

~~July~~ August 4, 1943
Miyamoto Document

"Kay Yamasaki" is a nisei from Pullman, Washington (eastern part of the state of Washington), about 5' 6" tall, 130 pounds, wears glasses, rather dark, and with a rather squarish face. But the striking thing about him is his harelip as a consequence of which there is a definite scar on his upper lip and he talks with a nasal disturbance that makes it difficult to understand him. He is about 26 years old. He is rather quiet habitually, makes little show of himself, wears conservatively dark clothes as a rule although he is always neat, and is generally pleasant in his associations with others. One suspects that his harelip has been a source of inferiority feelings for him and that his quietness, almost bordering on silence in some social groups, is a result of his self consciousness about speaking among strangers.

From my casual knowledge of his family and his history in the Northwest, I gather that his father was a foreman of a railroad labor crew (of Japanese) in eastern Washington and Montana. He has one older sister and a younger brother and a younger sister. His older sister, who is about two years his senior, is a somewhat heavy set sort of girl, wears glasses, and has a rather full soft featured face of the type that often goes with girls who are a little fatter than average. She made a brilliant record as a pharmacy student at the University of Washington, and was the president of the Japanese girl students' organization on the campus during the last year of her study there. Her friends regard her as very capable and intelligent, rather aggressive for a nisei girl, and possessing qualities of leadership. By contrast, Kay seems the less capable of the two, and as a person who has probably looked to his older sister for leadership among the children of the family.

Kay went to the University of Washington from about 1935 to 1939 where he majored in accounting, or at least in some field in business administration. When he first appeared on the campus, he lived with his older sister who was then in school, and seemed a little hesitant to break into the activities of the Japanese Students' Club (men's organization). He was always friendly in those years, but seldom said anything in front of others, and associated with a small group within the club. As he went through the years at college, however, there was a gradual change in which he became more conversational than at first, and he definitely adapted himself to the activities of the club. He would take girls to dances along with the rest of his friends, he would sit around in the parlor of the club and play "500", and, in other words, he made ^{for} himself a recognized place in the club. Where he had formerly been unobtrusive to the point where only a few knew of his existence, by his senior year he was a person accepted by all the members of the club.

One notices a further advancement in the same direction now. The fact that he called on us without warning was in itself a sign of the extent to which he has established sufficient self confidence to know that he would be acceptable despite any speech handicaps. Neither Michi nor I had seen him since about a month and a half ago when we ran into him in the company of a couple of other fellows whom we knew. We talked casually then for a few minutes and went

our respective ways. But today he happened down in our district as he went to the U. of Chicago employment office to inquire about a job, and, although I don't know where he got ~~an~~ address, he dropped in since he had an hour to kill before he was to meet his friend downtown. His narrative of his job hunting experiences also reveals the extent to which he has gotten over his inferiority feelings about his harelip.

Kay was not evacuated from his home since his family lives in Pullman which is outside the Western Defense area, but he was in Seattle at the time evacuation was decided upon, and hence he had to go back to Pullman. He came to Chicago about the last week of May, looked around for about two weeks for a job, and took a bookkeeping job with the Edgewater Beach Hotel. He was receiving \$125 a month for this job, working rather odd hours, worked even on Sundays, but he offers as his explanation for quitting, "I figured there wasn't much possibilities in the job. That's the only reason I quit. At the most, I couldn't get any more than \$175 a month at that place, and I felt it wasn't worth it to stay on there to work up to that. When I told my boss I was quitting, Mr. Reynolds wanted me to stay on. He told me there would be other things opening up, and he even offered me a raise. But I said I'd like to look around a bit to see what I could find, and they let me go."

"I looked around for another place and got into a swell set-up with the Mid-State Transfer Co. Gee, that job was swell, only some of the customers objected to having a ~~job~~ Jap working in their office and so they had to let me go. I was getting paid pretty well, and there were all kinds of chances for advancement. The comptroller under whom I was working wanted me to learn the ropes so that I could handle other things too, and I really thought I had something. But some customers probably saw me around there and told the general manager that the company had better fire me or else they'd take their business somewhere else. We were all working in the front office, and every now and then I'd have to walk into the main offices to check up on some data, and I guess they could see me when they came through the front office or when I was walking around there. My job as an accountant gave me access to all the credit ratings, accounts and so on of all the customers, and I think that's probably one reason these customers objected to having me in that office. They don't like to have their accounts revealed, you know. The general manager was nice to me; he had no objection to my working there as long as I did the work, but as he said, he couldn't do anything about it when the customers threatened to take away their business unless I was removed. The comptroller for whom I worked went around to see these customers and talked to them for about two or three hours, but it didn't do any good. He wanted me around and he wanted to see some advance, but I guess there wasn't anything he could do about it."

"I've been looking around now for two weeks since I lost that job. There's one place I'm waiting to hear from where the employment manager told me just this afternoon that he'd like to hire

me but that there was some dissension in the office about taking me on and so that I'd better not count on getting the position. I've had several offers that I've rejected. There was a job at the Illinois Institute of Technology that paid only \$125 a month, but that didn't seem to have any future to it so I didn't take it. There was another job at a foundry, and another at a laundry, but they looked like rather ordinary work to me so I didn't want them. There's one job out here with a Venetian Blind Co. that I'd like to get. I talked to the accountant there, and he told me that the pay would be \$140 a month to begin with, but he said there was all kinds of chances for advancement there. It seems this company turns out more venetian blinds than almost any other company, and has a kind of monopoly on the business. It's a rapidly growing business and he expects the company to expand a lot more before long. He said he himself started out at \$140 a month, but he's now getting about \$250 a month. He's hoping to get transferred to a salesman's position where he thinks he may be able to work up to head salesman or something like that. Anyway, it looks like a swell job and I'd like to get in on it. The fellow was very nice during the interview, and he said he'd do everything he could to get me the position, but I don't know how it's going to work out."

"The way I figure is that a fellow shouldn't think too much of the pay he's getting when he first takes a job. After all, these employers want to know what kind of fellow their getting before they take him and you can't expect them to pay high salaries right from scratch. Course, that's partly my trouble too. When I first came here I didn't want anything that paid less than \$150 a month, and even at \$150 a month I'd have my doubts as to whether I should accept it or not. But I don't think a fellow should figure on getting too much to begin with as long as there are opportunities for advancement. If I thought a company was developing and progressive, I'd take a job at \$125 a month now."

"I've gotten these leads partly through watching the newspapers. There are quite a few jobs listed in the Want Ads section, and I've followed them up. The public employment agencies aren't able to help much, and there are the private employment agencies too but they're a little afraid to take a chance on a Japanese. I guess it's harder to place a Japanese, and it's not worth it to them to find something for a nisei. It means more work for them. They work on a commission basis. You know, Mike Nakata got his job (as a welder) through a private agency. He paid ten dollars to them, but that's not very much if they get you a decent paying job. I went over to the University of Chicago employment office this afternoon because I heard that they had something. Do you know Miss Collins there? When I went up there, they told me they didn't have anything, but they took my application and told me to look in every now and then. She said she'd let me know if they found anything for me."

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"Hal Tanaka" dropped in at our apartment this evening. Shig had a call from him last night when Hal wanted to get in touch with Shig during Hal's first week in Chicago. He's stopping at the Y Hotel on Wabash St. which happens to be directly across the street from where Shig works, and Shig dragged him home to supper after calling on him at the Y. Hal's remarks follow:

"I got in last Sunday and found out where you (Shig) were from the WRA. I went to the Wabash YMCA to get a room, but the place was so rushed that they didn't give me a room until 3:00 in the afternoon although I'd been waiting around from 9:00 o'clock in the morning. The desk clerk told me that they had to find rooms for the service men first and then that the civilians were served. Jeeze, those soldiers stay up all night; yeh, they're making a lot of noise around the place all night. I guess they like to have a good time on their days off."

"Frank, do you suppose I could get back to Minidoka? I think I made a big mistake coming out here. I should have stayed in camp even if it is for the duration. The camp's a lot better than this place. (I told Hal that I thought he'd have a hard time getting back to Minidoka because the WRA doesn't approve of sending any of the resettlers back into the relocation centers.) Well, I'm going back there in December, anyway. I'll stay here for a while now that I'm out, but when winter comes, I'm not going to stick around here."

"You know, I don't think much of the WRA office here. They wrote me that they had a good job for me as an automobile painter, and they promised that the employer had a place for me to live and would look after everything that I'd need to know when I first got here. You know, the WRA didn't even meet me (this point was a bit vague). When I went up to Highland Park where they said they had a job for me, I found out that the man was willing to give me a job, but he said he couldn't take me because there wasn't any place out there where I could live. According to that fellow the WRA had no business telling me that the employer had a room for me because they didn't get in touch with the employer about that. All they did, it seems, was to pick up the information about this job by hearsay, and then to wire me. I asked the WRA specifically whether they would have housing for me or not, and whether I would get a decent pay, and they wrote right back to me telling me that the job was waiting for me, that he'd promised a decent wage, and had a place for me to live."

"Boy, I had a tough day Tuesday. I checked out of the YMCA and carried my bags all over town. I thought that job up at Highland Park was waiting for me, and I thought there was no use my leaving my bags behind, so I carried it along with me when I went up there. I had to lug it all the way back when I found that I couldn't work out there. I went up to the WRA to see if I couldn't leave my bags there, but they told me they didn't have any room to leave anything around."

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"I found a job with Nelson-Chevrolet. They have a shop down on West Diversy. I don't know where it is---gee, I don't ~~we~~ know where anything is in this city---but the job looks all right. I'll only get 77¢ an hour, but I like the employer because he looks like the kind of guy who'd help the Japanese. I think it's a pretty good company, too. It's a big outfit, and nowadays you look around and you won't find very many places with used cars, but this shop has one whole floor full of cars waiting for a paint job. That's what I'll be doing, painting those cars. He has a nisei working there already."

"Do you suppose I could find a pretty good apartment around there somewhere? If I can find anything decent, I'd like to bring my wife and kid out, but I don't know. My wife is pretty particular about having a clean apartment, and I don't think she'll like this city. If I can find anything, I'll move in with one of the boys down at the Y. Maybe he'll go in with me. I wouldn't mind having a job out at Highland Park; that's a nice place. But this city isn't much of a place to bring up a kid."

"You know, Michi, I don't want to brag, but we had a better apartment than this back in Seattle. We only paid \$27 a month for it, but it was cleaner and lighter than this, and had more room."

"Frank, I think the wage scale here is lower than in Seattle; at least it is in my line of work. Back in Seattle when I first started working as an auto car painter for the X Company, my boss started me out at 84¢ an hour, that was two years before the war, and when I quit just before evacuation, I was making \$1.25 an hour. But at the shop I'm starting in on, they're paying me less than what I started out on in Seattle. I guess they'll raise my wages all right, the boss promised me raises in pay after he found out what I could do, but I think the wage scale is lower than in Seattle."

"After the war, I'm going back to Seattle. My boss back in Seattle told me when I was evacuated that as long as he's got a business under him there's always going to be a job for me. He told me to be sure to come back to him when the war's over, and he'd have a job waiting for me. That fellow was a real man, though. I really admire him. He had a niece in Honolulu the day Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, and it happened that this girl went out on a party the night before with her husband. He's a Lt. Commander on a destroyer out there. Anyway, she couldn't sleep when they got back, so she went for a walk. When she heard all the bombing she ran back to her house, and by the time she got there she found the whole building torn to shreds by one of the bombs that happened to fall there. The bedding on the bed she might have been sleeping on was just full of shrapnel holes, the walls were caved in and everything. Yet, when my boss got the news, he didn't change a bit toward me. He has some other relatives who are pretty high in the Army at the Western Defense Command. He kept telling me before the evacuation that the Army couldn't possibly evacuate us since I was an American citizen, and he used to tell me not to worry."

I guess he figured that it would be unconstitutional to evacuate the nisei. When the evacuation came, he was really disturbed about it all."

"You know the Green Cigar Store across the street from the post office in Seattle? My dad knows Mr. Green, the owner there, very well, and Mr. Green said that he has a daughter who's married to a millionaire out here. Mr. Green said any time we were out this way for my dad to look up his daughter; I guess I'll look her up one of these days. Mr. Green's a swell man; my dad's known him for over twenty years."

"It's a funny thing but when you go to the relocation center you find out about people. Lots of the people we used to think were good in Seattle turn out to be the most difficult persons to get along with in camp; and those we used to think were just low class people turn out to be the best type. We found that out at Minidoka. The Shigemoto's who lived next door to us were very ordinary people, I think they ran a barber shop or something in Seattle, but they were really good to us and we got along swell with them. ~~They ran a bar~~ They never locked their door, and we used to see them often. Sometimes my wife would have to leave the baby at home when she'd go to the lavatory or to the laundry to do the washing and the baby would suddenly wake up and start to cry. Mrs. Shigemoto would come running over to my wife's place to tell her that the baby's awake. But the Katos who lived there before the Shigemoto's moved in never did anything like that. Mr. Kato was a very stern old man; he hardly ever said anything to us. But we never bothered them although we'd see them everyday. I felt it was better to stay clear of all the neighborhood squabbles and all. The Kato family used to have some kind of trouble all the time."

"This summer they had makeshift irrigation ditches all over the camp. People put in lawns, you know, and they'd get the water from the ditches that ran down the middle alley of the block. There wasn't enough water to keep it running all the time, so in each block the barracks were to take turns in getting water from the ditch. They'd run the water for about half an hour at a time, and they had ditches running in front of the barracks to draw water from the main ditch. Sometimes a family would dam the water in front of their place so that they could cover their own lawn and garden with water, and the families farther down would kick like anything. They'd have regular fights over it. Of course, people at the end would want water just like everybody else, but they wouldn't be able to get it if the people up ahead stopped the water. "

"That's all the old folks were doing back there---just tending their gardens and lawns as if they were all that mattered. In the evenings you could see people all over camp working in their gardens and carrying buckets of water to their place from the washrooms. Some places like block 26 put in real lawn grass, bought the seeds and fertilizers with their own money, but most of the places just had the barley that would shoot way up, and they'd cut

it off into stubbles. Until the issei started growing their gardens and lawns a lot of them used to fight all the time and they'd hardly get together to talk about things. But like in our block, when summer came and people started building up their gardens, some people built gardens in the firebreak across from our block, and you'd see all these old folks working in their respective patches right along side each other. In the late evenings, you'd see them gathered around their gardens talking together as chummy as anything; they never got together like that before. Even fellows who used to quarrel all the time with each other got so they'd be out there together discussing their gardens."

"Gee, I felt guilty about leaving camp. My wife was sick just when I left, she was run down and wasn't feeling very well. I should have stayed there, but I got tired of staying in camp, I wanted to get out. There sure is a lot of pro-Japanese attitude among the issei there. You'd be surprised. Almost anywhere you go they're talking about the Japanese victories in the Pacific, and they never believe the American newspapers telling about the American victories out there. The way most of them figure, they say that the war's going to be over pretty soon and we'll be able to get out. Most of them think Japan will win the war and then they won't have to worry about the future. I don't know how many of the older folks came to me to say that I shouldn't go out, that I should stay in camp and that way I'd help ~~the United~~ Japan win the war. I never paid any attention to what they said; I knew it wasn't any use arguing with them."

"When I was leaving camp, the baby was just beginning to smile at me. It's a funny thing, but babies get so they recognize their parents pretty early. Her name is Sandra Sadako; I picked Sadako for my mother's sake, that's her sister's name. Lots of people seem to think that baby's are a lot of bother because they cry and you have to wash their clothings and things, but it doesn't make any difference, you miss them when you're away. I don't think this city is any place to bring up the baby."

"I was really worried when my wife had the baby. Dr. Nair, the chief medical officer, is just a "horse doctor" and he doesn't know what he's doing. I guess Dr. Yasui isn't such a good doctor either, but he's a lot better than Nair, and we had Dr. Yasui deliver the baby. You know what Dr. Nair did? A couple of army medical officers visited the project, and they wanted to try delivering a couple of babies so he let them. He said he was tired and they wanted to try. Those Army doctors hadn't delivered a baby in ten years, they didn't know anything about it, but Dr. Nair let them do it. I heard that the way they handled the deliveries were terrible; the nurses were so scared to see the way they treated the babies that they could hardly watch the deliveries. Dr. Hasegawa who was there was so angry about it all that I hear he really told off Dr. Nair for letting a couple of army doctors who didn't know anything about delivering babies handle the cases."

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"We were really lucky. If the baby had come two days earlier, it would have been the army doctors that would have delivered our baby, but we got Dr. Yasui. He was supposed to be taking a vacation, but we asked him to deliver the child, and he did it for us. When Fumi was in the hospital, they had the epidemic of gonorrhea. Gee, I was afraid that she might get it or that it might affect the baby. I hear that Bill Araki's wife got it because the nurses weren't careful with her bed pan. They didn't have enough bed pans around, and they let an Indian woman, who was in the hospital at the same time, use it. Bill Araki's wife got it from her, and Chuck Suzuki's mother got it too. Chuck's mother was really sore about it, I hear. Fumi didn't get it, but boy, I was afraid that she might. Gee, I was really worried when our baby came."

"I don't think it's any use my working out here; I might as well go back to Minidoka. I can't make enough to give a decent home to my wife and baby, and Fumi's the kind that has to have everything just so. If I go back during the winter, maybe I'll have to pay the visitor's subsistence fee. It'd be about \$20 a month, but that won't be so bad. If the WRA won't let me go back, I think I'll go back there as a visitor."

(We talked of several other things, among others, Hal's interest in books.)

"I think Thomas Wolfe and James T. Farrell are about the best American writers today, don't you think so? They really know how to write. I think Wolfe is deeper than Farrell; he gives a more understanding account of his characters. When Thomas Wolfe came to Seattle a couple of years ago, I went to see him. I heard he was stopping at the Olympic Hotel, so I waited around there thinking he ought to come out sooner or later. I saw him all right. He's a great big fellow, and I'd read that he wore sloppy clothes and hardly combed his hair, but he was just like that. I recognized him from the picture of him that was in the papers. He was gruff and almost rude to everyone around him. When I saw him, I was a little disappointed. He wasn't quite what I thought he'd be."

CH-307⁸ (pseud. "Chuck Tanaka")
Miyamoto Document
October 25, 1943

Since my brother-in-law knows ~~Chuck~~ very well and we've wanted to invite him to our house for dinner, we had him over this evening. He arrived about 4:30 in the afternoon and stayed until well after 11:00 o'clock. Because "Chuck" is a very free conversationalist, he did most of the talking while we added comments here and there to keep the conversation going. The following is a roughly verbatim account of the interesting points in what he had to say. The conversation started by his telling about his work.

Chuck: "I'm getting tired of work. It's a seven day a week schedule and it gets pretty hard after a while. I just got through working at the shop a little while ago and came over here right after ~~a~~ got cleaned up. Yeh, we work Sundays, too. We have to; we're so rushed down there. I get up at 6:30 in the morning and get to work by 7:30; and then I check out at 6:30 or 7:00 in the evening. That's a pretty long day, you know, but I don't mind working. Some of the fellows down at the shop work on a piece work basis, and one fellow makes at least \$75 a week every payday. I'd like to get in on the piece work, but I can't because I don't work at any particular job. I help at the paint jobs, "bumping" fenders (fixing fenders), and sometimes on the service jobs downstairs. Moving around from one job to another that way I can't get piece work rates because it's too hard to keep the books on my hours."

Myself: "But you get paid for the overtime, don't you?"

Chuck: "Oh, yeah. I get 80¢ an hour for forty hours, and I get a \$1.20 an hour on Saturdays and \$1.30 an hour on Sundays. I make about \$50 a ~~month~~ week sometimes, but I'm not interested in making anything over \$40 a week. Gee, the taxes sure cut in and it's not worth it to work much beyond \$40 a week. Up to that point it doesn't make much difference because I've got my wife and kid as dependents.

Shig: "Do you get dependence deductions for your wife and child even if they're not here and the WRA takes care of them?"

Chuck: "Sure, why not. I send half my check home every week. I ought to get dependence deductions for them. The personnel manager told me one day to try to keep my hours down to less than 52 hours a week. I said, 'Okay', because I'm not interested in working all the time. But the next thing I know, somebody brings me a job and tells me that I've got to get it out right away because it's a rush job, so I stick at it until it's finished. By the end of the week I run up sixty hours of work, and I can't do anything about it. If I quit after doing only 52 hours of work during the week, the boss

would get mad at me. Sometimes I make over \$50 a week. I could make more if I were doing piece work, but I'm making enough. I got a raise not so long ago; they raised my pay from 75¢ an hour to 80¢ an hour. 5¢ an hour makes a lot of difference when you add it up at the end of the week. The boss told me that he'd raise my pay some more, but he says he can't do it until the OPA gives him clearance to do so."

"I like the place I'm working at; it's a good shop. The boss is all right, and all the managers of the departments are good fellows. When I went in there, do you know what the boss told me? He said to me one day when he took me aside, "Have any of the workers ever made any trouble for you?" I told him that no one had ever bothered me. Then he says, 'Well, if anyone ever bothers you or calls you a name, just let me know because I'll back you up and take care of the other fellow.' He must have gone and told the service manager and the personnel manager the same thing because each of them came up to me later and asked me the same thing and told me to let them know if anything happened because they'd stand up for me. I don't have any trouble with the workers anyway. Half the workers in the shop are Germans, first and second generation Germans, so they sympathize with my position. There's one fellow they took on not so long ago whose a Mexican. He had a hard time getting along at first because he was a Mexican, but he's all right now. That guy is for me too because he knows what it's like to be a member of a minority group."

Myself: "I hear you've found an apartment on the North Side. How is the new place?"

Chuck: "It's a three room apartment, or a flat. It's in a fairly nice district. The owner of the building cut up seven rooms into two apartments of three and four rooms. I got the one in the back with three rooms in it. I got the kitchen, but the other fellow who took the front apartment got the bath. You see, we've got a bathroom and a toilet in it all right, but the owner took out the bathtub and put it into the other apartment so we didn't have any bath there. I looked around in some of the 2nd hand shops and found a bathtub to put in the place, so it's all right now. The owner is a Jew, but he's all right. He wanted me to take out a one year lease but I didn't want to sign it. I've got my eyes on another apartment that's a lulu and I'm not sure that I'll take this apartment that I've got now."

"The rent will be \$27 a month, unfurnished. I'll have to buy all the furniture, but I've been thinking that I'll send for the stuff we've got stored away in Seattle. I figure I might as well bring all of it out here."

"This other apartment I've told you about is a lulu. Boy, if I could get it, it would really be the thing. It's only half a block away from where I work, and the district is fairly nice too. Of course, it's not in the best residential district, but it's quiet around there. This place is one upstairs flat with five rooms that have all been recently redone, and with a kind of small backyard to

it that the kid could play in. The trouble is that the owner, who is a Syrian---but he looks to me more like a Jew---has to get the permission of the OPA to raise the rent from \$18.50 a month to \$27.50 a month. He really did the place over and it's one ~~the~~ of the best places I've seen in Chicago for the price. The floor must have been in pretty bad shape before, but he had it all torn up and now it's all smoothed off and looks just swell. I told the guy that I'd take the place and that I'd pay the difference between what he got before and what he wants now on the side to him. He said that he absolutely wouldn't do that. But if this owner can't get \$27.50 a month, he says he won't rent it, but he'll just keep it closed and give it to his son when he comes back from the Army."

Myself: "How did you find out about this place?"

Chuck: "Well, there's a Greek kid that hangs around our shop. He does odd jobs for our shop; goes out and picks up cars that need to be serviced at the shop. This Greek kid knows the district around the shop like a book; he grew up there and he knows a lot of people around there. He happened to know the son of the owner of this apartment and so he heard about the place and let me know about it. I went right over and asked about the place, and the owner was willing to let me have it if the OPA agreed to raise the rent. It would be close to the shop and I could go home for lunch; it's the ideal place for me if I can get it."

["You know, I got turned down at so many places that I got to the point where I'd ask them right at first whether they'd be willing to take a Japanese. I'd tell them ~~my~~ landlord when I'd go up to their door to ask about an apartment, 'I want to inquire about an apartment. I'm an American of Japanese ancestry. If you don't want to rent to me, let me know now so that I won't waste your time and mine.' That's what I told the Syrian fellow and he said that he didn't care what I was as long as I was a good tenant. The Jewish landlord that promised me the first apartment took the same attitude and he owns half the block around the the place where he lives so he said that if anyone bothered me he'd back me right up."

"One woman who had an apartment near the shop almost rented me an apartment and then she turned me down when she found out that I was Japanese. One of the workers at the shop saw the for rent sign on her window and told me about it. I dashed over and took a look at it. It was the Greek kid who saw the place and he told the woman that I was Chinese, so I guess she kept thinking I was Chinese. I thought I'd take the place, but the next day she phoned me and said that her husband had already rented the apartment ~~while~~ when she'd showed me the place, but when I continued to see the For Rent sign out even after a couple of weeks had passed I knew that she was discriminating against me. It seemed that she called up Max Levey, the secretary of the YMCA where I'm staying now, and he'd told her that I was Japanese but a very good tenant who never made any trouble and paid my rent on time. I guess she backed down when

she found out that I was Japanese. One day I saw her on the streets when I was walking along, so I stopped her and really told her off. I called her a narrow-minded bigoted Hebrew. That's what I called her. Boy, I was mad."

"My boss has been swell to me. When he heard that my wife was coming out and that I was looking around for a place to live, he offered to drive me around. I told him that as long as I had my own two legs, it wouldn't hurt me to use them. I thanked him for his offer, but I didn't take him up on his offer because I knew he was busy and didn't really have the time to drive me around. Not so long ago, the wife of one of the fellows working in our shop came to live in Chicago. I guess this guy thought he could find an apartment right away, so he didn't try to find a place until just before she came. When he started looking around though, he couldn't find anything. The boss offered to help him too, and drove him around all over, but they didn't find anything either. Finally, when the wife was due to arrive and this fellow still couldn't find an apartment for themselves, he got pretty frantic, but a couple of the fellows working at the shop who had a neat little place up in the Wilson Avenue district told him he could have their place and they moved out. That couple is still living there. Anyway, when this guy's wife arrived, he took a couple of days off and didn't show up at the shop at all. Boy, did the guys kid him about that. Ever since the guys in the shop heard that my wife is coming out, they've been kidding me like anything, too. I'll get a terrific ribbing when she arrives."

Myself: "How does your present job compare with the work you were doing in Seattle before the war?"

Chuck: "It's all right. In Seattle I was doing straight fender repair work, and I got paid a lot better than I do here. But the place where I'm working is all right. The people don't discriminate against me at all. I'm getting paid just as much as anybody else would at the same job and I've got no kick about it. Chicago wages just aren't up to what they are in Seattle. You can see that because I was getting \$1.20 an hour for "bumping fenders" in Seattle before the war, but the guys around the shop who're doing that work tell me they've never got that much in Chicago. One fellow told me that things were pretty terrible here during the depression. He said that he considered himself lucky if he could get \$2 a day during the depression years even though it was hardly enough to keep his family going; but things weren't ever that bad in Seattle."

"As soon as I can, though, I'm going back to Seattle. I don't intend to make my home permanently in Chicago. I'll tell you why I don't think I'd care to live here permanently. If I were here alone, or with my wife, I might stay on here even after the war, but it's different when you have a child. I don't think I'd care to have my kid grow up the way the kids around here do. There's a bunch of kids who hang around the Y where I'm staying. They play around, in the evenings, on the tennis court back of the Y, but when it gets cold I often see them around the lobby. They crowd around

people who are sitting around there, and beg for money to buy candy. They even go downstairs to the cafeteria, and the secretary has to chase them out because the kids keep bothering the people. There's a theater near the "Y" that I sometimes go to, and I've often seen gangs of kids standing just outside begging for money. I was going to the show one evening and one youngster came up to me, showed me three cents that he held in the palm of his hands, and then asked me for two cents more so that he could have enough to go to the show. I gave him the money, but when I came out of the show later, those kids were still there. It's a regular racket with them; that's the way they make money. Sometimes a bunch of young school kids, about sixteen or seventeen, gather in the alleyway under my window, and although I'm on the fourth floor, I can hear them plainly yelling and arguing with each other as to who saw the girl first and whose going to date her and so on. You hear such remarks as, 'I saw her first, and we don't want you around here. Why the hell don't ~~get~~ you stay away from us, and go find your own girl.' Kids that grow up here are tough, and they know too much. I wouldn't want my girl to grow up among acquaintances like that, or live in a ~~place~~ place where every other young fellow is out to "make" a girl."

Myself: "Yeh, this is a pretty tough city. I wouldn't be surprised if an environment like this affected the younger nisei who are re-settling here."

Chuck: "Yeah, I'll say so. You know what? I was walking along the street one day and a couple of 'hakujin' girls, young kids, were walking right behind me. They whistled at me, so I turned around and looked at them, and they kind of giggled and thought it was a lot of fun. Some of the nisei fellows pick up girls that way. It's a mixed population up there, a lot of 'em are Germans, Poles, and Jews, and they aren't bothered much by racial differences. And the nisei fellows are willing to spend money on them, take them to a show or a dance, and into night clubs and taverns, so the nisei get along all right with these girls."

"Those young nisei kids were living a pretty fast life in camp anyway. We certainly heard a lot of scandal in Minidoka. There was one woman, an issei, who was trying to get her leave clearance the same time I was. Her husband was interned after the war broke out, and she was at the camp with a grown up son. Well, she got mixed up with some married guy---this woman was about fifty, but she looked more like forty---, and pretty soon the rumor was that she was pregnant. Maybe that was why she had to leave. (I questioned Chuck about her age since it seemed unlikely that she would become pregnant at that late period of her life.) (Turning to Shig, Chuck continued) You remember the time the block 7 barracks weren't still completed, and they had a hakujin watchman to keep people out of there. I was talking to him and he told me that he found a couple of nisei kids in one of them. He said he flashed his flashlight on them, and the young fellow turns around and says, 'Go away.' You know who that was? That was T. W., and the girl he was with was R. N. I was just going wild about the time evacuation took place, gambling, drinking, and going around with a lot of wild girls. Gee, it's unbelievable what these young

kids won't do."

Myself: "By the way, Chuck, where is the rest of your family now."

Chuck: "Most of the family's in Omaha now. They've got a big house for themselves, and my dad is working as a cook in a hotel there. Kiyoshi is with them, Jiro's there, the twins, and my younger sister. I guess most of them are working. (Jiro is completely blind, a consequence of a family eye disease.) Kiyoshi's almost completely blind; it's been coming on for the last ten years or so, but he was working up until before the war. (K. was a short-wave broadcast receiver for one of the Japanese vernacular newspapers in Seattle.) You know what, Kiyoshi can still fix radios even though he can't see. I don't know how he does it, but he's still able to fix em. I don't think he's working right now. My dad knew Mr. Green who ran the Green's Cigar Store in Seattle, and Mr. Green helped find a job for him out in Omaha. Sat is up in Minneapolis working in the dry cleaning business."

"That Sat is a funny kid. He's four years younger than I am. We used to have one room together before I got married, and sometimes I'd get madder than anything at him. That kid never used to make his own bed unless I kept after him or my mother or sister made it for him. But he's got quite a temper, too, although you'd never know it because he's quiet. One day I got good and sore at him because he wouldn't keep the room neat, and he didn't say anything for a while, but when I kept picking away at him, he suddenly jumped on me. Gee, I was surprised. I never thought he'd start anything like that. He and I are about as different as any ~~one~~ others in the family. He's quiet and doesn't say much, but he's a hard working kid. When he was going to college, all he'd do was go to school and study. Right after supper he'd say, 'I guess I'll go upstairs and study,' and then he'd disappear upstairs. First thing you'd know, he'd roll over on the bed and go to sleep, and I'd go out to see Fumi, or go to see somebody else, and get back in around midnight. I'd wake him up and tell him to take his clothes off and go to bed, but instead he'd get up saying he had to study, and then he'd stay up all night right through till morning studying. God, that used to bother me because he'd start studying just when I wanted to go to bed. I used to go to sleep all the time with the lights on."

"You knew Keith didn't you? I went around with Keith Oka all the time from the time we were in high school together, and for a couple of years we used to get together almost every night. I'd go over to his room, and then we'd lie on his bed talking. Keith's kid sister used to have a room next to his, and she'd keep her door open so that she could hear all that we were talking about. After I got married, that kid sister met my wife, and she told Fumi all about the things we used to talk about together. She told Fumi that all we did was talk about girls. Jeez."

"I knew George Taki too, and Keith and I went around ~~for~~ ^{with} him too. Keith and I wanted to organize a basketball team down at the Plymouth Congregational Church once, and we went down there to find

out about using their basketball gym. We found that George was quite a big shot in the young peoples' group there; he was president of a large young peoples' organization. He was teaching a Sunday School class and all that sort of thing. I got to know George pretty well, and when the union trouble started, and George was one of the few nisei who were willing to stick their necks out for the CIO, Keith and I were about the only ~~nisei~~ friends that stuck by him. George always knew how to look after his own interest, and he had a paper route that was really a paying business. When he got mixed up with the union work, he couldn't carry the route any longer, so he offered it to my kid brother. George had to teach my kid brother the route, and since it was a big job, I was helping for a while too. One morning George showed up in a big car, and there was a hakujin driver and a Filipino guard on each side of George. Gee, when I looked, I noticed that both the hakujin and Filipino each had a gun stuck under his belt on the hip. I was scared. The AFL union guys were really after George, and it was pretty dangerous for him for a while. I admired his courage in sticking up for what he thought in spite of all that."

"I think George was a good kid until power and money went to his head. He was pretty straightforward, and he was really interested in trying to improve the conditions of the workers in the cannery when he started out in union activity. When he got in solid with the union leaders, and the Companies gave him a soft job as dispatcher in order to maintain good relations with the unions, he started to go to the dogs. He started taking money for getting jobs for guys that wanted to go to Alaska. I know because I had actual evidence that he was doing this. My kid brother Sat wanted to go to college, and he needed a summer job, so I asked George to see if he couldn't get a work permit from the union for Sat. Sat wanted to go to Waterfall, and I thought that would be a good thing because Keith was there and he could look after Sat. He got to go all right, but a couple of weeks later we heard from our friends that George's mother was going around saying that we should pay an "orei" (repayment gift) for George's getting a job for Sat in Alaska. That burned me up. I used to know Mrs. Taki pretty well because I visited George quite often in the old days. I went over to her place, and asked her if she thought that we should pay George for having gotten a job for Sat. She said she thought we should. I told her off then. I asked her who it was that stuck by George when noone else in the Japanese community would have anything to do with George. I've never talked to that woman since. The trouble with her is that she's just a greedy old woman; she's always been money mad. When Keith and I found out that George was taking money for getting guys jobs in Alaska, we dropped him and quit seeing him. We heard afterwards that George told some people that Keith and I had changed. We weren't the ones who had changed; it was he who changed, but he didn't realize that."

Myself: "Is the work in the used car business unionized here in Chicago? Do you have to belong to a union?"

Chuck: "No, the workers in the used-car trade aren't unionized, but the service men are. In our shop we've got a servicing department as well as the used car business, and the guys in the other department all have to belong to the union. Any time anybody picks up a tool to service a car, he's got to belong to the union. Actually, I work in both departments and I have to join the union, but so far I've been able to avoid the union agents and haven't joined. If those agents ever catch me with a hammer in my hands fixing or servicing a car---one that's not a used car ---, I'll catch hell from them unless I'm a member of the union. The initiation fees for the union cost \$40, and I'd have to pay \$3 a month dues. But the trouble is that I wouldn't get anything out of it. The fellows in the shop all say that our shop has the best working conditions of any shop in town and the union can't help us much in improving it. If the union ever makes any demand for a raise in pay, it's likely that our boss will already have raised our pay before the union raises any questions about it. We wouldn't get any benefits from belonging to the union, and unless I'm going to get some benefits from it, I don't see any use in my joining up."

"Whenever the union agents drop into the shop, I'm always on the 2nd floor, and when they come up on the ~~third floor~~, 2nd floor, I go up to the 3rd floor. When they come up to the 3rd floor, I sneak down on the elevator and go out to the corner drugstore for a coke until the agents leave. I think somebody must have snitched on me because the agents have been looking for me. I guess they must know that I help service some of the cars. One day I was working away on a used car pounding away on a fender, and a couple of guys came up and started asking me questions about what I was doing. They wanted to know if the car I was working on was a used car, so I told them it was. Customers aren't allowed upstairs in the shop because they get in the way, so I figured these guys must be dealers interested in picking up some cars. We get dealers every now and then around the shop. I didn't think anything more about it, but pretty soon the personnel manager came up and asked me if I'd seen the union agents around. I didn't know who the union men were so I told him I hadn't seen anybody from the union. He asked me, 'Weren't there a couple of guys wandering around upstairs?' and I said, 'You mean those two guys who were around here a little while ago?' and the personnel manager says, 'Yeah, they're the fellows I'm talking about. They're from the union.' The personnel manager then wanted to know if the union agents had seen me working on any of the new cars, and I told him they hadn't. Anyway, I was warned not to be seen working on any of the new cars when those guys were around. Boy, that was a close shave. If they'd caught me working on a new car, there would have been hell to pay."

"I used to belong to the unions in Seattle, though. I used to work for the Eba's Mutual grocery chain stores in Seattle. You've heard of them, haven't you? All the clerks in those stores

used to belong to the Retail Clerks Union (AFofL). The Eba's stores had a very bad reputation with the union because their wages were low and they had generally very poor working conditions. One day when I was working in the backroom, some guy walked in and told us to drop everything and stand guard outside to see that noone came into the store. He told us all the Eba's workers were striking, and unless the managers met the workers demands, we were going on a walkout. A bunch of us stood around in the back waiting to find out what would happen. Pretty soon the same guy came back, and he told us to pick up some bricks or something because we might have some trouble. The rest of them went after something to use for a weapon, so I picked up a big stick too. Gosh, I was wondering what was going to happen. We must have waited around three or four hours that way, and finally the guy came back and told us we could go back to work because we'd gotten all our demands. Actually, the Eba's didn't meet all the union's demands, because they had a plan by which the wages would be gradually raised over a three months period, and we were losing out during that period of lag. But the union wasn't very strong then so we couldn't push our demands very strongly. Anyway, I helped picket in that strike and it's in my union book. I helped picket in another strike when I joined the AFofL teamster's Union, so I've got a pretty good strike record to my credit with the unions in Seattle."

"The Retail Clerks' Union used to meet in the old labor temple on University---you know the building---, but when we got bigger and powerful, we got to meet at the Teamster's Hall out in the Denny Regrade. We'd meet once a week, and you'd be surprised at the number of cars that used to park in the lots around there when we'd have our meetings. It got to be a pretty big union. I went pretty regularly, but they never talked about anything except regular business so I used to sit in the back and sneak out during the middle of the meeting. I never got anything out of those meetings. The hall would be crowded with workers, everybody'd smoke and the air would be filthy with clouds of smoke, and everyone would be talking and paying no attention to the speakers. The women used to come with their knitting, and they'd talk to each other all through the meeting. I didn't see any use sticking around at an affair like that so I'd sneak away."

"When I started working in the garage, I joined the AFofL Teamsters' Union. The AFofL never gave the Japanese regular membership. They'd give us a card with a "J" on it. We'd pay the regular initiation fee and dues, but we never got voting privileges and they could kick us out any time they decided to do so. I was about the only Japanese in the garage mechanics union, and when I first joined the union, I knew I wasn't supposed to go to the meetings. Well, the first meeting after I joined, I didn't go, and the union immediately sent me notification of a \$1 fine for absence from the meeting. I figured that maybe I was supposed to go to the meetings, so the next time they held one I went. When I walked in everybody there was Caucasian and they were all big fellows who looked like mechanics, but they stamped my book at the door and didn't stop me from walking in so I stayed. After that, I always went to the meet

ings."

"One time after the war started, Dave Beck came to speak to our union. Boy, that was one time I was sorry I attended the meetings because he started blasting away at the Japs, and I felt as small as anything. I'm telling you, that guy can talk. He knows just what to say to get the workers behind him. That day it was just after his son went into the army, and so he told the union about it and how he felt about the Japs. You know, with all those tough looking guys all around me, I was afraid something might get them started and then they'd lynch me, but fortunately nothing happened. With the Retail Clerks' Union, it was different because there were always a lot of women at the meetings, but when you have only men around, the meetings are inclined to be a lot more violent."

"I used to see Mr. Watanabe around the union halls in those days. When the dry cleaners' war was on, he was in there throwing the acid with the rest of the boys, and I guess that's how he got in good with the union. Anyway, he was the Japanese agent for the dry cleaners' union, and he used to get a pretty good cut out of it. I think he must have been paid around \$200 a month for the work, besides getting all kinds of travelling expenses. I believe the Watanabe's were having a tough time of it in the dry cleaning business until he became the union agent because I've heard neighbors of his say that after he got the job with the union, he started fixing up his yard and bought a new car and that sort of thing. Before that, it was quite evident that they weren't so well off."

"When I'd see him down at the hall, he'd always give me a queer look, I guess because he was afraid I knew too much about what he was up to. Now and then I'd ask around with the secretary at the hall about Mr. Watanabe's work, and I got quite a bit on him that the Japanese would have liked to know. I think he was out to get me because I knew that he was lining his own pockets with what he got out of the Japanese dry cleaners, and he was afraid that I might let it leak out. In fact, if the war hadn't happened and I'd stayed around in the union a couple of years more so that I was in solid around the union hall, I figured on fixing Mr. Watanabe for some of his dirty deals. I could have gotten enough dope on him to run him out of town, and I was planning on letting the people know about it sometime."

(I mentioned something about my cold and consequently we got off on the subject of colds. We were talking about the circumstances in which colds seemed to affect us.)

Chuck: "You know when I catch colds; it's when I start worrying about anything. I've caught two colds since coming out here, and both times it's been when I've been worried about something. The first time was when I heard from my wife that she was sick and the neighbors were having to take care of the baby. I worried about that, and the first thing I knew, I had a cold. The other time was when my wife wrote me that she had broken her glasses---she said that one day when she was feeding the baby, the baby pulled

the glasses off and broke them. Ever since, Fumi's been getting headaches and she hasn't been able to do much work. She can't see anything without her glasses. I was worried about it---you know, anything might happen, like Fumi might stumble over something she didn't see while carrying the baby---, and right away I caught a cold. When I start worrying, I can't sleep and my appetite falls off. I guessssall that gets me run down."

"I'll be glad when my wife comes out. I get tired of eating out, eating the same old restaurant cooking everyday. I generally eat at the cafeteria at the "Y" or at one of the restaurants around there. I don't know yet just when my wife can come out with the baby. It's going to be a problem for her to get packed. She has to wait until her sister can come over. Fumi can't pack while the baby's around because she crawls around now and gets in the way unless someone's watching her. But Fumi's sister has to help at home too because her mother isn't very well. I don't know when she'll be able to come over to help. Right now this sister has been having some kind of "woman trouble" and hasn't been well enough to come over and help."

"My wife's brother, Shiro, came through here not so long ago on his way to Shelby. He volunteered, you know, but he's sorry now that he did. When he volunteered, I knew why he was joining the army, but I didn't say much about it to him. He used to come over and talk about it, and he'd tell me that he was volunteering because he wanted to help make a place for the nisei in this country after the war. He said that by having a nisei combat team, the nisei could claim that they helped in a real way in the war effort, ~~but I knew~~ and he told me that by volunteering he was helping to make a place here for his brothers and sisters and family, and for us and our baby. I knew that wasn't the real reason for his volunteering, and I told him so. Shiro is a good fellow, but he's never developed any real goal in life and in camp he was drifting along not knowing what he wanted to do. If he were to resettle, he wouldn't have any special field to work in, since he doesn't have any kind of training. I told Shiro that it was because he was restless in camp and yet didn't know what to do with himself that he was joining the Army. He got mad."

"The people at the 'Y' treat me pretty well, and I've gotten to know quite a few fellows. A lot of them come over to my room and sit around for bull sessions, or they invite me over to their place. There's one French fellow who's always dropping in or calling me over to his room. Even if it is the 'Y', they're pretty liberal, and this Frenchman has a bottle of wine that he always drags out, and we sit around drinking and talking. The other night this fellow came over to my room and got to talking about the English. He hates the English---I guess a lot of the French people do--- and he was talking loudly criticizing the ~~the~~ English. The transom over the door was slightly open, and, gosh, I was afraid that people would hear all the ranting against the English and notice that it was coming from my room. I was just hoping nobody was listening in on the discussion. He'd keep taling away, and I didn't want to say

anything so I'd just nod my head. Boy, I was glad when he left."

"There's one fellow living on the same floor with me whom I've seen several times. I noticed that he was kind of staring at me one day---he wasn't smiling, but he wasn't unfriendly---, and I noticed that he always looked at me kind of funny when we ran into each other. Well, one day, I went to the washroom to shave, and I heard a couple of fellows talking in the shower. One of the fellows, I found out, was this fellow that I used to run into in the halls. The other fellow was a great big fat guy---you know, one of these soft flabby fellows with a narrow shoulder and wide hips that make you think he's more woman than man---; anyway, nobody likes him much and he's always got a sour look on his face when he sees me. Well, these two guys were talking away in the showerroom, and since they couldn't see me in the outer washroom, the fat guy spoke up and said, 'This goddam place is getting to be a regular Jap hotel. (There are about a dozen nisei staying there.) Why the hell don't they keep the Japs out of here?' Then I heard this other fellow say, 'Oh, I don't know. Some of them are pretty good fellows when you get to know them.' From the conversation I guessed that the latter had been out in California and got to know some Japanese out there. The fat guy would rant about the 'Japs' and the other fellow wouldn't contradict him, but I could see that he was trying to present a fairer view. I felt funny when all this started, but I decided to finish shaving so I just stayed there although I heard every word of their conversation. Finally, the fellow who was defending the Japanese finished his shower, and came out into the dressing room, and when he looked out, I was sure he saw me. Anyways, when the fat guy would say something, this other fellow would say something good about the Japanese. I knew he was saying it for my benefit so that I wouldn't take what the other fellow said too hard. I left finally, before they came out of the showerroom, but ever since then, every time I run into the fellow I used to meet in the hallway, he smiles at me now and we exchange greetings. We've never mentioned anything about the incident in the showerroom, though."

"I've got to know the secretary of the 'Y' there pretty well. Max Levy and his wife are swell people. Mrs. Levy says she thinks her husband knows you because he used to attend the University of Chicago, and he took sociology. One time I didn't know Max Levy quite so well, and once I got pretty mad at him. One day Levy called one of the nisei fellows living there into his office and told this nisei that there were some complaints from the white residents at the hotel about the number of Japs around. Levy wanted this nisei to not bring his friends over too much to prevent such complaints. He explained that he didn't care whether the nisei filled the hotel or not because they were good tenants and he liked them, but he didn't feel that he could permit bad relations to develop with the white tenants. This young fellow told Max Levy that he didn't bring any of his friends around, and Max said that he knew that, but he was just advising this fellow against it."

"The nisei kid was pretty worried, I guess, and hurt. He came over to my room to tell me about it. I got mad when I heard about it, and I was thinking that I'd tell Max Levy off when I saw him the next time. I thought I'd tell him off before I left the place. But one day I ran into Max and he stopped to talk to me. Maybe he guessed that I was sore at him, but anyway he started to explain the whole thing to me. I guess I'd misunderstood. Anyway, when he got through I was darn glad that I hadn't said anything to him. He's a very fair minded fellow and very intelligent. He's had to work up the hard way; he wasn't able to finish high school until he was 28 because he had to help support his family. I've visited their apartment several times, and they're planning to have my wife and the baby over when they get here. Boy, I've often thought of how close I was to making a mistake by telling off Max Levy. You know, that sort of thing teaches you never to go off half cocked."

Myself: "Chuck, I'm sure you've got a lot of interesting remarks to make about the situation in the camp and out here. I wonder if we might not sit down and have a good chat about it sometime?"

Chuck: "You know, Mrs. Levy's always asking me questions about this 'n that. I told her one day that I've got a friend down on Cottage Grove somewhere who's an instructor at the university who's just like her, always asking questions. I told her that when I'm at his place, I've always got the feeling that he's trying to get information out of me."

"Yeah, I wouldn't mind telling you what I know, although I don't know how much I can help. Not right now, though. As long as I've got the problem of getting the apartment ready for my wife to move into, I won't feel like sitting down and thinking about it."

Myself: "Well, welll get in touch with you when you get settled down."