

Copied

Fresno

May 15, 1942

My dear Virginia:

Taking time out from my daily routine to drop you a few lines before I depart for our "Shangrila".

The medical exam went along in smooth fashion this morning — for a while. After that, this old SBA building was a mad house. It is now two o'clock in the afternoon, and only a skeleton crew left here at present. To-morrow a similar program, preparatory to final evacuation, will go under way.

I can't feature the light and care free attitude most of the Japanese are taking in this crisis. Perhaps their outward appearance belies their inner feelings, I'm sure. Anyway, you've got to hand it to the people con-

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earned. What do you think? That's quite enough of the dismal end of all this.

Coming back to us "Americans", if it takes an evacuation to be able to meet such pleasant company as you, I demand more evacuations. But I shall not demand too loudly. People like you makes sacrifices that we have to make so much more easier.

The "song fest" that we participated in was quite a treat - a kind of fun which comes along only once in a while, but which has to last a lifetime. For all the help you were to me, I can only live up to ^{promise to} write when I can, as you wanted to me. That's the least that I can do, in my own peculiar little way.

Letter writing is no hobby or pastime with me, but with certain people, it seems so easy to write. Such is your case. First attempts seem so feeble. In my attempt to say the right things at the right time in the best way possible, I may have side-tracked the usual procedures of letter writing, but I promise to do better in the future. Shall I put it this way? It all depends upon the kind of a letter I receive from you that will determine my type of writing to you.

Thanks for your pleasant company again. Wish there could be more times. See you in future letters.

Sincerely,

San Nakano

Address me at Fresno Assembly Center.

Copied

Avenue J, Barrack 1, Apt. 2
Fresno Assembly Center
Fresno, California
May 18, 1942

My dear Virginia:

It seems that you were writing to me on the same day that I was writing to you. But I did not receive your letter until to-day. It was good of you to do so, and I shall reciprocate by answering this day, just 36 hours after entering this temporary exile of ours.

First of all, let me say that conditions are not quite as bad as most of the people had pictured. At present anyway, they are all taking this somewhat philosophically; more as an adventure, the novelty of which will surely soon wear off. A number of evacuees in this camp have been working all day throughout the past years, and this experience is like a long awaited vacation to them. I'm afraid that if these people are not put to some useful work soon, they will go "stir-crazy" slowly. To see them during the day, whiling away their time, doing nothing in particular but gabbing with neighbors and friends in whatever shade they can find in this hot and shadeless place, I begin to wonder what will gradually happen to them. Of course I am talking about the older folks now. Some have been put on the "pay-roll", working the scenery, carpentry, and kitchen duties. The latter is a roasting and thankless job, long hours, and a hard sort of work as compared to what the majority are doing at present; that is loafing.

The youngsters do not seem to be aware of the whys and wherefores of this change, and are having a grand "picnic", as you might say, playing ball wherever they can, and roaming the grounds as a whole.

to apply
The older fellows are trying/their respective talents to whatever type they are suited for, and most of them are already working at these positions. It's a good thing, for I can well realize how important it is to be doing something.

Many of us have not had enough time to adapt ourselves to this new location; therefore there is not very much that I can say about the sociological side of all this. Within a few more days, I'm sure that I can answer you in this respect.

Bankers, farmers, merchants, and common laborers- there just isn't any distinction, especially when we all have to get in line and wait to eat our meals. These women with small children who have to wait so patiently in line for thirty minutes and more in order ^{to get} into the mess hall to eat, waiting in the hot sun-I can't help feeling sympathetic towards them.

There are several cases among the civilians of the camp that is really touching. Among these is the case of a Mexican girl who has part Japanese blood in her. All of her life she has lived among Mexican people, reared among them, and even married a Mexican boy. But she is in this camp. On top of it all, she is pregnant. She just doesn't fit into this picture, has practically no friends to speak of, except those who understand her predicament and desire to sympathize with her. I have heard that she seems so self conscious of herself that she stays indoors as much as possible, and spends most of the nights sobbing and crying. Her husband, I understand, is trying to obtain an exemption for her from the outside, which I certainly hope he gets. If anyone deserves an exemption of this kind, she surely is it.

There are a few more individuals of this type, but they are doing better with themselves.

The food, because we have no other choice, is quite all right, for hunger does funny things to one's stomach. Mind you, this is not an outright complaint, but it does take some of us time to get used to this type of food.

They, that is, the carpenters from the outside, have started remodeling the womens' showers and rest rooms, which is a break the women deserve. More privacy for the ladies is the aim. The hot and cold water has not been fully adjusted as yet, so we are just getting cold water the greater part of the time.

So many of the people turned amateur carpenters overnite in order to beautify their respective rooms in the way of shelves, clothes closet, small chairs and tables. Where did we get all the lumber? There is, rather, there was a pile of used lumber, odds and ends of the finished barracks, from which we gathered the woodwork to do the carpentry. Getting such lumber is like going on a scavenger hunt. Young and old are still searching the pile for whatever they can find to build up their rooms the best way possible.

Speaking of rooms, many families are sharing the same room with other families, with only a hanging curtain or sheet separating them. This set-up does not appeal to me as quite right for married people. Who am I to determine the right or wrong of all this? But the wrong is there and everywhere and it just isn't right. And so far into the nite--

As far I am concerned, I have been made a recreational director, and a few of us fellows are trying a program for the camp; that is, trying to work out a program. This is quite important, and we aim to do our best.

This letter is just a general outlook on camp-life as a whole. In my next writing, I expect to go into more detail of specific matters.

Thanks again, say hello to Hilda, and I shall see you again.

Sincerely yours,
Sam Nakano

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J. 1-25
Assembly Center
Fresno, California

Hello Virginia

I certainly trust that you'll receive some benefit from our center paper which I delayed so long in sending. I have informed the press of your desire to be put on the mailing list, and I'm sure it has been complied by now.

The days are getting shorter and shorter here, as elsewhere, and the weather has cooled considerably. In fact, it's actually cold in the mornings. And this is supposed to be raisin' country. This cool weather is earlier than usual.

The labor shortage on the outside is really a serious problem, isn't it? Here we are confined behind these guarded barbed-wire fences and doing nothing of importance, while the farmers in surrounding vicinities cry for labor in relief of disastrous crop loss. If we were only given an opportunity

to aid in this tragic situation confronting the people who supply the food for the army. Since we are going to be here this October, thousands of us could have a real part in aiding the war effort. You know, we were never given a fair trial as to our loyalty, and you don't go around asking whether or not a person is loyal. It's what he is inside, his thought, his actions that are the attributes of loyalty. It seems a hopeless case to even try to get out and work on such a program as our contribution.

Rumor, and a very strong one from the front office, has it that we may possibly ^{be} sent to Arkansas. Don't know a thing about that state, but it's a long long way from home. What a wonderful cross-country train ride it will be — in a way. As for me, that will be my first ride out of the state of California.

As you probably have read in the center paper, we are now having movies here quite regular, and is it going over with a bang. We now have three showings of each picture in order to accommodate the residents, and the kids are going every nite. Its a wonderful and cheap, as far as money is concerned, kind of entertainment for all.

The army stepped in today, and with the aid of the interior police searched every room for contraband. Why, I don't know, but it sure had a lot of people in a dither, who's with about 50 M.P.s and the like number of police civilians, walking from barrack to barrack. Now that we're in these camps, are they still suspicious of us? Gosh, we just haven't a chance to present our side of the issue at all.

what's happened to Hilda? Since I wrote to her, I still haven't received any answer. Perhaps she's that busy.

How is your work coming along, Virginia? I wish I could keep myself as usefully occupied as you. It might help a lot to give a certain person a little uplift. What with the quality of the food decreasing I haven't even got an appetite to eat in the mess - Talk any more.

It seems that they are reducing the warehouse of the present supply of foodstuffs, and they are mostly staple ones, so our menus are pretty much alike from day to day.

Tell me a lot of funny stories in your next letter. I need to hear these.

See you around in a letter.

Sam Haddock

P.S. Pardon the pencil, since I can't write faster this way.

Avenue J, Barrack 1, Apt 2
Fresno Assembly Center
Fresno, California
May 22, 1942 answered
5/2

My dear Virginia:

You are answering my letters so fast, I'm having one heck of a time trying to keep up with you. But right now there is nothing to look forward to, but letters from sweet friends such as you. Thanks for all the moral support.

I just received a letter from Hilda today — a surprise. You and she are living up to my fondest hopes.

Our first camp catastrophe happened last Wednesday afternoon when over three hundred people, young and old alike, were stricken with food poisoning. Those affected had all eaten out of the same mess hall. It was a terrible picture to witness, with so many people suffering so in this terrific ^{heat} ~~shade~~.

In telling you, they had patients lying all over the Center Hospital floor. I know, for I was there, caring for my father and mother. Even today my parents are still quite ill. Hospital facilities could not care for so many people at one time. We have only two doctors, and even one of them was laid up during this siege. Some of the nurses' aides collapsed also.

I hope that this major incident will wake up the front office as to actual conditions in such an emergency.

On the fairgrounds side of this camp, there is little space for a well organized recreational locale. All the available area is taken up by barracks and roadways. Of course, on the Butler side of the camp, about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the front office is an undeveloped area of twenty acres which, we have been told, will soon be used as a playground for

Baseball, soft ball and outdoor, and other children's and adults recreations. This is another one of those inevitable "matters". We're dickering with the front office for a sprinkler or spray system here and there within the camp for the use of youngsters as a refreshing refuge from this terrific heat. Also to create shade arbors, or something to that effect, for the older folks. They shall try - is the answer we receive.

The day that we were supposed to work out a council for this camp, the food poisoning took place, and thus far nothing has been done definitely as far as the government of the camp is concerned. Eventually each block will have two or three elective representatives to a camp council. Now this council would be elected five members to sit in conference with Mr. Pulliam, manager of the center, as the over-all body. Other

than this set-up, I do not know, for I'm not on the inside of the governmental end of all this. It seems I came in too late for any key jobs of that sort. Still today, I'm not sure I have a "paid" job or not. The name of recreational director does sound rather important. Time will tell as to my specific duties and the responsibility.

I haven't eaten for a whole day while caring for my flocks, and because of those conditions, I have not felt any hunger. I do hope they (the cooks) will stop giving us so much "fatty" food so often, especially during these hot days. To me the meals are scrub, a dish we would seldom touch were we on the outside. Most of us have received our mess-hall cards, denoting at what time we are supposed to eat. This has curtailed the long waiting in line in the hot sun.

We still have room for about a thousand more people. I wonder where they will come from and when. How long will we stay here? Judging from the way many of the people are modeling and decorating their respective rooms, you'd imagine that these were our permanent homes for the duration. We have some clever amateur carpenters, and (artists) artistic, too. What we can make with a few nails and odd pieces of lumber laying around in the center. It's amazing, Virginia, to visit neighbors and gaze upon their wood work and craftsmanship. esp., it is fun to fiddle around with tools.

I have asked some of my friends to send me fruits and cigarettes. Waiting to get ^(cigarettes) them at our canteen is quite ⁱⁿ possible, with it being open only for a few hours each day for about four thousand people. It looks as if we have to buy

script books of several denominations with cash, our own, by the way, and purchase articles from the canteen with these books.

Hospital facilities are scarce yet. Much of the equipment which the doctors have asked for, and other things which any hospital should have, have not as yet arrived.

Ever since I entered camp, I've taken a shower or two every day, and to-day was the first time that I ever got warm water. For myself I don't mind cold showers, but there are a lot of ^{young} youngsters and old people who cannot stand it. For their sake I do hope that this situation, one among many, will soon be remedied.

Let's do make that promise, Virginia, and meet somewhere after all this is over and go on a well-deserved "binge". As long as we can keep up corresponding like this,

will know just about where we can keep our promise, and then decide where. Mind you, like you said in a previous letter, no matter what happens in between. Fair enough.

For many of us this is a first opportunity to meet and mingle with friends we seldom see. And we're making the most of it, believe me.

Gosh, only you could give me the energy to sit and write a letter as long as this. Perhaps soon after I've fully recovered from this shock of being in a camp of this sort, I can make my letters much more interesting. So hang on, won't you, please, until then.

Good-nite dear friend, and be good!

Sincerely
Sam Nakano

Avenue J, Barrack 1, Apt..2
Assembly Center
Fresno, California
May 28, 1942

Dear Virginia:

It was sure a relief to receive your prompt answer to my long letter of last week. At the time there were so many rumors to the effect that our letters were being censored by the postal officials, due largely to the food poisoning incident. But now, all my worries are dispelled.

Really, you would be surprised at this town which has mushroomed overnight in this center. Away from our homes and familiar conveniences, we are all making necessary adjustments in order to fit ourselves to this new life and new surroundings. People are now getting accustomed to the conditions here, and things are coming along in nice fashion, under the circumstances.

We just received a batch of new evacuees from Florin way yesterday, some five hundred strong, with more expected within the next few days, from where I do not know. What large families they have in Florin! Almost an average of ten to a family, with children in step ladder fashion, that is, ranging from one to the teen ages. The heads of these new families seem to mostly farmers; so that probably accounts for the many kids, or does it?

This week the weather has been the opposite of last week, with it being cold, windy, and rainy, also. Quite unusual for this section of the state for the month of May, but so many unusual things have been happening this year that we can overlook many things.

I have heard rumors of thievery and girls coming home early in the mornings, but no verifications yet; so cannot tell you this for a fact. I suppose that in closely quartered centers as this, you can't get away from such incidents. I have also heard of some big poker games going on, but such games as a whole cannot be looked upon as a crime here.

The Council is just in the preliminary stages today, with ten leaders being selected in each block to represent that particular block. From the ten are selected two official representatives and one alternate to the center council. There are at present ten blocks in all. From these twenty people are selected are five men to sit in on meetings with the camp manager. There you have a rough idea of the governmental set-up here.

The restrooms now have regular bowl seats now in all of them. The privacy improvement for the womens' is still on paper, with no definite action as yet. The women's showers are in the same category.

I can't say as much for the food here as in Tanforan, for it has not improved to such a high degree as that. But, as I

have said before, we just have no choice in the matter.

In this center it is true also that the younger set have taken over all, or at least, the major part of all and any key jobs there are to be had. But you have to admit that there are many on the outside who are more deserving of these positions. It's a shame that there so many persons who are much more capable, sitting on the sidelines, doing practically nothing.

As far as recreations are concerned, there is no organized arrangements made yet. Too much of it still on paper has not received the attention which this phase deserves. But with no action from the administration office, the hands of the personnel are tied. But, the educational committee within the camp has started schooling for the younger children, at least, the registration end of it anyway. With such a large sign-up, perhaps the facilities offered to us here will not care for such a large enrollment, which doesn't sound so good. You know, in all of our work, we seem to advance so far, and then we are stumped, what with such slow co-operation from the front office. Too much responsibilities are placed on the shoulders of too few men. This tends to give them more work that they can handle efficiently; too many things are started but never finished or accomplished to anyone's satisfaction.

Going out to lunch---that is a strange but familiar phrase to me. Sure, I wish I could accompany you, but as you would say, it shall have to wait until another day yet to come.

What would happen if you wrote a letter that went beyond one sheet?

Thanks for your pleasant and welcome friendliness in your letters. It's nice to look forward to hearing from you.

By the way, the canteen or commissary here is getting the top prices for anything they sell here. Cigarettes are fifteen cents a package or a dollar and half a carton, which is just short of robbery, I think. Book matches costs us just twenty-five cents a box, and I used to get them for nothing. I wish they would sell more fruit, such as bananas, apples, and oranges; also Kleenex and "cokes". For the number of people here who want to patronize the canteen, the size and the short hours it is open is a great handicap. We do have to purchase script books of \$2.50 denominations in order to buy at the store. And the rush is terrible.

Oh yes, I did write to Hilda. Such an efficient worker as she, she should have no difficulty at all. Look at yourself, two positions and still going strong. All I can say is more power to you and take care of yourself. Until our next meeting in these letters, I am

Sincerely yours,

Sam Nakano

Avenue J, Barrack 1, Apt. 2
Assembly Center
Fresno, California
June 3, 1942

Dear Virginia:

Back on the beat again with my weekly letter to you-- It's good to hear from someone as regular as you in a place like this. It's enough to give anyone a well deserved uplift when it is needed the most.

Camp life is progressing along as smoothly as expected, if not better. The main reason for that is that the populace itself comes in the majority from the Central California region, where the people are more or less intimate and have been living in close vicinity for many years. The people themselves get along as one big, happy family. The addition of about a thousand new evacuees from Florin and Elk Grove last week may make a difference, but I hope not. The manager and the civilian police are quite surprised at the good behavior of all of us, which is rather encouraging, to say the least.

The educational program swings into full sway this week, with daily classes being held for all age groups. Lack of indoor classrooms is one setback, but the classes are managing quite well outdoors. The recreational program also got started this week, with the inauguration of "sumo" (Japanese style of wrestling), under the general direction of yours truly. Volley courts, two in fact, have been erected, with more to come when facilities and other equipment will so permit. That is where we are stumped, and the front office comes into the picture, with a lot of plans and ideas on paper, but no definite action.

The restrooms have been improved to the extent that bowl seats and covers have been installed, period. Also, foot showers are being put in, which is very welcome. (Which are, pardon my grammar)

Food is getting better, with more being served at each meal. I suppose that the cooks are becoming accustomed to the coal burning stoves by now. It's one hell of a job working in front of those stoves during the mid-day heat, although the past week has been rather cool, with the wind blowing hard every night.

Have you ever gone to sleep to the tune of the crickets' serenade? Try it sometime, it is quite soothing, when you are in the mood. We have plenty to spare here, for not only are we congregated here, but also the crickets.

I understand that the Military Area No. 2 is being subjected to the curfew and travel restrictions, which indicates that eventual evacuation for the people there is in order. Japanese are going to ^{be} scarcer than a hen's

tooth in the very near future.

I, too, have not been to any shows, or have not been going out, either, so there is little, if at all, to report on that. Miniature golf--sounds like a familiar game. Can't say that I want to recollect such recreations in this camp

Mr. Walter Pollock is the party you were referring to in your last letter. Yes, he is a nice and likeable fellow, but he has too many responsibilities for one person. His load should be ~~re~~lieved, so that more things can be started and finished.

Murder mysteries are my weakness, and the books will be most welcome. A library has been opened within the center with books being donated by individuals and organizations. A two by four canteen is open for the use of some five thousand people and the service is terrific.

Well, I have to go to a meeting, so will bid you adieu, until the next writing.

Sincerely yours,

Sam Nakase

June 4, 1942

Dear Sam:

Got your letter this morning. Thanks for keeping up your end of it so well. I let you down by not getting those darn mysteries to you. I meant to, honest, but got so engrossed that I read one and am reading the other. I know that's plain mean. I'll send them off tomorrow. I stayed up half the night last night reading. I couldn't sleep until I found out who dun it.

The camp really sounds as though it's improving. I'm glad to hear you're working, but what the heck is this "sumo". As far as I know, wrestling am wrestling. Is it something fancy?

Yes, military zone 2 is frozen and I guess evacuation will start soon. I just heard that Mari Okazaki left for area no. 2, near Fresno. Her job is supposedly up the 6th but maybe they're keeping her on. I'm afraid you're right, it looks as though they're going to move everyone out. One of the kids I know at Tanforan has parents in this new order and he now doesn't know where they'll go.

The way you describe Fresno camp it sounds better than any of them. Is everyone just one happy family? I suppose this visiting stage will be over soon. I should think there would already be some conflict arising between the Issei and Nesbbs. It has been in the other ones. But perhaps there is a more conservative group in the valley. After all, it has been known for a long time that farmers have more control over their families than any class. In the city you find much more trouble. Are most of the people there small farmers. I've

forgotten the percentage of people who were farmers. But my impression is that they were a large percentage. Right?

I'm sitting on a very high stool to write this as the typewriter is high, so I'm getting quite tired. Think I'll have to find another arrangement. And don't you suggest my writing longhand, or you 'll be darn sorry. I think you'd prefer my typographical errors to my handwriting.

No, I can't remember having ever gone to sleep to the tune of crickets chirping but it sounds like a hard thing to do. Wait until you try to go to sleep after reading a gruesome murder. I had a terrible time---kept imagining noises etc.

I have to run along now and get some food before the stores close. Did you know that there are hardly any strawberries on the market and what there are are very, very expensive. I wonder if one of the reasons isn't the Sacramento and Fresno evacuation.

Write me soon-----au revoir,

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Avenue J, Barrack 1, Apt. 2
Assembly Center
Fresno, California
June 10, 1942

Dear Virginia:

For the past few days I have been what you might call "under the weather" what with a touch of cold, hay fever, and what have you in this freakish weather we have been having here lately. During the day it has been hot, and the evenings cool if not cold, with a terrific wind blowing every nite and kicking up a hell of a dust storm every day. And is it dusty in this dry place! One might think that he was in the middle of a Oklahoma dust bowl. (an before a vowel--an Oklahoma dust bowl, right?)

Graduation exercises are being scheduled for the near future for the hundreds of potential graduates in this center, with their wearing of caps and gowns, which has been approved by the front office. Most of the diplomas have been received already from the various schools. This will do so much good for the graduates who had thought that they would miss out on commencement exercises this year.

We have had several talent shows here, and we haven't begun to uncover the talent represented in this camp yet. We seem to have run into some conflict already in this respect. Some of these classical talents we have will not appear on the same program with the popular type of artists. We can understand their feelings, but we believe that while in this center we should get away from this class distinction, that some of us are better than the next fellow. We intend to discourage that type of thinking as much as possible, and this matter of talent shows will need a lot of co-ordination to stymie any conflicts as of above. You know, when we get in line to eat in the mess halls with a plate in our hand, there is no difference between a former banker, farmer, poor man, or what have you. We should strive to do the greatest good for the greatest number of people for the greatest number of years. To do this we will have to do away with class distinction; we are all in the same boat; sacrificing our all for a common cause with other Americans on the outside--those on the fighting front and those on the home front.

So you've never heard of "sumo" before? Well, you have to see it to understand it, but here goes an attempt to explain on paper. It's a type of wrestling done by two contestants within a fifteen (approximate) foot dirt ring, bounded by a ridge. The wrestlers themselves are undressed to the extent that they wear only a canvas belt around their waist and under their crotch, said belt used to grab opponents - it is one long belt, going under their crotch and several times around their waist. The two grunt and groaners enter the ring, spray salt, which has been provided beforehand, around the ring as a good luck omen, stamp their feet on the flat, dampened ground, ~~then~~ stoop and face each other and at a given signal, both attack. The objective being to grab the opponent in some way as to throw him to ground within the ring, or else push him out of the ring. If any part of a person's body touches the ground, he loses. This version does not sound very

exciting, but it really is, being one of the favorite pastimes for the older folks. As I said, you have to see it, to enjoy it. If I were able to paint a live picture of this sport, you'd probably be out of breath by this time with excitement.

Over 1500 youngsters are attending daily classes in this center, with teachers being recruited from the ranks of the evacuees, and doing a good job of it, too. Recreational program is on a small scale, with ample facilities our main handicap.

There is need here for dental care, but no equipment as yet. Medicines are here, but that is about all. The hospital is getting in their back orders now. The cry for an optometrist, and a shoe repair shop, also a barber shop or ten, and a beauty parlor has been prevalent for some time. Some of us are beginning to look like Tarzan without our haircuts. I, myself, have acquired a sort of tan that is hard to describe. I'm "done" just right, as one might say. It's a funny kind of tan. I often mistake myself when I look into the mirror in the mornings.

Visitors' days have just about been arranged for by the administration. They will be admitted only by written invitations by us in the center. Only so many will be admitted each day, and only on presentation of such invitation. The time of visiting is limited. The place is a barrack near the administration offices, visiting tables similar to the mess hall tables, where we and the visitor sit and converse. The visitors will not be allowed to go beyond this barrack into the camp itself.

Each nite we have to be within our rooms between the hours of ten and eleven p. m. effective last Saturday. Our lights must be left on until the center police has completed the count of persons in our respective room. How long this will keep up, I know not, nor why they are doing this, I do not know.

I've been aiming to ask you with each letter, but have forgotten each time, but if you have any old song sheets around your room, could you send them to me? They will help to keep the neighbors awake at nite.

As I sit and type this, there are my parents, lying on their cots, with straw-filled mattresses, by the way, whiling away their time reading and snoozing, whereas under ordinary circumstances they would be out in the field or around our old house tending to the flowers and garden. My older brother works in the messhalls at mealtimes, but at present is reading on his bed, also. His wife is knitting, crocheting, I think is what they call it. Isn't that an active, bustling picture of humanity?

I hear they have watermelons on the market now. Gosh, how about sending me a nice, ripe, cold melon? All kidding aside, I understand they are tasteless this year on account of the cold weather.

Don't forget me, neither--

Sam Nakano

Department of Political Science
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

207 Giannini Hall
June 10, 1942

Mr. Sam Nakano
Ave. J, Bar. 1, Apt. 2
Fresno Assembly Center
Fresno, California

Dear Sam:

I am sorry I have not written to you sooner, but have been very busy. We held a general staff meeting on the Evacuation Study which I told you a little about. Things are becoming clearer now and I have more of an idea of what I want. I wonder if it would be possible for you to interview some of the farmers in your camp in order to see if all arrangements concerning their farms were completed, and if they are satisfied. This need't be a large number, but I would like some sort of a sample. I hope you have time to do this as I want this kind of a report, if you can't, no hard feelings.

Let me know what is hapening on the recreational side as I am interested in that too. Have the churches been formed? If so what ones are being allowed?

I will write you a more complete letter as soon as I find time. Thanks an awfully lot Sam.

Sincerely yours,

VG:AE

Virginia Galbraith
Research Assistant

June 12, 1942

Dear Sam:

Thanks for the nice long letter. It was a coincidence, but Hilda was in the office when your letter arrived and we were talking about you. She said to say hello and tallyho when I wrote you. She is still looking for a job.

At least, I have a better idea of sumo than before. I love wrestling matches so I am sure I'd scream my head off if I saw one of the sumo matches.

Thanks for telling me about the visitors at Fresno. Now I have to ask you for an invitation. (Quite silly to have to ask for your own invitation.) I very probably will come to Fresno for the Kenney Committee hearings on June 22-24. In which case, I shall certainly want to come out to see you. Am I invited? How do I get out there since I probably won't have acar?

I feel like a terrible person having told you two weeks ago I was going to send those mysteries, and still haven't done it. I read one and now haven't found time to wrap them and take them to the post office. But Honestly I shall! I have no song sheets around and no one I know has, but I may run into some bargains in which case I'll sure get them. Anytay I'll be on the lookout.

We are working very hard lately. I've been trying to keep up on the evacuation by reading reports at night so it amounts to a 24 hour a day job. But I'm so interested that I can't seem to relax.

I'll let you know definitely if I will be down and when so you will know. Right now things are somewhat up in the air. I especially would like to find out what's going on in Military Zone 2. Mari Okazaki is down in Reedley now and I may catch up with the group before long. Have you heard anything about it? I am still more interested in the farmers and their problems than anything, so keep your ears and eyes open, huh? I have the JACL histories of farming in each county that were written pre-evacuation and I would like very much to follow this up and get the changes which have occurred due to the evacuation.

Bye for now. Hope to see you soon.

J-1-2
Assembly Center
Fresno, California
June 12, 1942

Hello Virginia:

May I commence this writing with thanks for your numerous letters.

Believe me, the weather is really getting hot now, and the lack of shade shelters becomes more evident for so many of us. And for some of us, the novelty, as you might call it, of this being confined in a center among peoples of their own nationality is beginning to wear off. You can tell that by the restlessness they show in their actions and conversations. It becomes more and more important that those people find something to occupy their minds and time. Recreation alone will not satisfy, I do not think; there must be work.

Visiting privileges being offered here as compared to some other centers is a farce. Only 200 visitors a day are allowed within a space of two hours — 50 persons every half an hour. For some of the older folks, visitors are the only means of recreation for them, and to have to limit the stay to only 30 minutes seems such a shame. You know how the old folks are — It takes most of the half hour

to inquire of one's health, say hello and
good bye, and what time have you left,
for actual visiting, I mean. If each of us
in ^{here} desired a visit, the schedule would
only permit a visit once every two weeks
under the present system.

As to your inquiries on the farms
and the care being received, I can only
give you a rough picture at this time.
You must realize that a number of our
people concerned in our evacuation of our
particular area were very artists. I
have talked to quite a few of these,
and each has leased his farm to a
neighbor or close friend, with the in-
tention of returning to said farm after
the war. Being in the hands of neighbors
and friends, the farms are receiving
good care. Very few truck gardeners owned
their farms. Those who did own I have
not been able to contact as yet. But the
others who formerly leased the farm —
some have sub leased the place and the
care being received has not been as favorable
as expected. Partly because of the cool
weather which has held back production,
and partly because of the low quality
being put on the market which results
in low returns to the farmers. In view
of that fact, those farmers who turned

back the lease and sold the crops outright were better off. The type of labor needed on truck farms is very adaptable to Japanese, but difficult for others to do the stony labor required, in order to keep up the high efficiency of such farms. Truck farmers have less chance of returning to their old land than the rice growers. I can supply you with further data on this matter at a future time.

As I yearn for the "leisurely hole" what I wouldn't give now for a dip into the cool waters of some pool, lake or stream.

Some of the younger children, one in particular was credited with saying that he was tired of living in Japan, and wanted to go back to America. (Japan, referring to assembly center for Japanese.)

Enclosed you will find a sample copy of our visitors' invitation. Please read it and be amazed! Perhaps in your case, doing the kind of work you are doing, you won't need such a card, and have access to the center at any time. But be sure to let me know as soon as possible, so that I can reserve a date for your visit, if such a procedure

is necessary. Just in case, I think I shall enclose an invitation anyway. If you can use it, well and good. If you cannot, well wait for another opportunity. Fair enough?

I have written to Bida several times, and have received only one answer. I imagine she's quite occupied in finding a position for herself more power to her.

Have I told you of the "Tan" I am acquiring? Virginia, I'm really being done "just right. Besides, I've lost some weight, and no way of getting it back as yet. But time will tell.

I can't even use "running to the grocery store before it closes" as an excuse to end this letter. Someday, you and I may both be running for a date to come.

Sam Kadane

P.S. May I ask why you seldom use the name Goldbach? Answer not required, mind you, just curious, and no hard feelings ever.

See.

am

J-1-2
Assembly Center
Fresno, California
June 18, 1942

My dear Virginia:

I have just finished your interesting hand written letter, and I should reciprocate in like manner, but I have such a time writing in a straight line across the page that I have fallen back on this typewriter. I well realize that personal letters should not be typed, but-----

First of all, a bit of cheery news to us is the numerous indications which seem to make us feel that we are going to be allowed to stay in this center much longer than we expect. For instance, we have reliable information that as soon as the Sacramento, Salinas, and Marysville centers are cleared of all residents to the relocation areas, the equipment on such grounds will be sent here to Fresno. Also, a farm project has been started with a large sign-up of workers. Gardens have already been started on rather a large scale within the center, and smaller gardens between the barracks and between the showers. Drinking fountains are to be installed throughout the camp, 65 in all. A large field to be used as arecreational area is now being worked over, which will accomodate some three or four baseball diamonds, a children's playground with swings, teeter-boards, etc.

Graduation exercises are to be held tomorrow nite with about a hundred graduates, wearing caps and gowns at the Center Bowl, an outdoor locale with a large stage and seating capacity of some three thousand persons. This is the most recent improvement-the building of this amusement place for all outdoor entertainment. I do hope that the office will approve the use of a microphone for such purposes. To such a large audience, and being outdoors, without some sort of loud-speaker system, it just isn't fair either to the listening public or to the entertainers, and speakers.

FRESNO ASSEMBLY CENTER

The undersigned invites:

Miss Virginia Salbraith Berkeley Calif.
(Name) (Address)

to visit them at the Guest House (enter at Ventura
Ave. gate) at 3:30 to 4:00 PM, 6-23, 1942.

Sam Nakano J-1-2
(Signature) (Block, Barrack, Apt)

Out Pass Approved:

Frank Fushiki
Officer in Charge Information Center

Guests are subject to Center Regulations.

GUESTS:

Are not permitted to bring packages or articles of any kind.

Are allowed daily, at the Guest House only.

Are limited to 50 for any one-half (1/2) hour period.

Must leave the Center immediately when notified their visiting time is up.

Not more than 1 guest can use a single invitation.

Only the time and date shown on the invitation will be honored at the gate.

Invitations must be issued by the evacuees themselves.

Control of invitations is in the hands of the "Citizens Committee".

Automobiles are prohibited in the Center.

copy ✓

J-1-2
Assembly Center
Fresno, Calif.
June 29, 1942

My dear Virginia

Pardon the long delay
in writing.

The weather here in
Fresno has been terrifically
hot the past week - the
kind of weather which fortu-
nately was late in arriving
this year. But it's here now,
and for the next few months,
there won't be any respite
from the heat for us. Yester-
day it was only 110° degrees,
to-day, 112 degrees. So
you can imagine the sort
of doings there are during
the mid-days. Yes, each of
us are trying to monopolize
what little shade area there
is scattered here and there.
It's almost impossible to
stay indoors in the shade.
The rooms are too hot. I
tried writing to you several
times, but you know I'm
the most sweatinged "guy"
around here.

As last, thru the personal
efforts of those who are so

interested in Hard Ball Baseball, we were able to build a diamond and get our favorite pastime organized into a league schedule, the first and only center to have a Hard Ball schedule on a scale large as ours. And turnout of fans is tremendous which is a good thing. For the older folks, being able to witness events such as these is just as much a means of recreation as if they themselves were participating. Even I have gone back to ball playing after a five year absence.

It was really too bad that you were unable to come last week. I did wait for you, but no Virginia. But I guessed that something out of the ordinary had happened to prevent your coming. In your position I'm sure that you will not need a pass, anyway, as I said before. It would be a great help if you should get into town to send some word well in advance of your coming. I'm hard to reach on a moment's notice,

as my work takes me
all over the center during
the day. I hope that you'll
be able to come before I be-
come unrecognizable. It
seems I'm getting a shade
darker and a good thinner
day by day.

Do you remember Mr.
Pollack, of the Service Division,
who took Milda and you
around the camp before
we came in here? Well, you
know our opinion and yours,
also, was that he was a
swell fellow. Since then
certain incidents have taken
place involving Mr. Pollack,
which has drawn intense
criticisms from among the
various residents of the camp.
His real self seems to be
coming out now, and it is
interfering with the efficiency
of his office. It has come to
light that he has a personal
antipathy toward the Japanese
people as a whole. Remarks
at a forum we had to the
effect that it was our fault
we were in this center, and
branding the Japanese as a

whole as liars and cheaters, making ridicule of some of our attempts to co-operate with his department. — these things are entirely uncalled for by an employee of the W.C.C.F., especially when the people here are trying to do so much to make this the model evacuee by beautifying the front of the Administration with gravel walks and shrubberies donated by our people on the outside and Caucasian friends, when each block is building one or more gardens in between the shower buildings, making every effort to do what we think is right and best for the administration. We have no fault with Mr. Pollock's qualifications and aptitude for his work, it's his personal attitudes which we question, and at the moment we are at a loss on how to approach of this problem which we doubt he knows exists in our minds. The other personnel heads are co-operating with us well in every way. They talk and treat us with respect

7
would want us to talk
and treat them.

The center is still carrying
on the nightly check up of
every room at 10:00 p.m. It
has also banned all
Japanese writing of any kind
any place. Before any signs
etc. were put up where in
English and Japanese. They
have also asked for all
types of Japanese literature
to be turned in, except bibles,
hymn books, and dictionaries.
The reason for this I do not
know. Any such books not
allowed and are found will
be considered as contraband.
The older folks were so careful
in bringing only those books
which they were sure would
not be questioned, and now
this recreation of reading has
been taken away.

Going back to the weather
it's getting to hot to eat in
the mess halls comfortably.
If only a cooling system
could be installed in the
mess halls, and incidentally
the hospitals, it will be a

big help.

By the way, have you
found any old song sheets?
Don't forget —

What is your work coming
along, Virginia? And has
Hilda found a job yet?
She hasn't answered my last
letter to her, so I do not know.

More later, but that's
all for today. She has
been getting me down.

Sincerely,
Sam Nakano

July 6, 1942

Dear Sam:

I'm sorry I haven't written sooner but this time I have a good excuse. I had a bad touch of the flu and was in bed all last week. I am now okay but feel swamped with work having missed a week. I got your letter when I returned to the office. I really sympathize with you since we have had almost comparable weather here. Last week-end it was so darn hot we couldn't eat around here.

The stuff you mention about Mr. P. is very interesting-- and very surprising. I would not have believed it when we met him. Let me know the developments, not that I know what I can do, but perhaps something will eventually happen. I do hope so. A similar situation was recently alleviated at Tanforan. I suppose you heard about it.

We are carrying on most of our graduate study at Tule Lake. They are very swell up there and have cooperated with everyone. It would really be a break for you if Fresno were moved to Tule Lake. I wonder what the chances are?

My work is mostly of a secretarial variety, but of course, all of the problem is interesting. I was particularly interested in the elections held at Tanforan. You probably have had similar ones. The posters were very funny, and so typical of the young Nisei group, who I think for the most part are a wide-awake intelligent bunch of people. Of course, most of the ones I know are of the JACL.

I am not doing any school work although I feel rather bad about letting it slip. I am working on my French at night so that I can take my French examination for my PhD soon--in about two months, I think.

What do you do at nights down there? I don't suppose they have any shows. Do they have Saturday night dances? I hope for your health's sake that you do something besides play baseball. You'll probably get out of there minus two fingers and with a mass of bruises. You can readily see how I feel about baseball. Speaking of movies, I saw one good show lately (there has been a dirge of them) This was an English picture by H. G. Wells called "Kips" and it was very artistically done besides being touching drama--about a simple soul.

Say do you know anything of this prevalent belief that the Japanese (Issei) do not like or won't drink milk. I hear it's similar to the Jewish dislike for pork. Is there anything to that? I can't seem to get at it.

I have loads of work to do today so I have to stop writing now, but I'll write a longer letter and I hope more entertaining at the end of the week. Have uncovered no song sheets, yet, and still have to mail those darn mysteries to you, but don't lose hope, I shall some bright day do both.

Sincerely yours,

copy
✓

J-1-2
Assembly Center
Fresno, California
July 10, 1942

Dear Virginia:

I, too, have been rather slow again in answering your letter, but this time it was on account of just the thing you mentioned in your writing would happen if I played baseball. Yes, for the past two weeks I have been laid up with a couple of bandaged fingers on just that account, and now I have regained the use of my right hand fingers to write you again. Rather a coincidence, do you not think so?

Judging from your letter you are not only charming and pleasant, but you are also very studious and ambitious. More power to such as you. It makes me want to go back to school again and resume my study of commerce. Perhaps, if this student relocation plan is enticing enough, I may do just that. But, finances are limited, I mean the sources of finances, and that may be my hold-back.

In this center one does not merit much remuneration nor does he have much need for it, except for clothes and so-called luxuries while in these barb-wired enclosures. Within the past few days the center has begun to issue free coupons, script books, to all the residents. That is, \$4.00 for man and wife, and one dollar for any and all persons under sixteen years of age, but no family will be allowed over the maximum of \$7.50. All persons over sixteen years old will receive a \$2.50 book. Most of us have received our June and July allotment already. Also, many of us have received our first pay checks. And the total on some are staggering, for instance, a check written by the government to the amount of \$.33! That particular individual swears that he will frame it and keep it for life.

Your inquiry about the milk incident interests me, for I did not know that such a thing ever existed among the older folks. As far as I know, and as far as I have seen here, they have been taking milk and liking it. Because they want to or have to, I'm not so sure.

The elections at this center were not carried on so elaborate a scale as that you mentioned, for there was a distinct lack of fanfare of candidates and posters. It was all done in the respective mess-halls, and the governing body of five men were chosen more by popularity than anything else. It just so happened that these parties were also capable as well as popular. The lack of any sort of major troubles is evidence of the morale of the residents here.

We have just learned that the administration is going to construct two 20x40 foot wading pools 18 inches deep for the youngsters. Because of the lack of shade here, one

will probably more adults in them than children for whom they are intended. Incidentally, we have also learned that this center will not be moved anywhere until after September. Of course, this will be subject to the change of conditions of war.

Some of my friends have been receiving letters from Tule Lake, and they find each one censored. This is the first time actual censorship has been exercised from any center or relocation that I know of, and it does not speak so well of Tule Lake. We have heard so many favorable comments about that area, and to have the letters so treated, one begins to wonder.

Virginia, I am beginning to miss my Caucasian contacts that I used to have, and I presume that there are many others in the same predicament. I'm afraid to think how we will fit into the social and business life of the post-war era. After all, history may repeat itself, and 50 years from now, another evacuation may take place. What about all of the marriageable nisei? Our parents, how will they adjust themselves? These problems seem uppermost in the minds of the younger set now. You know, the morale of the 20-30 years old group is not as high as that of the Issei, who are so anxious to make the best of things, and to do what they can for their children who had so much taken away from them.

Received a letter from Hilda, and I find she has gone back to school. I wonder what happened to her possibilities as to the WRA job. She sounds well and contented, though, with her present set-up.

Will you be making that trip down here sometime in the near future, as you had planned? If so, please let me know, for preparations to welcome such a party as you must necessarily need time.

Take care of yourself, and I'm glad that you are well again.

Sam
2

Answered July 18

✓ 0703
J-1-2)
Assembly Center
Tulare, California
July 2, 1945

Tells Virginia:

It was good to hear from you again, and quite interesting to hear that you had visited Tule Lake. See, it looks as if you will not get to visit our center after all.

I wish you could, for I'm sure that you would be surprised with the work done here up to date. I was here practically from the first and saw the work, so I can really appreciate the improvements and the advancements we have made with limited facilities. Other than the extreme heat, most of us seem to be getting along quite well. All in all, I'd say that this was a model center, and the center administration can boast for that.

Well, I understand that the remaining Japanese of military Area No. 2 have been given their marching orders. Which means that after

this group evacuates, there will be
no more Japanese left in areas other
than assembly centers or relocation
regions. What next?

You know, I wish that I could
keep as occupied as you seem to be.
This life that we lead now is not
encouraging to us as a whole. It tends
to make us lazy - conscious physically.
But, morally, I imagine we are doing
more than our share in trying to keep
up our spirits in this crisis. Of
course, this is nothing compared to
the boys fighting on the front, but
you've got to remember that this
evacuation concerns fathers, mothers
and children of all ages. In our case,
a whole race, whereas the soldiers
are those only physically and morally
fit and males as that.

I was just wondering what
our future will be even if we get to
return to our homes, for those
who have homes to go back to, after
the duration. What's to prevent
history from repeating itself, and

and 25 or 40 years, another evacuation takes place. Our children's fates are not too promising.

As one Caucasian writer to a local newspaper puts it: all the people in these centers should be segregated by races to prevent more Japanese being born and causing greater problems after the war. Such people make me sick - just like the case of the Native Sons and Daughters in trying to take away our citizenship. Isn't it enough that we are in these centers?

General DuWitt was to have visited our center the other day. Whether he did or not I do not know. But it was a great concern for all of us to see what he looked like.

Next week they are beginning the issuance of clothing warrants to the residents, which is very encouraging for the needy who have been unable to do any sort of work since entering camp.

The case of Mr. P. seems to have

worked itself ~~there~~. We are not
encountering any such difficulties as
before. How it all happened I do
not know. The thing is that all is
going on much more satisfactorily,
and that is all we ask.

Many of the personnel members
of the administration have expressed
desires of going along with us to re-
location areas. That would be a
great advantage, for here we have the
groundwork laid already and in
relocation areas we can continue from
there.

I am sorry not being able to go
on rides in a car, bus, or bicycle,
and continue our singing. But, please,
remember, that when this is all over,
we have a date.

Sincerely,
Sam

answered Aug. 25

copy J-1-2
Assembly Center
Fresno, California
August 20, 1951 ✓

hello,

A very cheery hello, for it has been too long since I heard from you last. To-day's letter was most welcome, for I was just on the verge of writing you to ask whatever had happened to you. I thought perhaps you were sent on the road again, and busy events prevented your writing. Instead I find that you are busily occupied as heretofore on a subject which is very opportune with the times.

I can well understand your sentiments, for mine also run along the same channel. But, being behind these barbed wire fences has many drawbacks. We here can only go so far and no further. If there were some means whereby we riseis could unite in these camps and present a strong front, if we could break away from all the red tape attached to any such activity, we may find

a solution or) means of arriving at that solution as far as we were concerned. In camps we have to take and take, and never a chance to present our side. People can so twist every good intention we have into the impossible, and there where are we? Worse off than if we had sat back on our laurels and done nothing about it.

We're still having trouble with Mr. P. and the feelings which arise from that do not do us any good. We try to make the best of things, try to conduct ourselves as normally as possible, yet, especially at forums when all are free to express their personal opinions, Mr. P. has to "slap us in the face" with his words and sentiments. Many of us have come to the conclusion that there is no use trying to argue with an administration who is so easily riled up by our views, and seems so

childish, yes childish, in argumentation. Now that we are in camp, why can't people try to see and understand our side of the issue, instead of kicking a fellow when he's down. And believe me, if something isn't done soon, we, as a race, are going to sink lower and lower. I dread the future, if and when we shall be allowed to seek our fortunes again with the rest of the world, to have people look down upon us, and say, "There goes a Jap"; when, in my heart, I am as much and more American than the same party who said those same words.

The way you and I feel in our inner self, we should get to gether some cool evening at any cozy spot, and the get-together would prove very interesting. I'm still hoping that someday we may be able to do just that.

No news yet regarding the removal of this camp to a relocation area. But rumors put it around the middle of next month. Where? — Colorado, Utah, or Arkansas, rumors say. Nothing very pleasant to look forward to, in my estimation.

Yes, I wonder about Hilda, too. I wrote to her last, but so far no answer. Hope she's getting along all right.

I miss my contacts with people like you on the outside. In here the world seems no larger than the boundaries of the camp — where one's own business seems to be every body else's business also. In spite of it all, we, as a whole, are managing quite well.

This is all for to-day, but will be back sooner than last time.

Thanks for being such a swell friend on such a short acquaintance.
Sam Nakano

August 25, 1942

Dear Sam:

Wakano

This time I have time for but a note, in contrast to my last letter--- long but involved. Yours was indeed welcome as it has been along time since I've heard from you.

Gosh, it's a damn shame that on top of roughing it you have to put up with the stupidity you mention. I can't help but agree with your conclusions that the best thing to do is just not argue. Anyway there is hope in the fact that it is just temporary. You will no doubt move soon. Everyone else is moving. It seems to me that the Relocation Centers just can't be compared in any respect to the Assembly centers, which, of course, is all for the good. I'm sure one couldn't dream up a worse set-up than the assembly centers. No doubt a lot of adjusting is having to be made in the Relocation Centers and also a lot of unpleasanties, but it is still better. The place lacks the prison look of the assembly centers since the R. C. is big. Also the housing is definitely superior. It's hot in the Arizona ones but that still can be stood if you have the type of administration and sympathetic cooperation that comes from intelligent people, but lacking in almost all assembly centers.

Hell, the whole thing is hard to think about without becoming emotional. And I suppose under the circumstances the one thing we should not do is become emotional. My personal feelings are that we'd better win this war fast and start cleaning up our own backyard just as soon as we can. I'd sure like to handle one of the brooms.

I said this was to be just a note as I have to run over to the Library, but here I am almost to the bottom of the page. So keeping my word, I'll quit.

Write soon, Sam and let me know what you do with yourself. I've heard it's terribly hot in the valley, but you valley people are probably used to it. I hate heat, but would like a little around here just to break the monotony of the fog.

By the way, do you suppose we could get a set of the newspapers of the camp? Who would I write to? I'll, naturally, pay all costs to them. What's the dope?

With my best regards,

Thanks for the set. Postage follows

Sam Nohano

October 14, 1942

Dear Sam:

Received your letter and was very happy to hear that you are finally being relocated although Arkansas sounds like a strange place to have to go. I will write you a longer letter when you get there and let you know whats going on in California. Be sure and send me your address immediately upon arriving. Sorry to dash this off but I want you to get it before you leave.

Bon voyage and lots of luck.

U.

J-1-2
Assembly Center
Fresno, California
October 6, 1942

Dear Virginia:

It has been a hell of a long time since I have last heard from you. Not so many days ago, I did receive some stamp money from your secretary, presumably, but nary a word from you.

By now you probably know that this center is to be relocated in Jerome, Arkansas, with the advance crew having departed already. My particular section is scheduled to leave on the 16th of this month, only ten days away.

Arkansas--how far away it sounds, but taking things as they come, I don't think that it will be so bad. We are going for a futile cause on our part in a way, but in another way, we are going for a good cause. I suppose it is the way you look at things. As for me, I'm going, because I have no choice in the matter. I'm stringing along with the people who have been here together the past five months, and not trying to obtain a release to go to some other relocation center as many have done.

No news is bad news. That is why I am so eager to hear from you. Even Hilda has stopped writing, and I do hope the reasons are nothing serious.

I am in the midst of packing again, just as I was some five months ago, but this time, it is to a point so many, many miles away. There is one consolation, tho. This will be my first trip out of the state, and perhaps the only time that I will be able to see so much of these United States.

Please write if you can spare the time and effort, at least by the time I leave.

Sincerely yours,
Sam Nakamura