16).

b and c

18. Composition of household in Assembly Center or Free Zone (Give symbols from 15 and 16; if others, give sex, age, relationship) Upon arrival:

b and c



SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL RESETTLERS, page 3.

18. continued -

Just before departure to Assembly Center or Free Zone \_\_\_\_\_

19. Composition of household in Relocation Project (Give symbols; if others, give sex, age, relationship).

Upon arrival: \_\_\_\_\_

a, b, c

Just before leaving Project: \_\_\_\_\_

20. Composition of household in Chicago at date of interview:  
(Give symbols; if others, give details)

	Name	Relationship to resettler	Residence (if deceased write "dec."	Age (if dec. age at death	Sex	Mar. Stat.
(a)	x					
(b)	x					
(c)	x					
(d)						
(e)						
(f)						

20. continued -

	Birthplace	Grade completed American school	Educ. in Japan	Occupation Dec. 1, 1941 (for dec. last occupation)	Religion
(a)					
(b)					
(c)					
(d)					
(e)					
(f)					

21. Changes in composition of Household in Chicago: Note departures by symbol and dates. Give details for new households or entries:

	Date	Name	Relation- ship to resettler	Residence (if deceased write "dec."	Age (if dec. age at death)	Sex	Mar. Stat.
(a)							
(b)							
(c)							
(d)							
(e)							
(f)							



SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL RESETTLERS, page 4.

21. continued -

Date	Name	Relation- ship to resettler	Residence (if deceased write "dec.")	Age (if dec. age at death)	Sex	Mar. Stat.
(g)						
(h)						
(i)						
(j)						
(k)						
(l)						
(m)						

21. continued -

Birthplace	Grade compl. Amer.school	Educ. in Japan	Occupation Dec. 1, 1941 (for dec. last occupation)	Religion
(a)				
(b)				
(c)				
(d)				
(e)				
(f)				
(g)				
(h)				
(i)				
(j)				
(k)				
(l)				
(m)				

22. Educational history of resettler

Elementary schools (name and location)	Dates	Grade completed	
Kaullani School	7 yrs.	7th	
Laupa hoe hoe	2 yrs.	9th	
Grammar schools (name and location)	Dates	Grade completed	
High schools (name and location)	Dates	Grade completed	
Colleges, universities and vocational schools (name and location)	Dates	Grade completed	Degree
Attendance at Japanese language school, location	Dates		
Laupa hoe hoe	2 years		



SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL RESETTLERS, page 5.

22. Occupational history (begin with first job). Note periods of unemployment by entering dates continuously and writing "unemp" in Job column to cover such periods. Include employment in Assembly Center and Relocation Project and continue with employment since resettling.

Dates		Nature of job	Type of industry	Location	Av. mo. wages	Reason
From	To					for termination
1915	1917	Soda works	general help	Honolulu	\$12	
1919	1919	Koji plant	truck driver	"		temporary
1922	1922	Sugar plant.	laborer	Hawaii		ran away
1923	1923	Soda works	general help	Honolulu		
1923	1923	Plumber	apprentice	"		
1923	--	Cannery	machine shop	"		
--	1924	Cannery	box factory	"		no future
1924	1925	Bakery	delivery boy	"	\$72	plant moved
1925	1925	Brick layer	help	"		too heavy
1925	1925	Carpenter	help	"		fired
1926	1926	Koji factory	general help	"		migrated
1926	1926	Bay City Prod.	general help	L.A.	\$150	slack season
1926	1929	Diamond Prod.	general help	L.A.		Co. moved
1929	1942	H & F Prod.	gen. help to home	L.A.		evacuation
1942	1942	Turlock A.C.	canteen manager	Turlock	\$16	relocation
1942	1943	Gila Center	"	Rivers	\$19	resettled
1943	1943	Ink Co.	general help	Chicago	\$250	no overtime
1943	1943		shipping clerk	"		" "
1943		Ink Co.	general help	"	\$250	

23. Religious connections (begin with first, include assembly center and Relocation project and status after resettlement)

Dates	Attended what church	Where attended	What Sunday sch.

24. Political activities

Dates	Voted in what elections	For what party
1928	Presidential, local prim.	Democrat
1932	" " "	"
1936	" " "	"
1940	" " "	"



Initial Interview  
Nov. 9, 1943  
Document CH-107  
Shibutani

Randolph H. Ishimoto

There is one thing I know I can't do. Farming is no good for me. Because for some reason, I just can't stand chickens, ~~cattle~~ cats and dogs. I can't handle them, that's all. I just can't touch them. I can't grab them or come near to them. I guess I'm afraid. Maybe it's because I have artistic hands. I'm good at using my hands. People say I have the movable type of hands.

I was born in 1907 on January 27 in Honolulu and left Hawaii in 1926. I was in L.A. to the time of evacuation.

The first job I ever had was in a soda plant as a help. I had to go to work because I had to help support my family. There were a lot of kids so I went to work in the plant of a friend. I was going to school too. I guess I was about 8 or 10 years old. I remember that I could barely lift the boxes up unto the trucks. I used to go to school in the morning from 9 to about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Then I went to Japanese school from 3 to 5 and worked from 5 to 8. I got about \$3 a week. It was general work and it wasn't so bad but I wanted to go out and play ball. That used to both me quite a bit.

The next job I had was in a koji plant. We made miso and sake. I used to drive a truck for them. I was 12 then but I told them I was 15. I was big so I got a license to drive the truck and used to deliver. I was still going to school and worked there only six months. It was just temporary help. I used to work early in the morning delivering. After school I ~~pay~~ played a little, not much because there was an 8 o'clock curfew for all kids.

About that time my folks went to Japan and I went over to my uncle's place on the island of Hawaii. I went to school then because I was still pretty young. In 1922 I graduated from the



boarding school where my uncle sent me. I finished the eighth grade. Then my uncle sent me to a sugar plantation. I was 16 then and they put me to work full time. I had to work in the cane fields for two months. I did irrigation work. God, I used to hate that. I wanted to go into a machine shop and I wanted most of all to be an engineer. But they told me I would have to go to school. After two months I ran away and came back to Honolulu. I was under contract and was supposed to pay room and board. But I paid nothing. I went to Honolulu and went back to the soda works. I didn't like that kind of work. I'm not suited to it. From the first day I got to the plantation, I planned to run away. I figured out how much it would cost in train and boat <sup>fare</sup> ~~fair~~. I kept quiet and just figured it out for myself. I figured it would take two months to earn that much money and then I beat it. I was forced to take the job. My uncle sent me to school and he expected me to repay him. He didn't do anything so I ran away. I guess he was glad I was off his hands. I had only two brothers in Hawaii. All the rest of the family went to Japan.

At the soda plant I stayed for another half year. I did the same kind of work, only it was full time. Then I quit and worked as a plumber's apprentice. They told me it would be better if I learned some kind of trade. They told me there was a future in plumbing but I didn't care for it. After eight months I quit. I just didn't like it. It was too heavy.

Then I went to work in a cannery in a machine shop. I guess I was more a night boy. I used to sharpen knives for pineapple cutting. I guess I was there for a couple of years and worked off and on. In the summer I worked in the cannery full time and in the winter I worked in the box factory. It was really just a three



months' season. And the rest of the time I set up machinery or I worked in the box factory. I used to just ~~pas~~ stack the boxes. You see, a long time ago, they used to put all the cans in boxes. It was all in the same company. There was no future in it though and I could see no chance to get into the machine shop.

I always wanted to fool around with a lathe. I used to see people work on them when I was a plumber. I thought that it must be a lot of fun. I always wanted to use one and even today I want to use them. But in all my life, I never got to use them.

Then I went to work in a bakery as delivery boy. I was 17 then. I worked full time and I liked it a lot because I got to drive a truck. I stayed there for a year and then got laid off because they moved the plant.

Then I went to work as a brick layer's helper. I stayed there for three months but I couldn't stand the work because it was too heavy.

My teachers used to tell me that I was good in English. It just came natural to me. But I was poor in arithmetic. I used to study extra in that and I tried like anything but I just couldn't catch on. English and geography and stuff like that was okay but I was always poor in mathematics. It's the same way even now. They told me that I would never be a machinist because it was all mathematics. I noticed when I was working in the Co-op in Gila that I wanted to keep moving all the time. I don't like jobs where you just sit all day. I never did have a sit down job except at the Co-op.

I went to work as a carpenter's help and I stayed there for one month. Then they told me "It's not use, you'll never make a carpenter." I went back to the koji factory for two months.



After I quit work as a carpenter, I got a letter from a friend of mine on the coast. He told me there were lots of chances to make money. I jumped at the opportunity and worked for two months in the koji factory to save enough money to come out.

All that time I lived alone. It was near my cousin's place. I lived in a Nihonjin home and paid rent. I used to like to read a lot and spent my time either at the library or the YMCA. I liked songs and music. Music comes natural to me. I used to like to play the steel guitar, the violin and the saxophone. I used to play basketball a lot and I was the best swimmer at the 'Y'. I tried to specialize, like when I played basketball, I used to read up all about it. ~~Th~~ I used to go fishing all the time too with my friends. ~~They~~ were all Nihonjin and I knew very few hakujin. I used to read. You see, when I was fishing I used to read about fish. When I played baseball, I read about baseball. It was my childhood ambitions never to play second fiddle. I always wanted to be at the top. When I was a kid, I was a gang leader. That was from the time I was nine to the time I was about 12. Yah, I guess I used to be pretty tough. But I wasn't satisfied until I was the leader.

I used to get up and eat and then deliver the bakery goods. I was thru about 7 or 8 at night and I stopped at the YMCA. I went to the gym and played basketball or swim. Sometimes I played pool. I did one of those three things. I was a pretty good pool player too. I worked all day Saturday and on Sundays I used to go fishing. I always went with the same friends. We all grew up together.

I missed family life quite a bit. I didn't write much to my folks. I never did write much to anybody. I graduated Japanese school with honors. In fact, I graduated from both schools in Hawaii and Honolulu with honors. I never even took an exam except



for arithmetic. I tried awfully hard to master that but I just couldn't.

There were a lot of clubs I could have joined but I had no time. There was one educational club at the YMCA. We used to get together and sing and listen to lectures. I never was an officer. I refused time and again because I had no time. I used to be a good boy, they say, except for being a gang leader. I was respected because I worked hard and used to study.

I never had much time for church. I worked all week and was raring to go out on Sundays. I was a Buddhist and that was the only church I went to until I joined the 'Y'. I took religious pretty seriously tho, My friends were Methodist but they didn't go to church very much.

When I came over, well before I came over, I had a saxophone. I wanted to be a sax player and I wanted to write stories. I wrote some stories and sent them to the Palmer Institute for scenario writing or something like that, in Hollywood. I used to get rejections all the time. They told me I had ~~an-natural~~ imagination and was creative but had no background. They told me to read up on certain books but I didn't even go to high school and it was kind of tough. My main watchucallit was to write stories and movies and things like that. I remember now, I wanted to be a writer. On the boat I had a lot of trouble. Three of the boys had been over before and they got in trouble with the steward. We had a tough time. And I was seasick for three of the six days it took. I had a friend who said he'd meet me. He worked in a produce market and said he thought a job was open. I thought I could work there and write too. That was the general idea.

It struck me funny when I came to the coast. In Hawaii we used



to work 10 hours a day. But this place, Jesus Christ, when I came here, I came on Saturday and on Sunday night I went to work. I went to the place called Bay City Produce and we put in 13 to 15 hours every night. I made \$75 in two weeks and I thought it was pretty good because I used to make only \$18 a week. I didn't mind the hours, when I thought how much I was being paid. I worked from May to September. We worked all night. I didn't do nothing else. I had no time. That's why I quit.

My friend was going to school then. He's a doctor now. I was staying with him and his family. I paid for my room and board. They treated me like one in the family and I didn't mind. But pretty soon they moved to a farm and I had to leave, because I don't like it on the farm. I've stayed in a hotel ever since. When I quit in September another house heard that this company was letting me go so they picked me up right away. I worked just as long as before. I had to change. They were going to lay me off anyway. You see, after summer, there's not much doing anyway in the wholesale market. I was doing everything, receiving, selling, loading, floor work, and trucking. The new place was a wholesale and jobber. It was what they call a second jobber. It's a firm with steady customer who don't want to get up early in the morning. They sold only good grade stuff and they repacked everything to check the grade. That was the Diamond Produce. I was there for two years. It was a lot of fun. I liked to work with a hustle. There was never a dull moment. Then the company moved. They changed buildings around and the fellow I worked for started a suit against the market. He kicked like hell but he lost out. So he sold the store and went back to Japan. When I was working there, a fellow at the H & F found out about me so I went to work for him.



About 1929, I went to work for H & F and I stayed there until evacuation. It was always market work. That was just before the stock market crash. I saved up a lot of money to go to Hawaii. I guess I had about \$3500. The fellow I worked for told me to invest it so I started playing with stocks. In the '29 crash, I lost everything. They lost too. But they borrowed from the bank and kept going. That changed everything. But I think they made more money in the depression than they did before.

I often wondered what I would have done with that money if I didn't lose it. At that time I wanted to go home and show off to my friends, all the money I had. Yah, I often wonder, what I would have done with that money.

I used to work 12 hours a day and I didn't have much time for anything else. The unions came in about '35. It was the AFL. After that, they had lots of time. I was one of the members of the arbitration board. I was in favor of the union because the hours were too long. After the unions came in we worked only six hours. Times changed overnight. We had better trucks and facilities and everything was better.

I played golf, went to shows but spent most of my time watching baseball games. I bought a box out there and went everyday. I used to watch basketball and football games too. I used to go alone. There was another fellow who worked with me who used to go along sometimes. After the stock crash, I gambled a little. I tried to recuperate everything I lost. I went to the Tokyo Club to try to get my money back. I was always in the hole. I played "21", Block Jack and got into a crap game now and then and I played the horses a little bit too. I used to go everyday to the track. I went, not for the sport, but it was a money making proposition for



me. I came ahead in racing but behind in everything else. I never made a third pass in a crap game.

There was only one man that I trusted. The other guys are all right when I got money, but not otherwise. They're not real friends. There was one many about my age and we went out together quite a bit.

I was satisfied with my work. I noticed in L.A. that a lot of guys who graduated from university but they all came to work in the market. When I saw that, I figured that there was a good future in it, so I stuck around. That was in the '30's.

Then I met my wife. I knew her brother a long time and I met her one night in L.A. That was in '38. We went around together for three years. She heard I was rombo so she kept my money for me. My wife's different. She wants to play poker for one-tenth of a cent chips but I don't like it that way. I want to either make or break. I want to do things on a big scale. I guess the market got me. When you're in the wholesale line, you don't like these small time guys who buy only a few things.

The place I'm working now is no good. Generally, when I get a job, I usually read up on it and get ahead. But that place is nothing you can do to get ahead. My wife says for me to go to school and learn something. I thought I'd take up some mechanical work. Auto mechnics or something like that. If I can work in a place where I can learn something, I'm willing to work 12 to 14 hours for four bits an hour. I get good pay now, but all the money I'm earning now won't do any good because 10 years from now I'll be doing the same goddam thing I'm doing now. If I can get into a place where I can learn, I can work twice as long and learn in half the time. I figure this winter will be pretty cold and we'll be cooped in anyway. I could quit work and go to some day school for maybe a month. After



New Year's I could go to work and start at 60 cents an hour. My wife says it's okay as long as we can get by. I could for for a while and can tell whether I'm fitted for that kind of work or not.

I intend to stay here as long as I can. I want a house here and I wouldn't want to go back to California for anything. People say they want to go back to California but that's because they're new here. They're not used to it. I want a job that will last. At my age and with my experience, I can't stay at the bottom. Even at the ink factory, I started out with a scaling job. But, they changed me after one week. They told me I was too valuable. One day I told the foreman that usually after two mnths and then get a raise. He told me, "You get 80 cents and you stay at 80 cents." I figured it's no good because you get better and better in your work but your pay stays the same. I don't like work like that. It's too heavy and they don't give enough pay. The hakujin people know they can get a job anywhere so they just quit. But we can't do that. We nisei have to build up a reputation first. I don't like the place and I'm going to quit pretty soon. Usually a man should be able to decide what kind of work he wants to do. I was in the market so long that I never thought of it.

If I had enough money and could do anything in the world I wanted, I'd want to live the life of Reilly. I like to get up in the morning and play golf and then go fishing and maybe in the evening see a boxing or wrestling match. Then I'd call it a day. That's the way I want to live.

For work I'd like to have my own business. In any line, I don't care. I think there's a Big future in construction work. That's big work. I wrote my brother in camp to polish up on his carpentry. He could make a \$1.50 an hour anytime because he has his



own tools. I'm funny. When I work I like to stick. And I hate to quit. Most guys look up to me. All of them who work with me and the people in the camp came to me for advice. I figure I'm giving out more than I am looking out after myself.

This damn job I got now, is not good. The foreman is a helluva guy and sometimes I don't get to eat lunch until 7:30. I remember once a Jew told me at the market to be nice to customer until you sell the merchandise and then tell him to go to hell. That's why I worked hard to build up my reputation and then I quit. But they begged me to come back. I'm tired of that work, tho. I knew guys like that before. The guys there yell like hell but inside they're kokoro ga yasashii. They're like a barking dog. They say one minute "no use killing yourself" and the next minute they say, "get to work". We're not supposed to take him seriously but this foreman ~~is~~ is different and I figure there's no use slaving away.

My wife wants to go to Milwaukee. She doesn't like it here. But I tell her she'll get used to it. The transportation is not so good in Milwaukee. You can get used to Chicago. You can go fishing or bowling but you just have to find out about it, that's all.



Second Interview  
Nov. 13, 1943  
Document CH-107  
Shibutani

Randolph H. Ishimoto

I told the guy where I work that I am going to quit. There are only two of us there and the guy wants me to run three machines at once. I'm not a slave and I can do only so much. So yesterday I told the old boy that I was through.

I was at the market for 15 years. My routine varies from time to time. But I used to get up at 9 at night and work all night to about 10 in the morning. Then I used to stick around the pool hall (pay ball?) and play. We used to play table. I used to be a good player and sometimes we played all day. That's just about all I did sometimes. Then I got to sleep. I lived in a hotel then. I read a lot too. I like detective stories quite a bit because I like to solve the mystery. After I met my wife I had to cut out the good times, and started planning for the future. There is not more pool hall for me. And less bowling. We had more and more time to ourselves as work went on, especially after the unions came in. We had more time to play. I guess meeting my wife changed my outlook toward life. The It changed everything. I felt at the time that the produce business was something to set my goals to so instead of playing pool I started taking up golf. The work was the same. There was so much to be done and that didn't change. Most people have a hobby to keep them busy. But I never had one. I had a very important position, I was tops in my market. I was floor manager. Yes, I guess meeting my wife made things different.

December 7th was kind of funny. We went fishing the night before. The family used to go every Saturday afternoon. That time a friend of ours, a widow, went along. We used to bring a tent but that time it was cold so we slept in the car. We have a little



gasoline stove and we fished all night. We got more fish than we ever got before and we couldn't believe it. We thought there was something wrong because we caught enough for a week. About 2:30 or 3 in the afternoon we started for home. We turned on the radio in the car and got the flash that Pearl Harbor was attacked. I thought it was just propaganda or some kind of a play. I couldn't believe that there was war. When I got home there were some telephone calls and then I was convinced that it was true. When we first heard it in the car, the others said that it was too bad. My wife thought of her folks the first thing because they were in Hawaii. I didn't go to sleep that night. I couldn't get over the fact of the attack until two days later.

That night I went to work and the market was closed. The FBI already picked up the Japanese nationals and we didn't know until the next morning when we were going to work. We didn't do a thing. Everybody was out of work. We all stuck around and had a meeting. The Junior Produce Club got together and in the meeting the President of the club had a conference with the JACL officers. Things moved kind of fast and I don't remember very much what people said. We were interested in getting the place open. Everybody was talking about war. The nisei had the controlling share. The old men used to use their son's name and three days later the place opened again. It ran as usual. We had the same customers, both hakujin and Nihonjin. I asked the old man if I could quit to go and run my own business. So many places closed down that it was a good chance for a nisei. When I said that, he started talking about a bonus. We made quite a bit that year and we had been talking about a bonus for a long time. After that, everything was quiet and normal again. On Christmas, we bou y



bought presents for our friends and on New Year's Day we visited our friends as we always did. We talked about the war, no matter where we went. I never thought of what would happen to the Japanese in this country because my only thought was of starting my own business. The issei were out and it was a good chance. I wanted to go ahead but I didn't have enough capital. I figured on hauling from the farmers to the market and reselling. Hauling offered the best possibilities. The overhead was low. We had long hours but the license was cheap and there was no commission broker to pay.

The February 15 move didn't affect us at all. All I remember was that every morning I talked to the people who were hauling. They were saying that they couldn't do business. The stores were closing and the issei were in jail. That's all I thought about. I thought of borrowing some money from some people in Hawaii but my wife was against that. She didn't want to borrow money and told me to wait. I needed at least \$3000. I had just a little bit to go but my wife was against borrowing it.

I first heard of evacuation when Mike Masaoka came to L.A. and addressed the crowd. The Junior Produce Club was against evacuation. We were against everything that Mike said. I figured he had nothing to lose but we had everything to lose. He told us to be patriotic and all that and said that evacuation was the only answer. I didn't like that fellow anyway. He didn't have a business of his own and he didn't know what it meant to lose what it took years to build up.

The market had a lot of nisei working together. We sponsored a radio broadcast and a fellow named Knox Roth of the ACLU. He worked hard on the evacuation and he tried to bring out all the good points. We felt it coming tho. Even today I have a conviction that it wasn't voluntary. It was forced. We were saying let the jeeps come and pick



us up. I read in the newspapers about the FBI raid but I never believed the newspapers anyway. We were in touch with FBI and knew those reports were not true. Roth, he used to come down for a get-together every morning and we used to sit around and bring out some of the good points.

I can't understand why evacuation was necessary. The way I figure, there was some dirty politics mixed up in it. I think DeWitt was responsible. He didn't know what he was doing. I think he is incompetent. I think those big Jews who controlled the market and the big business men were behind the evacuation. A Jew syndicate took over the market after we left. I don't know about the price they paid but I hear it wasn't very much.

About 15 of the boys were with me on the evacuation. I told them to stick it out even if we have to go to jail. I told them they couldn't turn us out because we were loyal citizens and they taxed us. We committed no crime to go to jail for. What we think was right. Most of them said that they would stick until the time of evacuation came and then they all left. I was the last one to go and I thought it was hopeless. I used to go to the restricted areas all the time. Nobody stopped me or anything.

I gave up the idea of having my own business when they started pulling in the Japanese farmers. I didn't know what the future was like and I didn't know what a camp looked like. I heard from the boys who left for Santa Anita and Manzanar. They said to bring a lot of clothing and bring everything in portable form. And <sup>sold</sup> our sewing machine and bought a portable one. We sold our stove and bought a hot plate. We bought a lot of warm clothing and food. We had about a hundred dollars worth of canned goods. We sold every-



thing else, our car and everything except what we took.

We then were sent to Turlock Assembly Center. I heard a lot of stories about how dusty the centers were. I never thought about it though. I figured on going to the camp and resting up. There was one thing I figured, and that was one reason why I sold everything. I figured the war would last a long time, at least five years and I had no plans of going back to California. I felt that the people of California were responsible for the evacuation.

We got there late at night. I blamed the government quite a bit. I was pretty bitter. It was hot during the day and cold at night. We wore coats and sweaters on Fourth of July night. I didn't go to work until a couple of weeks later. They needed a manager for the canteen so I applied. There were 50 of us trying and I was selected I guess because of my qualifications. The only trouble we had was that people didn't want to work. We had lots of labor trouble and it was a tough job. I had to study each individual. The administration was okay. The government set the policy and there was nothing we could do about it. It was okay with me. My wife didn't mind the camp either.

One thing that got me was the lavatory. It was dirty and it stunk. We just had odd houses. We never had no showers because there was no hot water. We just can't get it because so many people used it. Most people used to take their shower in the daytime.

Three months later I pulled out for Gila. That was in July. I went with the volunteer group. I didn't want to volunteer but the supervisor said for me to go. He said this camp was closing up and that I was a good man so I should go ahead, and set up another canteen. At the time I left I thought it would be another government



canteen, but when I got there I found out different. It was run by the individuals. I thought it was a good opportunity for me. I did all the buying. I hired the help and set up the policies. I was general manager. I don't know how I ever did it. I expected to find the same thing only a little bigger.

When I first got there I got sick. The place wasn't ready. There was no water, no lights, no gas. We had to sleep in half-finished houses and they had to bring water in a truck. We couldn't put on the lights even if we had some because it would bring all the bugs in the house. Most of the houses were ready but there were no pipes. There were ditches all over the place and they were working like hell to finish up. We just ate sandwiches for two weeks. There was no gas so we couldn't cook and we couldn't wash our plates because there was no water. We had some trouble right from the beginning. They were going to pay \$12, \$16 and \$19 wages and the third day the mess hall went on a strike. It was hot as hell, 110 to 120 degrees every day. The mess hall boys said that they wanted \$16 or \$19 and so they raised the wages to 16 bucks. The heat really got me. I was busy working and my mind was occupied. We didn't worry too much about food because we brought along quite a bit.

We had community enterprises until March. The main trouble was that we couldn't supply the demand. The principle was the same as in the market. You know, the supply and demand stuff. We had a lot of complaints. Most people said our prices were too high. Some people said we didn't have enough candy. We tried to educate the public thru the papers. There was one bad thing about Gila that made it tough for us. It was in a state that was anti-Nipponjin. I had to buy supplies from New York or California or somewhere out of state, because the Arizona guys wouldn't sell to us.



My days varied. But I was always the first one to work. I had all the keys and I had to open up the office and the three warehouses before 8 o'clock. I checked the warehouses every morning. That was the routine. Around 10 I used to get all the mail and I checked the invoices and letters and distributed the invoices to the different departments. Then I gave the answers to letters to the different stenos. I used to write a sketch of the answers myself and let the stenos fill it in. Sometimes salesmen used to come in and I did some buying. At 12 I went to lunch and then after that I took care of salesmen or made the rounds of the canteens. I just looke around to see if everything was okay. I nocked off about 4:30 and played ball to 5. We usually had a softball or a hardball game going.

I couldn't live a happy life tho because my time wasn't my own. The trucks used to come in anytime. They came a long distance. A lot of times from L.A. and we had to punpack them right away or else we would have no merchandise. I liked it tho. I think the experience was good for me. We did a \$100,000 a month business and I was the boss. The people in the barber shop, radio shop and everyone had to get my okay. People appreciated my work quite a bit.

At night we used to get together and talk. I liked to read the comies but I didn't get much time for anything else. On Sundays I played ball. Sometimes we had to unload and they used to wait for me to finish the game and started unloading.

They beat up a fellow in Gila but other than that we didn't have much trouble. We didn't get any clothing allowance in Gila and this fellow Tada promised to get it. He didn't and so they beat him up. I don't think they were justified in doing it but you know how it is, people hear of things and then they get mad. I saw myself, kids who had no clothes. It was pitiful. Tada tried to help but they beat



him up. He used to be with the L.I.A. Chamber of Commerce and I hear he's teaching at Camp Savage. He liked to be in the public all the time. Those guys take a lot of whatyou call it. They take the good and bad. I don't think there's much appreciation for their work. That's the way with all the people in the public. There's no appreciation for their work. People used to say I made lots of money but I never touched the cash. I always told them to look at the financial report. All checks were counter-signed by the supervisor and he was pretty strict. He wouldn't sign one check ahead.

I think the JACL had a good and bad side. I was a member ever since it started, way back when Mas Igasaki started it. I guess nisei will always be that way. They always talked about the bad side but I think those fellows worked awfully hard. I think they made a mistake on evacuation. They should have fought that. But you can't tell tho. Fred Tayama told me that the JACL would have fought only there were no people to back them up.

I used to be House Representative in the Junior Produce Club. It wasn't a club to make money. There was one many who never paid attention to the club until the war broke out. People don't think in ordinary times but when they need help they expect you to help them all at once. That's the way most nisei are.

I got along pretty good with my workers. The only thing was that I was strict on the hours. They didn't mind tho. They knew how I wanted things run. There was some resentment at first, but I wanted them to put in their required hours. People thought I was a good manager, tho. But they think I was too strict. But I figure this way, if the head is no good the whole outfit is no good. You know, if the head "shakkari shitenakattara", the whole gang is no good.



I left Gila on July 19, exactly one year after I went in. I had all kinds of ideas. My buyer who went out, came back from Chicago, St. Louis, Salt Lake and Denver and when he came I asked him how it was on the outside. After I talked to him for a while, I decided to come out alone to see what was going on.

When the Co-op came in, there was a lot of conflict with me. Most of the board members were business men and they were old-fashioned. Conditions have changed since the war started and there were only two who knew what was going on and they backed me up. But when the board voted, we were always outnumbered. I told the board, at their meeting, one day that all the work that I did up to that day and all the actual training that I had just didn't count with them. The big beef came with the idea of setting up a bakery. I was against it. I wanted a bakery but we couldn't get any sugar. I went over to the regional OPA to beg for sugar but they said no. I fought them but it was no use. Then I went to the board members and told them it was impossible but they said that some issei had a place in L.A. and he would have his machinery brought out. It was that and a beef about a dry cleaning shop that got me into trouble. I told them it was impossible. I don't think they got it in yet. I guess they know now what I meant. I resigned in May but they didn't accept it so I stuck around for a while. I sent in another resignation and gave my reason as relocation. When I quit five others quit and they were all the key men in the outfit--the cashier, the assistant cashier, the bookkeeper and the head stenoes. They all quit. I had a fellow in charge of sporting goods and publicity. He quit too. He was my pet. I kinda of felt sorry for him. He had a lot of artistic ability. He could draw and write. When he came out, he told me one thing, "You're free." I talked it over with my wife and we



decided that I would go out first. I was prepared to do anything. I can do practically everything.

I used to look at all the papers from Chicago and I figured from them that there was so much work available that there would be no trouble in getting a job. It never occurred to me about the wages. I picked Chicago because a fellow said to me that Chicago could accommodate 3000 or 4000 more Nihonjin. I figured in a big city there was never a worry about jobs. He said housing was tough but I lived in hotels before so I figured no matter how tough a single man can always find a room.

At first I was going to Cleveland but I stopped here for one day because my friends were here. All the boys I came with stopped here and they went to a hostel. I went to the ball game and saw the Cubs play. That night I left for Cleveland. I went there for a Co-op job. It wasn't really the job but since I didn't have the Eastern Defense Command clearance, Cleveland was as far as I could go. I was trying to go to New York but when I went to Cleveland I changed my mind. I stayed there for three days and went to the WRA office. I talked to Fister there and they offered me a job in the machine shop. At that time it didn't occur to me that maybe I might not like the job. The only thing I thought of was what a couple of fellows told me. I talked to a couple of boys working there and they said they were having trouble with the other help. Right there and then I made up my mind to work in a small place. The reception in Cleveland was terrible. It made me sick. The WRA was pretty bad. I guess I must have been homesick. Fister said to me, "You mean to say that you came all the way out here and don't want the work?" But it wasn't the kind of work that I wanted. He told me that it was up to me so I told him that I wanted to go back



to camp. He said, "No, you can't do that." I told him I paid my own way and I could do what I want, but he said that I had to get an O.K. from both the project director and him. He said to me, "You're just homesick." I guess I was. But the reception they gave me was terrible. Now that I think of it, I guess it was partly my own fault. Fistere was sick that day but when I went in, everybody was so cold. It wasn't even a hello or anything. I went to inquire about a hotel and they didn't even care to talk to me. So I came back to Chicago on a bus. I could see a lot of possibilities here for any man. I don't care what kind of line or what kind of work you do. There is so much at present.

(He said this many times before.) The foreman is a slave driver. I don't know how long I'm going to keep working here. I've seen men like that before. They're tough but they are good inside. But this guy is just a dirty bastard. He don't have no heart. I'm going to quit.

I really should know what line of work I want to go into now, but I'm not sure. I talked to a friend of mine who studied astrology quite a bit and he told me that no matter what I did, if I was born on a certain day, I would get ahead. I don't know anything about it and he wouldn't tell me how I was going to come out. I know I've been figuring that if I need money badly enough I could start playing the horses again. I always win on horses because I'm not dumb. I go out to the track, look over the horses, look over the record and find out who's riding it and I only place a bet on the races I'm pretty sure of. Some dumb guys bet on every race. When I bet, I bet on them to show. I'm satisfied with 10 or 15 bucks profit but some guys want to clean up a thousand bucks that's why they go broke. I don't lose on the ponies but my wife won't let me. She said she



don't want me to.

I've never met Louise Suski but she used to call me up on the telephone. I was secretary of the golf club. It was an organization both of issei and nisei. All of us worked at the produce market and had our own club. After I decided to settle down, I decided to play golf because that wasn't as wild as some of the other things I used to do.

I came into Chicago on the bus. The station was right near the 'Y' hotel so I dropped in and just stayed there until October. I didn't go to work for two weeks. I inquired around and was pretty disgusted. Some of my friends were making 60 to 65 bucks a week. But I couldn't do so well. I got a hold of a telephone directory and looked in the classified ads. I went thru all the companies and I made my plan out. I made a list of all the place I was going to go to ask about a job. It took me two days to make the list. I guess I wanted to drop in and talk to them. In the meantime I saw Burke of the Hyde Park Co-op and I also saw this fellow Franklin Morgan who has a big wholesale grocery store. He told me he'd let me know but that was the end. So you know, I started out on Friday morning and I saw an Ad in the paper about an ink factory who wanted help. I phoned them up and they told me to come over. I went over and saw the boss. And the first question he asked me, "Do you drink?" I said no. Then he asked me, "Do you smoke?" And I said yes. Then he told me that the work was dirty but that there was plenty of over time so I told him that I'd take the job. I asked him, "Do you mind having a Japanese around?" He said that he didn't give a damn and he didn't think that the fellow employees would mind either. So I started working. That was in August, some time. I guess it was about the middle of August. The first day, God, I never thought



I'd work again. All my hands were swollen all over. My back ached and I couldn't even grab a toothbrush the next morning. I didn't quit tho, but I sure felt like it. Then the old Yamato Damashi+ came in and I knew that I couldn't give up. I said to myself, I can't give up, I can't let a job beat me. So I stuck it out. They told me my hands were no good for this kind of work because my bones were too small. I had a tough time. I don't mind it so much now, but I really feel it though. It's really hard work. A man can't even smoke. You have to hide from the foreman to take a puff from a cigarette. It makes me feel bad when I see the other men looking around the corners just to run outside and take a couple of puffs and then they come in again. I don't like to do things on the sly, so I walk in front of the guy and tell him I'm going to take a smoke. If he don't like it, I tell him, the hell with him. But ~~th-~~ I think the hell of the thing is when a fellow can't even take a smoke. I get along okay with my fellow workers. They invite me to go fishing and bowling with them, but I don't have any time. The other fellows I'm working with, fells just like I do and he is going to quit too.

I quit once in October when they didn't have much over time. Hell, it's no use working in a place like that if you can't make no money. I went to work ~~as-th~~ a shipping clerk but it was just as bad. I had a friend who was working there and he told them I was a Hawaiian. I couldn't tell the guy that I was Japanese so I had to work as a Hawaiian. All the other fellows I worked with thought I was Hawaiian and they talked bad about the Japs right in front of me. That got me sore. And once I almost took a poke at a fellow and then I figured it was no use working in a place where I have to lie. I stayed there two weeks and then I quit.

I didn't get my paycheck from the ink factory so I went over



there after it. The fellow told me I'd better come back because there was lots of over time again. I remember the day that I quit my second job. It was a Jew holiday. After that I went right to work in the ink factory again.

The WRA here gave me the run around. They got a teletype saying my wife was coming. Then I got a telegram from my wife on Oct. 13. I wired right back and told her to come on the 20th because I had to have some time to get a house. I went to see this fellow Olson at the WRA who was supposed to be in charge of housing. I brought a friend with me to verify what I had to say. And Olson said to me, "Our responsibility is to see that all families are housed." That was on a Saturday. He told me to call up Wednesday so I called him up to see if everything was ready. When I called up, Olson, he says for me to talk to Mr. Brenten because Mr. Brenten has charge of all housing now. I asked him, "Didn't you do anything about mine?" He just told me to speak to Brenten because Brenten knows everything. So I took time off from work to go see this fellow Brenten and he said he didn't have no idea about me except a little card that Olson left for him. He said that he'll try to help me. But the only way he had to find a place was to look in the classified ads in the newspaper. I asked him if he ever canvassed the territory where he was trying to find housing but he told me he had no time. Then he gave me one address and he called up the landlady. I went out there but it was not the kind of place I wanted. It was unfurnished and it cost \$35. I told him I can't stay there because I only had a small family and the place was too big. He told me he'd try everything he could but I didn't bother him any more. All he did was look in the classified ads and I could do that myself. I found the place for myself. After I'd looked around a little, I figured that if I was



Brenten's shoes I could find hundreds of place if the WRA backing me up. If you have a government agency behind you, you can get a lot of places. But he sits in his office and telephones. How can he find anything? I asked him if he checked up with the real estate company but he said he didn't know anything about them. I don't see how they pay a man like that. I don't see how they can keep a good-for-nothing like him in the office and pay wages like they do.

I met my wife at the depot. She had another woman with her who came from camp to look after the kids. This girl looked after the kids on the train. When they got here they took a cab and dropped her off at around 2000 Kenmore or something like that where she had a job. When we got to our apartment my wife was really surprised. She had to go up three flights of stairs. She said it was all right and that it was better than camp. ~~It was~~ She wasn't pleased but she didn't show it to me.

You can talk to my wife if you want to. She'll probably tell you I'm the never-stay-home type. She's looking for a flat whenever she has time off.

Three weeks before evacuation we had to leave our house and go to live with some friends because we sold everything. There was another family there too and we had to share the place for three weeks.

I guess the Turlock center was okay. The administration was all right. The way I look at it, it was pretty good when they let us play ball and see shows. They tried to make everything as comfortable as possible. It's hard to say anything about the evacuees. Some were bitter but the smart ones were all right. I figured this way, even if they killed us, we couldn't do anything about it anyway. Just like if they killed Americans in Japan, we wouldn't know anything



about it. I don't think that I felt badly about the hakujin. In a way, we can't blame them for doing what they did. I used to get nice letters from them and I had a Chinese friend who used to send me anything that I wanted.

I didn't have much spare time while working here in Chicago. On Saturdays I shopped for the family and sent stuff back to Gila so that they couldn't get there. Then I either take in a show or go to a ball game. Sundays I just visited friends and wrote letters to friends in camp. I wrote to my wife about twice a week. I tell my friends in camp that if they have a large family they better stay there. Married couples and single men, I tell them to come out if they are not afraid of hard work. If they're family men, I tell them never to come out because the wages are not enough.

I think the future of the nisei depends on the individual. For myself I think I fit in pretty good. Some boys don't care. They think they are going back to California but that's out of the question. I don't think the nisei will end up like the negroes though, because I think they'll get wise to themselves pretty soon. The nisei have what it takes if they only knew what they were doing.

I think this is a good experience for most people but they don't forget what they went through. I think the majority of the nisei will forget. They're making good money here and now they don't care anymore about anything else.

A lot of nisei around here are money crazy. All they do is work like hell to buy expensive clothes. A lot of them never had clothes before. But they work long hours and they make all the money they can. Most of them are worried about the post-war. I guess a lot of them are figuring on all the nisei will be canned after the war. The future is uncertain, but I don't think the nisei



will be canned. They are proving themselves capable. In a lot of places they have a tough time at first but they made good. Like the wholesale place where I applied. The other day I got a call to go to work. At first they were skeptical but now they want all the nisei possible. National Tea is that way. There's a difference between the nisei and hakujin when they work. The nisei are more industrious. I guess because they were brought up in American schools and are Americanized more than most of these foreigners around here.

I always wanted to have my own business. I guess I just wanted to be my own boss. I'm taking these jobs now just to save up my money so I can get started. I want to learn now even if I have to work at low wages and then when I get good enough I can start my own place.

I think drafting nisei will be a wonderful thing. I don't mind going. If I have to go I'll go. I never even thought of defense work. That was the first thing they told me when I came here. But you have to have clearance and I don't care to work with hundreds of other people anyway. You can't get nowhere. You can't get out because you always stay where you are and only the best in hundreds can be foremen. I guess a lot of nisei are worried about the draft. They don't want to go and I think they're very selfish.

That Tule Lake riot was too bad but I don't blame the people. You have to look at things like this both ways. They're prisoners of war and they have a right to ask for their rights. I don't think that it will hurt the rest of us at all. It has no bearing to the resettlers. I think that they ought to raise a big rumpus because then, the hakujin will think that all the bad ones are in one group. If there is no trouble they will think that we're all bad. When we were in camp, there was no trouble. Now that they are all in one



if  
place, they make plenty of trouble they will boost us up.

I think different from most people about this. I figure the Dies committee did more to help relocation than we realize. Without that publicity nobody knows about us. After they came out, all the more people sympathized with us and if they did more, it would have been easier for us.

I don't know about the zoot suit boys. I've never seen one, but I hear there are plenty of them around. They're all young though. I guess you can't blame them. It makes it tough on the other nisei. But I figure this way, out of all bad there always comes a good and I ~~gar~~ figure no matter how gloomy it looks now it will end up okay.

Right now I want to know what I'm fitted for. That's the only thing I'm worrying about. I always think about it. Once I get the hang of it in any line, I hate to play second fiddle. I want to be up there. When I don't know anything, I'm curious and I ask and ask until I get a sane answer. I always used to hound the people I work with until I find out what the work is all about.

What got me to thinking about this ink factory job was, my wife says to me, you slave and slave and what will you be six months from now? I'll still be in the ink shop. She wants me to learn but I don't know what I should learn.

My father always told me two things, and I have always remembered them. He said, "Always remember you're a Japanese. You have yellow skin and you will always be Japanese." I've never forgotten that. Another thing he told me was, "Never work for money. Let money work for you." He told me to enjoy life when you have money. It's no use just slaving all the time.

I figure this way, about life. It's like gambling of a Chinaman. I used to go to the boats and watch them play. They never sit



around and play all day. If they feel lucky they go and play a few rounds and when they win a little bit, they go home. The Chinaman will go in with a thousand dollars and he'll put \$500 of it away. Then he'll play \$100 and if he loses he'll put up another hundred. But when he loses five hundred he goes home. The nisei guys start playing small and when they lose it they try to win it back and play big and they lose everything. When I go to a club, I wait around and watch to see how things are going. Then I play a few times and if I win, I leave. By a law of averages, a man is bound to have a lucky streak sometimes and he's got to cash in on it when it comes. Once in a lifetime comes a time when things go your way and if you don't cash in and miss your chance it may never happen again.

There are a lot of good opportunities for starting business here. I here this is a graft town and you can get away with murder. That means business ought to be pretty good.

The nisei around here are money crazy. They got jobs that pay a lot but I wonder about their future. I think they'll be able to hold their jobs after the war but they won't get anywhere working in the kind of jobs they got.

Another thing I don't like is these damn unions. At the place where I work, they asked me if I wanted to be an elevator boy. I asked him, "Do I have to join the union?" And they told me I did. They said I have to pay an initiation fee of \$50 and then \$100 every three months. They said that was for all the benefits I get for the union protecting my job. But I figured that there's a lot of dirty politics in there so I didn't take the job. I'm all for unions but some of them are crooked.



1. see Wirth
2. see Togo
3. Go through  
interview data
4. work out analysis  
I recommende-  
tions—
5. see Mrs. —
6. additional interview



(COPY)

BEHRENDT-LEVY INSURANCE AGENCY

Sept. 23, 1943 (14)

Professoor Louis Wirth  
Department of Sociology  
University of Chicago  
Chicago 37, Illinois

My dear Dr. Wirth:

I cannot thank you enough for your kindness in helping Mr. Gilbert Kuramitsu. I certainly appreciate it.

Leo is working hard on motion picture stories. His whole family are now in Los Angeles. For your information, they are living at 313 South El Camino Drive, Beverly Hills.

Kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,

/s/ LEO S. BEHRENDT

GB:b



Oct. 22, 1943

Dear Mr. Wirth:

Thank you for letting us copy the letters which you received from Mr. Kuramitsu. They were very helpful indeed. I am returning them with this letter.

I went to see Mr. Kuramitsu last night and am enclosing with this letter some notes that I took on the interview. I don't know quite what to do about him, but have scheduled some further interviews for the next two weeks. When he says that he needs a psychologist, he is not referring to any fears that he may have about being abnormal, but rather to a vocational guidance expert who would presumably tell him what job he is best fitted for. He claims, as you can see from the write-up, that he wishes to save money and start a business of his own. He is primarily concerned with the field in which to go into. I told him that he probably would not get much help from anything like the Strong Vocational Interest Test and he asked me if I could interview him and then show you the results. He felt that perhaps you could help him in adjusting himself. There's apparently no hurry in this because he intends to continue working at his present place until he has saved enough money. He stated that he was willing to take a job at low pay if he could learn and if the future were good. I told him about my connections with the Study but what I said apparently did not register. I think that he thinks I am one of your assistants and as long as that does not cause any embarrassment to you I shall let it go at that for the time being.

He hesitated about the co-op job that you mentioned because he has little experience in retail work. He wishes to know a bit more in detail the nature of his duties if he should take the job.

Thank you ever so much for bringing this to our attention. We shall do everything we can to help him and it seems that at the same time we are gathering valuable data.

Very sincerely yours,

Encl.: 1

Tom Shibutani