

Tanaka 7/27/43

Jim I. Furita (pseudonym) will have been in Chicago exactly one month on July 29. On that day he hopes to be enroute "back to Manzanar."

On the day of the interview, Jim Furita said he had been trying to "get up enough courage" to go back to Manzanar Relocation Center. He had struggled with himself for the past three weeks, first deciding this way, then that way. When he called at our office, he gave all the outward signs of a person in considerable mental distress and under high tension and pressure. He had no real purpose in his mind in calling on the American Friends Service Committee. He had just wandered, he put it, rather aimlessly to the tenth floor of the Security building in the Chicago loop. Oh yes, he had been advised to call on us by Kenji Nakane of the United Ministry for Evacuees with whom he had talked a few days previously. Jim Furita was clam-mouthed at first. He did not speak squarely or directly. He was evasive and vague. The interviewer could not at first determine what Jim had in mind in calling on him. After a full hour and a half of conversation, carried on with some effort by the interviewer, Jim finally volunteered this statement:

"I sure must be in a neurotic state of mind. I've felt right along I been gettin' on everyone's nerves. Even my roommate shows it. He don't seem to have so much use for me hangin' around and mopin' all day."

Jim Furita is 22 years old. He is of solid,

husky build. He stands five feet six and a half inches in height and weighs 170 pounds. His features are clean-cut and he is light brown of complexion; he could almost pass for an American Indian. He seems to be in good health and gives one the impression of a young man with strong back and good hands capable of putting in a good day's work at stiff manual labor. Despite the fact he was glum, restless, uneasy and somewhat shifty-eyed on the day of the interview, this condition apparently due to his mental state, he has a winning smile. He was cheerful once for a fleeting moment during the interview. The sparkle in his expression was an almost startling contrast to his manners and carriage during the rest of the time.

Jim Furita was born June 21, 1921 in Los Angeles. All his life before the past month, he has lived with his parents, in the mental sanctuary of the family hearth. He has an older sister and an older brother. Jim has been the "baby" of the family. He apparently does not resent being referred to as this, even now. He has never had to do very much thinking for himself, and he admits he has acted "on the spur of the moment" and according to his impulses. Asked if the decision to come out had been one of his own, he said:

"I never had any responsibility all my life, but I left Manzanar with some friends the day after I told my folks about it. I came out through the Brethren hostel. No, my folks were against me comin' out. My father is 60 and my mother's not so young anymore. They told me I would have a lot of prejudice and discrimination and trouble on the outside. I kinda hinted around before that to them that I was going to

leave. But I never really gave 'em much warning. I told 'em on the day before I left. It was just like that fast."

Jim arrived in Chicago without a job, but with definite assurances, through the hostel invitation procedure, that he could secure one through the War Relocation Authority. He said:

"Mr. Smeltzer sent me and my friend to Mr. Shirrell's office at W.R.A. We got sent on a job lead to a place called Kaln's in the wholesale produce market. The man who was doing the hiring was swell and all that but the union kicked and wouldn't let us join."

This, according to Jim, was a great blow to his expectations. He was asked:

"Was this because of your Japanese ancestry?"

"Why sure, why else?"

"You're sure of this?"

"Yeah, absolutely sure."

"Was it the C.I.O or the A.F. of L.?"

"A.F. of L."

"But aren't there any evacuees in that same union?"

"Yeah, there's one fellow working there now. I don't remember his name exactly, but he says the union's not accepting any more. They've got a quota--just one."

"Have you since tried to get any other jobs?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Oh, I dunno. I been sleeping awful late and spending all my time in the apartment by myself just think-

ing. I been trying to work up enough courage to go back to Manzanar."

"Why? Just why do you insist on going back to Manzanar? What is it about Chicago you haven't been able to like?"

"Oh, I dunno exactly," he looked out the window and scratched his head. He shifted his gaze from ceiling to wall to floor, then he said:

"I'm fed up with this place. I'm lost here. This city's got a whole lot of buildings. They're all alike. They all look square and big and just the same." He was gesturing with both arms, describing a square to indicate the shape of the buildings. He stopped, looked up a bit sheepishly, then almost yawning, said:

"Yeah, I guess they'll laugh at me and say what a failure I am, but I'm going back any way."

He was asked:

"Do you mean your friends will laugh at you?"

"Yeah, and especially my folks."

"Well, they'd be glad to see you again too, though, wouldn't they?"

"Yeah. I know my folks. They'd be glad to see me sure, but deep down inside, they'd wish I hadn't come back but had made a success on the outside."

"In that case, wouldn't you like a job lead where you won't be turned down by a union?"

"Well, no, I don't think so. Why, you got any good leads?"

"Your description of your skills and your application sheet* here which you have filled out show that you might prefer to take a factory job. You don't have any particular skill, but you do want to keep busy and be able to save. Is that right?"

"Well, I don't know. I druther go back to Manzanar."

"You'll need train fare back, won't you?"

"Oh, I got that."

"Well, what's holding you, then?"

"They tell me I can't get back into Manzanar. It's in the military zone. Besides, if I go in, I'll be stranded. I won't have any money to get out again."

"Then that's all the more reason why you perhaps ought to work here, save enough money, then go back if you can get into the Center, say on a visit to your folks and prepare to bring them out on relocation. Don't you think that's a good idea."

"Yeah, but my older brother and my sister can do that all right."

"You want to save some money?"

"Sure, but I gotta work first."

"How much are you living on here in Chicago?"

"Why?"

"Well, can you live on \$60 a month, including all your expenses."

"Sure I can do that easy. I been doin' better'n that."

"Well, if you will go to work at the Canfield

CH - 211 (6)

Beverage Company, and they have just telephoned us tellingus they need more men, you can earn, by working hard and putting in overtime, better than \$165 a month. I think you have considerable capacity for physical work, and I know fellows who are earning that much and more in that plant. You can have an opportunity to keep occupied and less time for moping. You'll be able to save and make your financial position better. What about it?"

Jim hadn't been listening closely. Long statements seemed to lose his attention. He looked blankly at the application form which he had filled out incompletely and which was lying on the desk in front of him. He looked down at the floor. S i l e n c e .

Jim Furita is the very picture of a young man working himself mentally into a nervous state of irritation. He is confused and shows it in every move. He is unable to make up his own mind. He is indefinite about everything. He can't make up his mind to go to work because he has already "made up his mind" to go back to Manzanar, he says, then adds: "I can't be sure about going back to Manzanar because my money will runo out and maybe they won't let me in." He can't make up his mind to stay in Chicago because "if I go to Manzanar, they'll never let me come to Chicago again, will they?" He is not sure that he is goingto like manzanar any better than he is now enjoying Chicago and he is not sure he will stay in camp a second time very long. He is not sure that Chicago is "as bad as all that" and he may even want to come here again.

His statements are contradictory, muddled. He is uncertain about everything. He has done "so much thinking about this thing, I don't know whether I'm comin' or goin'." Jim Furita has been confused for several weeks. He has heard numerous rumors and spent considerable time in digesting them. He no longer is able to talk clearly. His thoughts do not run in understandable sequence. He jumps from one thing to another. It is not easy to follow him. His thoughts seem disjointed, and there are long pauses of silence between his volunteered statements.

He had already apparently been exposed to considerable advice and suasion against his announced intentions of going back to camp. He said:

"Mr. Smeltzer doesn't even talk to me like he used to. When we first came out, he used to call me over and everyday as I came into the hostel, he would say: 'Well, Jim, any luck in job hunting today?' I guess he just got disgusted with me because I'm kinda slow and didn't show any interest. He must have thought I was lazy too and didn't give a darn. I didn't do much looking. Pretty soon, he would just look up and say hello. Then he'd just nod his head, as if in disgust. I moved out of the hostel with my friend who got a job; he's working now. I been to see Mr. Smeltzer several times. He tells me to buck up and go to work--get a job."

He was asked:

"Why don't you?"

"I wanna go back to manzanar. I have an older sis-

ter. She's in New York and wants me to go there. She don't want me to go back to camp, whatever I do."

"Why don't you go to New York?"

"Jobs aren't so good there, I hear."

"Who told you that?"

"Oh, I hear it from a lot of guys."

"You need only one job, you know. You may find it in New York."

"Yes, but I drutther go back to Manzanar."

"Have you been to see Mr. Shirrell at the W.R.A. office?"

"Sure, I went yesterday. He told me I couldn't go back to Manzanar. He said he wouldn't let me go back. I'd just get as far as Reno, then I'd need a permit, and he said Mr. Merritt wouldn't give anyone a permit unless Mr. Shirrell said to. I'd a gone a long ago if I knew I wouldn't get stranded at Reno. Do you know if there are any restrictions on Japanese at Reno?"

"Not to my knowledge. There might be some curfew regulations, although we have no official information. What would you do at Reno?"

"I'd telephone Mr. Merritt at Manzanar. They say he's a reasonable man. Do you think he'd let me go back to Manzanar from Reno? He couldn't turn a guy away after going all that distance?"

"That would be hard to say. I don't know. Why do you want to go back to Manzanar so badly?"

"I'd like to get another start. Just because I went back wouldn't mean I couldn't come out again, would it?"

"No, I suppose not. But you would not be eligible to receive another grant. You got it once, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did. That's right. I'd be stranded without dough to get out. And they've started segregation at Manzanar today."

"How do you know they've started segregation at Manzanar today?"

"Mr. Shirrell told me that when I saw him yesterday."

"And you still want to go back, knowing how unsettled things are going to be at Manzanar?"

"Yes. And you know, I could tell Mr. Merritt I went back because I wanted to be with the folks when they were moved to another camp."

Jim's folks are not applicants for the segregation camp at Tule Lake apparently. While he made no definite statement to that effect, he implied that they would probably go to another camp further inland, possibly Granada. He was asked:

"What makes you think they're going to another camp?"

"Why, they're going to move everyone out of Manzanar. Haven't you heard. Mr. Shirrell said so himself. He said that when the segregation is completed at Tule Lake, there will be so very few people left at Manzanar, they'll move em all out and make it a prisoner of war camp. They've only got 64 prisoners of war right now, but they expect a lot

more later on. Yes, Manzanar people are going to get moved again."

"Are you sure he said this?"

"Sure, why what's his name, Mr. Smeltzer, was right there with me and heard this."

"How soon is all this going to happen?"

"Well, he didn't know that."

Jim Furita has been homesick and depressed ever since he arrived in Chicago. He says he didn't even enjoy the novelty of coming out and being "free." He does not appear to be the type who mixes easily or makes new friends readily. His is an extremely reticent and introvert personality. He is close-mouthed to strangers, even those who approach him in friendly manner; or perhaps this characteristic may have been accentuated by the nervous state in which he has worked himself. He was asked:

"What have you done for your recreation?"

"Oh. I been to a coupla shows now and then. But I don't really enjoy them. I haven't been able to have any good time at all."

"Don't you have any friends here?"

"Oh sure, lots of 'em from Manzanar, but they're all scattered around. I don't get around much at all. I been spending most of my time in the apartment. I sleep real late and spend a lot of time thinking. I guess I been thinking a lot."

"About what?"

"Oh, this and that, you know, everything."

"Maybe you've been thinking too much and not doing enough?"

"Yeah. I guess so."

"Would you say you were the happy-go-lucky type?"

"I'm certainly not happy."

"You haven't had many pleasant or happy experiences in Chicago?"

"None worth remembering?"

"You've had some unpleasant experiences?"

"Yeah, some."

"Do you care to elaborate?"

"No. I'd like to know how to get back to Manzanar."

"Have you any church preference?"

"Nope."

"If you go back to camp, what will you do?"

"Oh, same as before, probably. I'll be a policeman. I'll wait for the draft, maybe. They say they're gonna draft us anyway,, so instead of getting a job, I might as well go back and wait for the draft."

"Are you 1-A?"

"Yeah, unless something's wrong with me. I don't think so, though."

Jim Furita's trouble seemed to lie in his inability to make a decision. But this vacillation seems to be part and parcel of his character make-up. He suffers from a tremendous inferiority complex; he is timid and afraid to meet people. He said that if he were sure he could get back into Manzanar, he would have gone back the first week. He

did not like to admit it at first, but he has been lonesome and "homesick" for Manzanar. He has never been away from his family ~~ake~~ in his life. He attended grammar school in Van Nuys, California, and graduated Belmont high school in Los Angeles where he majored in mathematics. He also played varsity football. At this time he also worked part-time in a retail produce market in Glendale *7 am 12/3* and continued to do so after graduation. All this time he lived with his parents. His father was head of the household.

For a young man of 22, Jim does not appear to have attained any semblance of independence of thinking or emotional maturity. He has made no break from family ties, despite the fact he apparently has not been completely motivated by considerations of concern for his elderly parents.

Jim Furita is also extremely race-conscious in that he is sensitive and aware of his Japanese ancestry to a very high degree. He suffers keenly from a sense of having failed. He appears to have a definite complex of inferiority. This feeling stems from two sources: (1) his sensitivity regarding his Japanese racial background and (2) his lack of a college education. He has, however, the frank quality of a quick and ready admission of his own shortcomings. He says:

"The good jobs here are only for the guys with a college education who's gotta be real good to get anything

half decent when you're Japanese."

Jim's hobbies are stamp collecting and drafting. He has more or less let both "go to seed" lately. He seems bored with everything about him. He is drifting aimlessly, and he knows it but has no idea what he can do about it. He wants to secure a grip on himself before he gets completely lost, he says. He was asked:

"Do you plan to continue your education?"

He replied:

"No. The draft's gonna catch up with me anyway."

"You'd be willing to go, of course?"

"Yeah, if they'll take me. Might as well get ahold of something."

S i l e n c e .

He sat there and fidgeted about, his gaze looking aimlessly out toward the Chicago river and the Civic Theatre building towering to the west. He was then told by the interviewer:

"One of your biggest problems--perhaps your only real problem--is to learn how to make up your mind. I take it you came up here for help. We want to be able to help you. But in order to do that, we must know what you yourself want. We can't know that unless you yourself do. You find it difficult to make a decision. So you avoid it by putting it off. You'd feel better if you could bring yourself to a decision. If you are drafted, as a soldier, you may have to make some quick decisions. If you hesitate on the field of battle, for instance, they tell me a soldier

may lose his life."

He replied with a shrug:

"That'd be me all right."

Jim Furita began to talk rather freely after an hour of continuous interrogation by the interviewer. As he loosened up, he seemed to be more at ease; he even smiled on one or two occasions. The subject got around to Jim's interests in girls. Apparently Jim is not accustomed to voicing opinions about the opposite sex. He gave the impression that he was not interested in them. He was asked:

"Do you have a girl friend or fiancée?"

He colored slightly and shook his head. He seemed embarrassed. The question was pressed:

"The reason why I ask you such a personal question is because if you had one waiting for you in camp, it would help us understand why you want to go back. You don't have anyone waiting for you in camp then?"

"Only my folks who are there," was his reply.

Jim's older brother, who is 26 and also single, is currently planning to relocate from Manzanar, Jim said. He has not kept in regular touch through correspondence with his family.

At the termination of the interview, Jim Furita stood up and offered his hand. He said:

"Thanks a lot. You've helped me make up my mind."

"Then you'll go out and get a job and give Chicago a try?"

"Nope, I'm going right back to Manzanar. I'll sink or swim. I'll take the chance. That's what you say I ought to do--make up my mind. I'll do it. Thanks a lot."

He was smiling and apparently relieved.

The interviewer was not.

Jim promised to keep in touch with the office and said he would call on the American Friends Service Committee by mail if he got stuck enroute.

* * *

Somewhere between the Friends office which he left that afternoon and his apartment, Jim seems to have changed his mind again and found himself in the same quandary. That same day, later in the afternoon, it appears that he visited Ralph Smeltzer of the Brethren Service Committee through whose hostel he had originally come to Chicago. He asked Smeltzer if he felt that Mr. Merritt would let him get back into Manzanar. Smeltzer said that he probably would not because Mr. Shirrell had said he would not approve of his return and Mr. Merritt would not admit anyone returning from Chicago without Mr. Shirrell's okay. Jim then asked Smeltzer if it wasn't true that Mr. Merritt needn't know anything about Jim's having been in Chicago. He asked:

"If I just quietly went back to Reno and called Manzanar from there, how would Mr. Merritt know that I was in Chicago. How would he have word from Mr. Shirrell?"

Smeltzer replied that inasmuch as he was personally responsible to the War Relocation Authority for the Brethren hosteler, he would be obliged to let Mr. Shirrell know if Jim took a train west for Reno; that seems to have squelched almost-crystallized intentions to return to Manzanar.

According to Ralph Smeltzer, Jim Furita "left Manzanar tagging along with his friend, Sam Suto (pseudonym.). He followed along at Sam's heels for a couple of days as Sam went out job-hunting. It seems that Sam was the person who made up their minds to relocate; Sam did all the thinking for the two. They came to the Brethren hostel. But even Sam seems to have got tired of Jim's backwardness after a few days. Sam went out on his own hook and got a job when Jim wasn't around. Jim just seemed to be completely lost without Sam. We tried to help Jim, but he just couldn't make up his mind on whether to take a job that paid a lot of money but hadn't any future and a job that didn't pay so much but trained him for a skill that would provide a trade or some kind of a future.. Jim just got into the habit of hanging around the hostel. He was a bad influence on new arrivals because he was always so pessmistic about things.

"Finally, one day Sam made arrangements to get Jim a job at the Ace Foundry where Sam works. But Jim just actually couldn't get the nerve to go out. He's told me that he's gone up to get a job and walked back and forth before a door and then, out of fear of meeting and facing the boss, just given up and gone home. Jim has an inferiority complex. He's not psychopathic. He's lost. He doesn't have

courage enough to talk to employers to get a job. He just can't talk. He freezes up. He's never been on his own. The only reason why he came out was because his pal came out. His pal Sam is around 23 but he's much more mature.

"I've talked to Jim several times. I've found job leads for him to make connections, but he just doesn't have the nerve to follow through. One day, I believe it was last Friday, he said he was taking the train back to Manzanar. I took him on my car to Mr. Shirrell's office, and Shirrell told him right off that Merritt wouldn't let him into Manzanar without Shirrell's okay. He said he would not give Jim such an okay, and he would need a military pass to get to Manzanar.

"That stopped him cold. Shirrell made Jim promise that he would come down on Monday to the W.R.A. and register so he could be sent out on a job offer. I don't know whether Jim did; I think he neglected to do so.

"Late Tuesday (7/27/43) afternoon, Jim came over to the hostel again. We had a long talk. He said he had decided to go as far back as Reno and take his chances with Mr. Merritt. Then I laid it on thick. I said he was being a coward and taking the easy way out. I said he was soft and going back to Manzanar because he didn't have the courage to make a go of things here. This seems to have got under his skin because he said it took courage to go back to Reno. When I insisted it took more courage to stay on, he then said he would remain. He found himself without any avenue

of retreat. He said he was going to stay on.

"My opinion is that we have been too soft with Jim. He's a big baby in a sort of way. He's got to be man-handled a little. For a while, he was raising excitement around the hostel by going around and telling everyone he was going to commit suicide. That was when he was lowest in his feelings, doing absolutely nothing all day long. He said he might jump off a bridge. He was bad on morale but pretty soon we didn't take his threats to jump off a bridge too seriously. He does need help, though."

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

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

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

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

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

Miyamoto addenda to Togo's interview
August 23, 1943

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Jim sat there without comment.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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