

Block 31, 11-B
Poston, Arizona
August 24, 1942

Dear Dr. Thomas,

I had intended to write you immediately after arrival in Poston, Arizona, on August 11 but the circumstances were such that I was compelled to wait a week or two before I could inform you of my status here. I came to Poston with the definite understanding that I would work as anthropologist for the Bureau of Sociological Research and that I could continue your research here. Upon arrival I was informed by Dr. Leighton that there was a W.R.A. ruling that no one in a relocation center could obtain income from the outside and he intimated that in all probability I would be compelled to give up your research. However, he as well as Mr. Gelvin, the assistant center director, were in favor of my continuing your research and wrote immediately to Mr. Wade Head, the director of Poston, who was then in San Francisco for a W.R.A. conference to find out whether it was permissible for me to hold two jobs at one time and be compensated for both. Mr. Head telephoned Dr. Leighton last Thursday that the outcome seemed favorable. He returned from San Francisco last night but so far I have received no definite answer as to whether I may continue your work here or not.

Dr. Leighton is very much concerned with my problem because he realizes that if I had known that I could not work for you in Poston I would not have accepted the job in the Bureau of Sociological Research. I regret immensely now that I had not stuck with the interesting Los Angeles group in Santa Anita and followed them from the pre-evacuation to relocation center stage as I had originally planned. I have been trying to ascertain the reason for my coming to Poston for the last few days and the only plausible answer I can find is that I was thoroughly disgusted with the restrictions placed on all research in Santa Anita and was ready to fall into any scheme that appeared to offer greater freedom.

Your letter dated August 12 containing my July check arrived a few days ago. In it you state that you offered to release me to the Bureau if Dr. Leighton felt that the responsibilities would be too great and that he accepted your offer. From the above I infer that I am no longer connected with your project. However, I feel that my work in Santa Anita was rather inadequate primarily due to the hostile attitude toward all research by the administration. Therefore to atone for it I propose to send you fortnightly or monthly reports from Poston gratis -- i.e. if you still wish to hear from me. Dr. Leighton sees no difficulty in my performing two jobs at one time since the research will be along similar lines. Besides we have a large number of secretaries to take charge of the clerical side of the work. Furthermore

Poston is an unique community in that it is the only relocation center (if I am not mistaken) under the jurisdiction of the Indian Commission. People here, I surmise, enjoy greater freedom than in any of the relocation centers under the direct management of the W.R.A. The population of Poston is primarily drawn from the rural areas of California and Arizona -- Imperial Valley, Salinas, Coachella Valley, Orange County, Bakersfield, etc. -- and a few hundred from the Boyle Heights area of Los Angeles (a Japanese section), so it would be extremely interesting to ascertain the degree of americanization of these rural areas which are generally reputed to be rather Old Worldish. Under a sympathetic and "benevolent" type of administration as we have here I would hazard the guess that the Japanese in Poston will be able to duplicate to a greater extent than anywhere else their pre-evacuation mode of life.

I shall attempt to send you the rest of the notes on Santa Anita by the end of this week. I had intended to mail you the section on politics and attitudes as soon as I reached Poston, where I had been assured there was no censorship of mail, but upon arrival I discovered that many of my notes had been confiscated during the baggage inspection by the police. Before an evacuee leaves for a relocation center his baggage is taken to police headquarters four hours before departure and thoroughly inspected for contraband, and the victim has no knowledge of what has been confiscated until he reaches his destination. I managed to carry out my diary in my purse so from it I have been able to reconstruct as accurately as possible the life at Santa Anita. My intentions in sending you a report by the 15th were good but having been accustomed to a temperature of 50 to 85 degrees at Santa Anita, the sudden change to 125 degrees in the Arizona desert in addition to a regularly recurring dust storm was too much for me and it has taken me about ten days to feel alive again. Dr. Leighton and Dr. Spicer, the head of the sociology section of the Bureau, tell me however that in another five or six weeks the weather will become tolerable and that we will feel like working again.

Sincerely yours,

Tamie Tsuchiyama

September 9, 1942

Miss Tamie Tsuchiyama
Poston Relocation Center
Poston, Arizona

Dear Miss Tsuchiyama:

I am very much gratified that the situation at Poston has been cleared up so that you will be able to continue your work for us. Your new appointment will begin as of September 1. Within a few days I shall send you a letter concerning this and worded in such a way as to protect your money in case the W. R. A. decides that outside earnings should be disposed of by the council.

I am enclosing a copy of a recent memorandum and hope that you can soon send us the additional section of your Santa Anita report. We will then go over it in detail and send you our further suggestions. I am sorry you have had so much trouble and am glad that you are now in a situation where the Administration is so sympathetic.

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy Swaine Thomas
Professor of Rural Sociology

Enclosure

DST:vp

September 15, 1942

Miss Tamie Tsuchiyama
Block 31, 11-B
Colorado River War Relocation Project
Poston, Arizona

Dear Miss Tsuchiyama:

I have the honor to inform you that, under a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, you have been awarded an honorarium to enable you to participate in the University of California Evacuation and Re-settlement Study. Your activities in this connection should in no way interfere with your performance in the Work Corps of the War Relocation Project to which you have been assigned.

The honorarium has been awarded you, in the expectation that it will be used by you for the continuation of your research training at the graduate level after you are released from the Relocation Center. Funds will accumulate for your use for a period of 10 months beginning September 1, 1942 at the rate of \$62.50 per month. This accumulation will cease upon your departure from the Relocation Center unless the senior staff decides that, because of your usefulness in preparing reports, the honorarium should continue. In this event, additional funds will be awarded to you. If you remain in the Relocation Center longer than 10 months, the honorarium is subject to renewal. During your residence in the Relocation Center, the senior staff may, at its discretion, release funds to you from time to time.

Very sincerely yours,

Dorothy Swaine Thomas
Professor of Rural Sociology

DST:vp

Block 31, 11 B
Poston, Arizona
Sept. 17, 1942

Dear Dr. Thomas,

I was very happy to learn from you and Dr. Lowie that I have been reinstated and that I may start sending you reports from Poston. The remaining sections on Santa Anita are almost completed and should be in your hands within a few days.

We have been extremely busy the past few weeks interviewing prospective research assistants for the Bureau. At present we have about eleven or twelve undergraduates and college graduates working for us in the three camps. Kenny Murase and Bob Sakai, both good friends of Tamotsu Shibutani and James Sakoda, your research assistants at Tule Lake, may work for me provided they can obtain their release from their present jobs. In fact they are so enthusiastic about my research that they are willing to volunteer their services on a part-time basis if they are unable to break away from their present connections. Since Dr. Leighton prefers to have me sit in the office along with Dr. Spicer and direct the activities of the assistants rather than go into the field myself, I am orienting the research in such a fashion that the data you desire will be collected by them and analyzed by me before you receive them. Because of the dearth of adequate assistants we have been able only to cover a restricted phase of culture but with the increasing number of interesting prospects I am certain the research will be more well-rounded. I am planning this weekend to go through the Sociological Journal which contains all reports brought in by the assistants since the Bureau was founded in late June and attempt to reconstruct Poston life before my arrival in the middle of August. I know that we have full data on political organizations, the housing situation, survey of food conditions and religious organizations, but I doubt if any serious attempt has been made to study other phases of camp life. Of course this will be supplemented by the data I have gathered myself. I shall do my best to follow the Shibutani-Najima-Shibutani outline; the sore spots will be rectified as soon as my assistants' reports pour in. If you have no objections I shall not send you weekly field notes for the next two weeks but will utilize that time to make a preliminary report of Poston.

Sincerely yours,

Tamie Tsuchiyama

September 23, 1942

Miss Tamie Tsuchiyama
Block 31, 11 B
Poston, Arizona

Dear Miss Tsuchiyama:

I was glad to get your letter of September 17 and to hear that we may expect the remaining sections of the Santa Anita report shortly. Your work at Poston seems to be going well. I am glad that you have gotten hold of Kenny Murase, for he is a good boy. I had intended using him at Tule Lake but since he wanted to go East to finish his education as soon as possible I was unwilling to make the effort to get him transferred.

It is perfectly all right not to send the weekly field notes for the next two weeks, but as a general plan I should like to have them regularly in order to keep abreast of what is going on.

Toward the end of October I expect to visit Poston and look forward to seeing all of you at that time. Give my cordial regards to Dr. Leighton.

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy Swaine Thomas
Professor of Rural Sociology

DST:vp

Block 31, 11 B
Poston, Arizona
Nov. 2, 1942

Dear Dr. Thomas,

This is just a short note to explain my silence of almost a month and to acquaint you with the progress of my research here. Somewhere in the early part of October I recall mailing you a letter promising to send a preliminary report on Poston within two weeks. At that time I was engaged in perusing all of the data gathered by the Bureau since its inception in June which I hoped to utilize along with my notes in writing the preliminary report. I also believed at that time that with twelve to fifteen research assistants working for us we would be able to secure a well-rounded picture of camp. Unfortunately many things have happened since then to impede the progress of our research. For one thing the four most promising students -- among them Kenny Murase -- have left us to continue their studies in the East or to work in the sugar beet fields of Utah. Also the fact that our files are confidential and inaccessible to any group including the administration has aroused the curiosity of some of the people of Poston and many of us have been branded Inu, or F. B. I. informers and individually notified of the public's dislike for such behavior. Since many of the former JACL leaders and other "suspicious" characters were being beaten up by gangs at this time some were frightened enough to resign from the Bureau or used this excuse to leave us. The fact that Dr. Leighton is in naval service and must wear a regulation naval uniform has also tended somewhat to increase the distrust of the Japanese people toward us as a group. Many of my friends caution me never to be seen with him in public, while others persist in asking, "Why do you insist on working for a naval intelligence officer when you can get any job in camp? If you have a sincere interest in helping the Japanese why don't you give a few courses in adult education or teach in the public school system?" At present we have only four assistants in camp one, none in camp two (the entire staff resigned last week), and four in camp three. The tragic part of it is that the best ones have abandoned us and we are left with a few untrained and not too imaginative ones whom we can easily dispense with. Most of them are sophomores or juniors in college and I suspect more interested in receiving college credits than in actual research. I do not know whether I wrote you or not the last time that Dr. Leighton in an effort to train research scientists induced the University of

Chicago to permit us to give extension courses in anthropology and psychobiology with the three departmental heads as instructors. I was assigned to teach the introductory anthropology course three hours a week but after much arguing managed to liberate myself from a third time-consuming task. I felt that my work with you and the research phase of the Bureau took up a full day's work and I had no extra time to spend on teaching. Furthermore since I was the only one of the three to have entree into the Japanese community in the face of anti-administration or anti-White attitude prevailing in camp my time was too precious to expend on something which they had instituted and which they were better qualified to perform. It was finally decided that I substitute for Dr. Spicer when he was ill or otherwise engaged or when my special fields were to be discussed. Thus last week I delivered three lectures on physical anthropology for him while he was visiting his family in the Papago Reservation.

The poor quality of the research staff in addition to my onerous office duties have prevented me from much actual field work aside from attending the regular meetings of the Temporary Community Council and the Issei Advisory Board, certain recreational activities, and keeping a record of prevailing sentiments in camp. The only systematic study I have started so far is the detailed investigation of my own block to see how a block actually functions. At present I am engrossed in the demarcation of the various cliques existing there.

So far I have full notes only on the following:

1. Background Data: Age groupings; marital status; geographical, occupational, and religious background of evacuees, etc.
2. Political Organizations: Civic Planning Board, the Temporary Community Council and the beginnings of the Permanent Community Council; the Issei Advisory Board; Block Managers' Organization (including records of block council meetings in my block); political cliques, etc.
3. Religious Setup in Poston.
4. The Housing Situation and its effect on family organization.
5. The Educational setup in the three camps. (In addition

to the formal structure it includes themes written by various classes containing attitudes of students toward evacuation, camp life, their future, etc.)

6. Economic Organization: Attitude of the evacuees toward cotton picking in Parker Valley; data on sugar beet workers in Nebraska, Colorado and Utah; and some incomplete notes on the economic setup in Poston.
7. Two food surveys conducted in camp one.

I have not yet made a satisfactory adjustment to Poston life. Since I knew hardly any one at the time of arrival there was no one to "soften" my initiation and as a result I built up a terrific wall of dislike for Poston which I am valiantly attempting to break down at the present time. My boss, Dr. Leighton, appears to be a brilliant and sincere fellow but because of his great enthusiasm for a certain brand of applied anthropology to which I do not subscribe I find it extremely difficult to establish rapport with him. This seems to be the general attitude as far as the senior staff is concerned. For the past few weeks I have been greatly troubled with the feeling of "being lost" in the Japanese community so yesterday I finally screwed up sufficient courage to ask for a month's furlough from the Bureau to do field work as I pleased. This means that I shall not have to be obligated to attend lectures and classes conducted in the Bureau or to be tied down to a desk to glance over second hand data. If I can show at the end of the month that I can handle the work of two or three assistants by myself I may yet convince him into demoting me to the rank of a research assistant.

Mich Kunitani dropped in at the office a few days ago to inform me that Tom Shibutani had written him that the entire Tule Lake staff was "sick and tired of the Japs" and was planning to resign and go to Chicago. I hope this is only a transitory stage and that they will continue working for you, especially since Mich tells me that they are doing excellent work there. I often wish that you could send down two or three others to work with me so we could cover Poston adequately for your purposes. The Kunitanis and I often talk of you and hope that you will come soon to see us. Mich and I are also hoping that you might be able to take us to Gila when you visit your staff there to give us a broader perspective on research here.

At the moment cotton picking in Parker Valley and the Community Trust Fund are burning questions so I intend to sample the sentiments in camp in the next few

days. This means I do not know how soon I can finish the preliminary report although I shall do my best to send it to you as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

Tamie Tsuchiyama

November 28, 1942

Dear Tamie,

Ever since returning, I have been trying to get in touch with Mr. Fryer, but he has been in conference with the Washington officials continuously. I hope to see him on Monday, and will let you know immediately what can be done about you.

I hope you will send me a documentation of the strike. It got dreadful newspaper publicity: 5 inch headlines in the Call Bulletin "8500 Interned Japs Strike against U.S.", etc.

I trust that your personal situation is no worse, and both Professor Lowie and I are much concerned about you. Please let us know how things are going, and rest assured that we shall do everything possible for you at this end.

Please tell Mich to send along that manuscript, first class, registered mail, and we will have it copied here and send a copy back to him. It is good, and I am most anxious to have it at hand.

You will hear from me soon again. WI sends cordial regards

Sincerely yours,



Block 31, 11 B
Poston, Arizona
Dec. 1, 1942

Dear Dorothy,

This is just a short note to inform you of my present status in Poston. As you may recall when I came to say good-bye to you Thursday morning I told you that all workers except those employed in the mess halls and other vitally essential jobs had been forbidden by the Emergency Council (the city council had resigned the evening before) to return to work for the duration of the strike and that all non-conformists would be treated as "dogs". Furthermore, one of the three proposals accepted by the administration in the settling of the strike was that "Poston residents be given the right to select and appoint all evacuee personnel in the administrative and important positions". As a result of this when the strike ended Tuesday evening, Nov. 24, workers discovered that they had automatically lost their jobs and that they had a free hand in selecting whatever jobs they desired and for which they were qualified. Taking advantage of the situation I informed Dr. Leighton that I did not wish to be reemployed immediately with the rest of the research assistants since I was still very indefinite as to my future plans and abhorred the idea of requesting a release shortly after being hired. I also inquired whether he would have any objections to my taking a less time-consuming job -- say, like conducting a seminar in the Adult Education Department -- and working only for you in case I had difficulty in securing my transfer or if I preferred to remain in Poston indefinitely. He answered that he had no objections but that he had the definite understanding that you needed me badly at Topaz.

My problem stated baldly is this: The future of Poston and to some extent that of other relocation centers will be largely determined by the succession of events in the next three or four months. For some unknown reason -- perhaps to my apparent approval of the strike (I went to picket the police station every day with my fellow block residents primarily to save my neck but also out of intense curiosity) -- I have gained the confidence of certain Japanese leaders who once suspected me of being an F.B.I. agent and I find it extremely easy to talk to them. The Issei in the block (the Nisei have always liked me) have come to recognize me as an individual and not another block resident and have been pressing me to accept responsible positions. The other night I was the first one to be nominated block representative to the City Planning Board and last night I was again nominated quad candidate for the Honor Court to investigate all people accused of unseemly conduct. I managed to evade both responsibilities but you can see from this that I am beginning to be accepted by the community. Since so many "history-making" events are occurring one after another I feel in a certain sense that I am needed here more than at Topaz at the present time. Furthermore the Bureau of Sociological Research is in no position to get much dope and I consider it a sort of "duty" to record as much as possible for future research. However, I am leaving everything up to you -- if you still feel that I should go to Topaz as soon as possible I shall contact Mr. Head and have him write to Mr. Fryer; otherwise I should like to sit around and watch Poston for another two or three months. As far

as Leighton is concerned I know he will not make any trouble for us. I heard via Spicer that he is willing to keep me in Poston at any price since he feels that I am the only one here who can possibly secure the type of data he desires. He realizes that he cannot approach me personally for information but thinks he might be able to use Spicer or someone else as contact man.

I wish you would let me know as quickly as possible what you want me to do. If I'm going to Topaz I think I'll spend the next few weeks making a thorough report on Poston while keeping up with current events. For this I wish you will send me the revised outline for writing up preliminary reports that you mentioned you were bringing down with you in your last letter. If I'm to remain in Poston I'll have to apply for a job within the next two weeks so I won't appear suspicious to the community. And another thing -- do you have any objections to my running for the city council? I'm afraid that when the City Planning Board retires in a few weeks and the city council is to be elected in all probability I shall be nominated for Nisei councilman from my block and I can't keep on refusing a public office if I'm to keep up the front that I have the welfare of the public at heart. Besides this is the only way to get the lowdown on politics in camp. Everything has become very secretive after the strike so unless you happen to be within the intimate circle it is extremely difficult to get any reliable information.

By next week I hope to send you the data I have gathered on the strike. For the past four days I have been comparing notes with a Stanford graduate whom I've known for several years in Los Angeles on inside dope on the strike.

Mich and Ann are thoroughly disgusted with the Japs and are planning to go East as soon as their request to leave camp is granted.

Sincerely yours,

Tamie Tsuchiyama

December 5, 1942

Miss Tamie Tsuchiyama
Block 31, 11-B
Colorado River Relocation Project
Poston, Arizona

Dear Miss Tsuchiyama:

Your letter containing your request to stay at Poston came at a crucial moment in this office. The very day before, Dorothy had arranged your move to Utah with Mr. Fryer. And when your letter came Dorothy was at home in bed with the flu.

I consulted her by telephone, however, and immediately afterwards contacted Mr. Fryer's office. Luckily no official action had been taken to have you moved to Topaz and therefore I was able to have the whole thing called off. Thus I am able to tell you that you may remain at Poston, as you wish, during the next months of important activity.

I did not wish to bother Dorothy further in regard to the question posed in your letter about your own political activities. I am sure, however, that she has no objections, per se, to your participating in community activities. Her objection would only come if such participation might interfere with your research activities. If, on the other hand, such participation will facilitate your research in any way, then I am positive Dorothy would encourage your present course.

I am happy to be able to give you the news in regard to your move and apologize for my inability to reply to the rest of your letter. Dorothy may be in bed for four or five days but I am sure she will write you just as soon as she returns to the office.

Sincerely yours,

Morton Grodzins
Research Assistant

MG:vp

December 13, 1942

Dear Tamie,

I have now read your letter, and Morton's reply. As he told you, I am satisfied to have you stay at Poston, if that is what you really want to do, and so we broke off negotiations with Mr. Fryer. I dropped a note to Dr. Leighton, but have not heard from him.

Even though you don't go to Topaz, I wish you would follow the procedure suggested in the second paragraph of your second page, i.e. "spend the next few weeks making a thorough report on Poston while keeping up with current events." Will you, yourself, set a deadline by which we may expect to receive this report? It is so important for our whole program to get the reports while the situations are still in flux. And I look forward eagerly to the report on the strike which you have promised for this week. It will, I am sure, be a fine and unique document, and we are certainly fortunate in having such a competent observer in the thick of things.

I rejoice with you in the fact that you are now freed of suspicions and that you are being accepted so cordially by the community. By all means, run for the city council. It will be good experience, and will certainly give you a chance to get some "inside" information.

Professor Lowie joins me in most cordial regards. And give my very best to Anne and Mich. I received Mich's manuscript, and will write to him shortly. I still feel a little shaky from the flu, which, by the way, was a new brand imported from Honolulu.

Sincerely yours,

Tuesday, Dec. 15, 1942

Dear Dorothy,

I was sorry to hear from Morton that you were in bed with the flu but am glad to hear in today's letter that you are much better.

I have been working like mad for the last three weeks but am not quite ready to send you that report on the strike yet. So many things have been happening here since the strike that it's a full day's work trying to keep abreast of things. I have finally finished analyzing the voluminous notes I gathered in the last four weeks and have typed off some thirty odd pages but I'm still on Thursday, the second day of the strike, so I'm afraid you'll have to wait a few days more. If Leighton wouldn't knock on my door so frequently to find out how much I know (everything is 50-50 as far as I'm concerned -- if he isn't going to let me see what happened on the administrative side during the strike I see no reason why I can't remain mum on the Japanese side) I'll probably progress faster. I'll try my darndest to get it off to you by this Saturday even if I have to take a vacation from field work until I complete it. My report covers the period from two or three months previous to the strike which laid the foundations for it, to the election of the representatives to the new City Council which occurred today.

My present plan is to take a vacation from any type of work in Poston during December and January so I can get up to date in my research. As soon as I complete the report on the strike I am intending to write up the reaction of the people to the Spanish consul's visit last week as well as the attitude toward the proposed reclassification of Nisei for the draft which is receiving much attention this week. After that I shall start the preliminary report on Poston using the outline you sent me as a guide. I can't state definitely when it will be ready since its completion depends entirely on the state of activity in camp. If no more flareups occur for some time I believe it can be accomplished by the end of January. Would you rather have me send you sections as I finish (e.g. political organizations as distinguished from religion) or would you rather have the report in its entirety?

Sincerely yours,

Tamie Tsuchiyama