

<Covering from April, 1940 to Evacuation>

11 There were many times when I actually wished that I weren't a Jap. It wasn't because of any shame of my background, but I felt that economically I would be better off if I did not have a Japanese face. <I suppose that this was a sort of a reaction from the experiences I was going through. Actually, it was only the beginning.> I consoled myself by the fact that many young college graduates were having a difficult time getting placed. Several times I talked to my professor at college and she suggested^{jokingly} that the problem might be solved by having an operation on my eyelids to eliminate the slant-eye effect. She said I could pass as a ^{slow} southern European if that were done. I took this quite seriously and I even investigated several ^{it} plastic surgeons to see if/could be done, but I gave up the idea when I was told that it would cost around \$50. It was a silly idea, but it indicates the mood of my thinking at that time. The ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ^{two years} after graduation from college, ^{we} was extremely frustrating in many ways.

<Looking back at it now, I can be very philosophical about my experiences and think to myself that it did ^Dto me some good; but, at that time, it was tragic to me and I was one of the most confused young men in the Bay area. There just did not seem to be any answer to things, and often the situation looked quite hopeless in spite of my determination to be optimistic. Instead of becoming extremely bitter about it, my attitudes developed more and more into that "I'll show them that I'm an American in spite of what happens". This was easier said than done, and I did not seem to be getting any place in the months that quickly passed by.>

Out of necessity, I began to live in the Japanese community. Getting jobs there ~~were~~ just as difficult for ~~me~~ because I had

Capitalize
first
name?

to compete with other nisei who were in a similar position as I, ^{to mine?} only ^{who} ~~that~~ ^{the} had an advantage of knowing Japanese. The only reason I stayed around in that district was because food and rent ^{that?} was ~~was~~ ^{were} cheaper than in other sections of the city. At the same time I hated living there, as I definitely did not feel that I was a part of the Japanese community atmosphere. It probably intensified my reaction to the segregated living to a much greater degree than if I had been foreign to it. It grated upon my ears to hear the strange Japanese tongue everywhere. It seemed that even the young nisei used the language exclusively, altho ^{ugh} this was a ~~an~~ mistaken impression since I later found that they were quite Americanized and that many of them were going through similar conflicts as I was.

The Japanese community of the ~~the~~ Pacific Coast has never been self-sufficient. During the earlier days there was a necessity for professional workers of all kinds to fill the existing needs. This was especially true when the older issei passed into retirement so that these nisei who received a college education and training during the 1920's and early '30's were easily assimilated into the narrow economic life of the Japanese community. At that time there were not so many nisei in college, since the average age of the group was fairly young. It was during the '30's that the great masses of nisei began to fill the Bay area colleges and universities. This was partly caused by the economic depression during that period, so that there were no jobs anyway. Gradually the Japanese community became ~~flooded~~ ^{filled} with certain types of trained college nisei because there was a tendency for them to go into a limited number of fields. Those who came later could not be absorbed by the community, so that there

was a great deal of restlessness and frustration. A number of the nisei were seeking escapes into other types of activities. This was especially true in the realm of social activities and sports affairs. The nisei who excelled in these fields were the ones who were looked upon with approval. It did not matter if they worked in a laundry for \$30 a month or in a Japanese grocery store for \$35, tofu factory, dry cleaning shops, Japanese transfer company, Japanese art good stores, etc. There just weren't enough jobs to go around, so that many of the younger nisei were forced to go to the country to do migratory work in order to earn some income.

Coming into a situation of this sort, it was more difficult for me because of the language handicaps. I also had a certain amount of false pride and I didn't want to do menial work because I felt that this would be admitting defeat to myself. But hunger is a powerful force, and I soon had to swallow my pride and take any kind of a job. I soon found out that even for the most ordinary job there was a great deal of competition with nisei, issei, kibei and Filipino workers. I hung around the Japanese employment agencies in order to compete with them for day labor jobs which paid 40 or 50 cents an hour. This type of activity kept me going for several months. I did all sorts of odd jobs but I was never able to get ahead in any because I was living from hand to mouth. It was a frustrating experience because I found that I wasn't qualified ^{for} to many of the ordinary types of work because most of my previous activity had been directed towards educational ambition. | I consoled myself with the thought that a lot of the less unfortunate workers that I competed with had to do jobs of this sort all of their lives, while my break would come eventually if

I remained patient.

Some of my college friends were extremely concerned about me and they attempted to help me out in all sorts of ways. One of them was a brilliant student who had graduated the year before me with highest honors and he had been working in an Eastbay school. He was fired from this position because the school board thought that he was a Communist and they didn't like to have the young students contaminated with radical ideas. Frank then became engaged in the labor movement. He worked with the warehouse union, and I met him on the street one day and told him of my experiences. He was very sympathetic, and he felt that he could get me into some sort of union work through his connection. But it was the same old story. I couldn't join the union because I had a Japanese face. Before this realization dawned, I had gone to the waterfront several times to picket ships that were carrying cargo to Spain and the orient. One day, we went down to picket the Japanese Consul's office down near the waterfront. Frank and I strolled up and down the street with an American flag and ~~xxxx~~ placards. When the Japanese officials came out for lunch, they looked at me in amazement and made some comment but I didn't understand what they were saying. I felt that the embargo of American goods to the orient had to be strictly enforced because of the aggressive ambition of Japan. It never occurred to me that some day I would be looked upon with suspicion and regarded as a Japanese. I had not had close enough contacts with the Japanese community, in spite of ^{having} been living in it, to be influenced by the cultural and political battles which were already going on between Issei and Nisei.

My ~~xxxxxx~~ enthusiasm for boycotting these ships died down

young Communist League?

when I discovered that I could not get into union work and I had to spend more of my effort to earn some money to eat. Frank was an official in the YCL, and he kept urging me to join with the group. I personally liked many of the young fellows in this organization, but my political sentiments were not this quite far to the left. I still had a firm belief in democracy and I felt it would be a betrayal to overthrow it simply because I was having a difficult time finding a job. I tried to remain consistent in my attitude that a large part of it would be up to the individual efforts and that I could not blame the system entirely for failures on my part. The YCL discussions stimulated me, yet they were very disturbing. I wasn't in a good mood to be entirely engrossed with arguments on political systems, so I gradually began to withdraw from this activity.

Adams

Around June of 1940, I suddenly had an urge to get away from everything. I thought that I would do migratory work for the summer since it would help me to think objectively about things. I was also curious to get a first hand view of the Issei and Nisei migratory workers ^{then} since I had heard so much about it. I discovered, to my amazement, that I could not get a job with many of these Japanese work gangs because I didn't speak the language. I worked for a while with Filipino, Mexican and Okie laborers and I got along well enough with them. < Most of these workers had been deadened in their ambition and were only existing from season to season. It was not difficult to understand why they looked forward to Saturday nights when they could get drunk, go see women, and gamble. It was a release from the hum drum life that they were living. I worked all through Sacramento Valley/ and south as far as Fresno with one Mexican and Filipino crew. I kept mostly

to myself because I didn't care to engage in their type of activities, as I felt that I was saving my money to further my education. >
Q I had been making many efforts to get a scholarship to do graduate work because I knew that I would never get any place unless I had some specialized type of training. I wasn't sure what I wanted to train for. I had changed majors in college several times because of this uncertainty. Originally I started to be a physical education instructor but this did not seem very practically. I changed over to an education major with the idea of teaching some day. The college adviser strongly discouraged this as they pointed out that no Nisei ever received a teaching job in California. < They thought I might have some chance in Hawaii because of the large Japanese population there. I objected to this type of solution because I had no intention of ever leaving California altho there was a hazy ~~xx~~ idea in the back of my mind that I would go east some day. >

After my junior year in college, I became a little discouraged about employment possibilities in the educational field so I changed over to a history major, emphasizing oriental history. I had some sort of an idea that this would be the opening wedge to eventually getting into a high school or university as a teacher. < I never did care for history although I got extra marks in the courses. It seems that life was going along at such a fast pace that it was a waste of time to go backwards and re-create things. I became more and more interested in philosophy but I gave up the idea of changing to that major because it was such an impractical field. > My efforts^{were} to do graduate work ~~was~~ directed towards the history department up until the time I went to work with the migratory laborers in 1940. This experience was quite

illuminating to me because I saw at first hand how these workers were exploited. I wanted to do something about it. One day I picked up a social work book and I became intrigued with it so much that I decided to become a social worker~~x~~. I felt that in this way I could work upon minority problems and attempt to help solve them in some way. <These migratory workers lived under the most unsanitary conditions imaginable. The government's work to alleviate this condition had not touched the bulk of the migratory workers at that time. They lived in old shacks near the harvest field without lights or water, and many of the mothers had a terrible time keeping their babies alive. It was not an uncommon sight to see dead Mexican babies in these migratory camps. The mothers would very casually bury them in some lonely and deserted spot, and it did not seem to affect them too much because they were used to such things as a part of their lives. It was shocking to me because I had naively swallowed everything, or almost everything in college, and I had an impression that this country had the highest living standards in the world. I was aware of sociological problems, but these were only abstract things to me and I did not become fully conscious of it until directly faced with the lax of our system. >

After a month or two of wandering around the state I met a Nisei friend near Stockton. He told me that there was a chance to work on a celery ranch near Stockton with a Japanese gang, so I went along with him and applied for the job. My ^{friend} ~~friend~~ spoke Japanese and he did the talking for both of us, so I was given a job with him. For the next two months we almost broke our backs pulling celery stalks out of the~~2~~ grounds ~~xxx~~ with our bare hands for 25 ~~xxxxxx~~ cents an hour. There were many times that I wanted

to quit because I rebelled at the thought of being exploited like this, especially by a Japanese foreman. / It seemed to me that these Japanese farmers were inhuman in their attitudes toward the workers and there ⁱⁿ only interest was to get out as much out of them as possible. Some members of these work gangs were old Issei who had been doing the same type of work year in and year out for 25 or 30 years. There were about 9 Nisei in this gang who stuck together mostly. A Filipino crew was employed in the sheds to do the cutting, and there was little effort made on both sides to break the ice and mix.

This job was my first experience working for a Japanese foreman. We were out in the fields for 10 hours a day, and there was little opportunity for recreation. Meals were eaten in the bunk house according to the Japanese style. Most of the meals consisted of a small dish of vegetables and meat with all the rice one could eat. I had to stuff myself with rice in order to have enough to eat. I discovered that the Filipinos were very clean in their bodily habits and they took a bath every night as the Japanese crew did. The Okie crew in the next field rarely took a bath. There was quite a bit of rivalry between the Japanese and Filipino crew because there was only one large bath tub available. The bath house consisted of a small out-house. The tub was about 6 x 8' and made by galvanized iron. A pit had been dug under it so that a fire could be built to warm the water. The Filipinos were anxious to be the first ones to get into the water because they did not want to follow any Japanese. On the other hand the Japanese workers believed that all Filipinos had syphilis, and they wanted to get into the water first so they would not be affected. This conflict got so intense that the

Japanese foreman finally had a separate bath house built for the Filipino workers. However, bad blood existed between the two groups. The Japanese workers accused the Filipinos of strike-breaking tactics and being trouble makers, while the Filipinos felt that the Japanese workers did not have guts enough to demand a living wage. ^{not}

~~66666666~~ In order to get revenge, the Japanese/workers put an extra effort in their work in order to pile up the celery cutting and force the Filipinos ^(to do it) extra work. < This went on for several days until the Filipinos were over-swamped with ~~the~~ ^{the} cutting and the Japanese crew was called in to the shed to help the Filipinos catch up. There was a bad atmosphere that day and everything was in a state of tension. I was sitting between a Nisei fellow and a large Filipino. I attempted to become friendly with the Filipino worker and I soon discovered that he was a likable person. He was a graduate of the University of Manila and had come to California to attend the university. Running out of money, Manual was forced to work in the farm gangs. It became a pattern for him, and he had remained in this rut for 10 years. He talked about his ambitions to return to the Philippines but said he could not return until he was a success. I was so busy talking to this Filipino that I did not notice the bad atmosphere in the air. The crisis broke when the Nisei boy next to me innocently threw a crate out of the shed. It hit on the beams on the ceilings and fell on the head of another Filipino worker. For a moment there was a stunned silence. Then the Filipino man sprang up and started swinging his knife. The first thing I knew about it was when this 12-inch knife came swishing through the air, cutting the tip of my nose. There wasn't anything I could

do because my back was to a board and I could not make a retreat. A general riot was about to burst loose when Manuel jumped to my protection and he shouted to the other workers that this was a personal matter. The Filipino who had been hit on the head then proceeded to go after Kenji. He slashed him once on the hand and the second time on the stomach. By this time Manuel caught up with him and pinned him down. Manuel was recognized as the leader of the group and he calmed all the workers down. The Japanese foreman was given a demand to fire all of the Nisei workers because they were the trouble makers, whereas the Japanese crew wanted all of the Filipinos fired because they threw around their knives too carelessly, and they felt that some night a Filipino gang would murder one of the Japanese workers. There was a hot discussion back and forth for about an hour and then things began to cool off so that everyone agreed to forget the whole incident and return to work. After that the Japanese and Filipino workers kept their distance but I continued to go visit Manuel and talk to him. The Japanese workers did not like this very much and they said that I was betraying them, so they insisted I move out of their bunk house. I found a place in Manuel's bunk house and for the remainder of the season I worked with a Filipino crew.

During all of this time I continued to make applications to various universities throughout the country in order to get a scholarship. I wasn't able to finance myself, and it was very discouraging when I received so many negative answers. I decided to go back to San Francisco at the end of the summer as I had only managed to save a hundred dollars during the 3 months that I worked. The experience had not been unfruitful for me because it had given me an objective picture of migratory workers and I had

also learned that the Japanese workers were in a similar predicament. The experience had also helped me to determine what my field of study should be. From that time on I worked for this goal. I was intensely interested in the Nisei predicament as I could see no good coming out of the segregated community which could never be self-sufficient in itself. I continued my job hunting activities in the fall of 1940 without much success. I was offered the job as the reader for the whole social science department of San Francisco State College, which would have paid me around \$125 a month, but the head of the department decided to give half of the job to a Ph.D. graduate who was unable to land a teaching position. Since he had a wife and child to support, I let him take on two-thirds of the work, so my income from this job was around \$40 a month. I went to the USES for placement, but it was the same old story. One day I talked to the counsellor at the Junior Counselling Service of the USES, and she suggested that I get on the NYA in order to ~~make~~ make a study of the Nisei employment situation in the Bay area. I was quite agreeable to this because I was curious myself. I received \$24 a month for this work, and this income was sufficient for me to get by. I still had time to look for other odd jobs on the side. I began to do less and less readers job at the college, because the Nisei survey, which I was undertaking, occupied a great number of hours, much more than called for.

I was discouraged about my progress, but the more I studied the Nisei groups, the less sorry I felt for myself, because I soon found out what terrific economic handicaps the nisei workers entering the labor markets for the first time had to face. I didn't finish my survey until the spring of 1941, as I only worked

on it off and on. The results were most disturbing and discouraging, because it verified my suspicions about the difficulties of the Nisei workers. (Review San Francisco survey here)

During all of this period I was engaged on this survey, I was having a most difficult time myself in order to make ends meet, but strangely enough I had developed a new attitude toward the whole thing. I felt it was part of my growing up process. Perhaps part of the reason was due to the fact that my brother came up from Los Angeles to attend college in the Bay area and he lived with me. He brought a friend, George, along. The three of us lived in a room on the top floor of an old Japanese apartment house. We paid \$10 a month for rent, and during the winter of 1940 we often had to shift the bed around to escape the dripping water from the roof. We developed a light attitude towards everything and we called our apartment, "The Penthouse", and we acted as if we were living like kings. With such an optimistic attitude, it was not so difficult to live in poverty and it became fun, a sort of a game. ^{cut to p. 23} Jack was the only one going to school at that time so that George and I spent a great deal of our time making rounds of the Japanese employment agency. I put less effort than George, as I was doing my survey at that time and I had a small income.

George ~~xxxxxxxx~~ was a very Americanized Nisei fellow. He had gone 2 years to San Jose State college where he held a boxing championship and represented the school in the Pacific Coast weight lifting championship. He held the coast record for his weight. However, George was an unassuming fellow, and he was often mistaken for a timid person. ~~He~~ The result usually proves disastrous to the aggressor because George could take very drastic

action when he became aroused. George had no funds to continue on with his education, so that he was forced to do odd jobs along with my brother and I. Some of his experiences are related in the following article which I wrote for "Current Life". (Insert article regarding George)

In the meantime, ~~we~~ the three of us took turns at seeking employment. We made a nuisance of ourselves around the Japanese employment agency so that we were greatly disliked by some of the employment office managers. These Issei who were running these employment agencies were not interested in good placement or anything of that sort. Their only interest was in the 10% interest which they received for each placement. They had no idea of the economic situation of the Nisei. In most places the job calls for Caucasian establishments were usually given to a relative or a friend of the Issei employment manager. Since we did not have ~~any~~ roots in the Japanese community, we received only the crumbs. One employment agency had a very nasty old man in charge, and he used to berate us in particular and the Nisei in general because he said that we were lazy and we didn't want to work. Jack got into an argument with him and the man pulled out his gun in his anger and started to flourish it around. He rushed toward Jack who was seated on the bench and the only thing Jack could do was to lift up his feet and ~~the~~ throw the man on his back and then he left the office. Jack came to our apartment and said that Hide-shima had a good ~~good~~ job for George and ~~N~~ and told us to go down. When we got ~~there~~ the man was still waving the gun around, and he told us that if we ever got around he would shoot us. He then spread the word around with other employment agencies that we ~~were~~ were trouble makers, so we were boycotted even from the most menial jobs.

Experiences of George
in finding a job -
written by C.K. for
Current Life, Jan '41

JOE NISEI LOOKS FOR A JOB

America is a land of great opportunities, but for the Americans of Japanese descent the road to economic independence is proving a trying and difficult one. The author presents here a true life experience of a Nisei jobseeker and with deft skill relates the accounts of his bitter trials and endless tribulations in the busy commercial center of the West, San Francisco.

Even a Nisei must sometimes work! But don't think it's a cinch to find a job! I remember how last June I regretfully yielded my status as a Stanford student, and hopefully started out to make my own way in this mad, materialistic world.

I wanted to get out and experience Life, instead of being stuffed with a lot of theoretical and impractical nonsense. Semester after semester the professors had been pouring educational stuff down my throat, which I was supposed to meekly regurgitate at their commands during finals. I got mighty fed up with this diet. I craved more subsistence. Life was too exciting for me to be wasting my time in this manner. In short, I wanted and needed a year of work and rest to think things over clearly, in order to get a better perspective of my future. I've been getting plenty of rest, but that's getting ahead of my tale.

After a leisurely summer picking fruit in the country, enjoying the invigorating California heat, and generally having a helluva good time, I came into San Francisco to really get down to business and find a steady job. Naturally I was full of confidence and optimism. Who wouldn't be? Didn't I have a strong and healthy body with an adequate amount of intelligence to go with it? And wasn't I ready, willing and able to do practically anything in the way of general labor? Sure, and besides I had eleven dollars (in \$1 bills) safely

tucked away in my zipper wallet!

It was hot the day I arrived in San Francisco.....awfully hot. In fact too hot to look for a job right away, so I enjoyed a pleasant afternoon looking at the beautiful sarongs on Dottie Lamour in a nice air-cooled theatre downtown.

Having nothing else to do afterwards, I drifted up to Japanese town to give it my first once over and maybe find myself a cheap room to rest the body for the night.

I was relaxing my dogs at the Nisei Grill contemplating my tactics for the next day when who should drift in but Taro, my old college buddy.

"Hello, Joe!" he greets me. "What's doing?"

"Nothing much," I says, "just getting ready to look for a job tomorrow. Got any leads? I'm quitting school for a year and going to work. If I save enough, I'll go back to dear old Stanford next fall. What about you?"

"Oh, I'm going to enter U.S.F. this term," he answers. "No girls there to distract me!" /

Then we went on for about an hour discussing the summer events and our future plans. All the while I kept thinking about how adventurous it was going to be for me to actually be a working stiff instead of a quiet, bespeckled college student confined in the cloisters of an Ivory Tower. I was pretty smug that evening, I guess.

Well, it ended up by Taro deciding that I should sleep with him and his brother in his big double bed in an attic room up on Geary Street. If you have ever slept three in a bed, you will have some

idea of how stiff we were the next morning.

After grabbing a bite to eat, I sauntered over to an employment agency and told the manager I was ready to go to work immediately.

"What kind of job do you want?" he asked.

"Oh, any kind.....clerk, stockboy, office worker, truck driver, salesman....."

"But I'm so sorry," he interrupted. "We only receive calls for domestic workers. Now if you want to be a cook or a houseboy, I might have something for you."

"What? Me do domestic work! What do you think I am.....a sissy? Say, I'm a college man and I want a man's job."

"So sorry," he lisps, "Next please."

I stormed out in helpless anger muttering to myself. "Huh, me a houseboy! Not on your life! I'll starve first."

The rest of the Japanese employment offices all had the same story to relate....."Nothing but domestic work today." That night, tired and disappointed at my failure, I returned to Taro's room. I was feeling sort of uneasy. Was this other average Nisei like myself were faced with? I shook off this mood and gayly promised myself success the next day. |

Taro welcomed me warmly with, "Greetings, pal! What kind of a job did you get and how much are they going to pay you?"

"Well," I responded uncomfortably, "I haven't quite a job yet, but tomorrow I'm going to try the American places. It's no use working for a Jap. Well, it takes time to get a decent job!"

That night, exhausted from the day's walking, I slept like a dog, unmindful of the cramped space. Bright and early the next morning. I went downtown eager and sure of landing a job. I went to

dozens of places! I walked until my feet were blistered and my collar wilted. But no luck. They all had the same old story..... "Sorry, no jobs today." "Sorry, but we aren't taking on any more men in our firm. Business is lousy." Or they would give me a cold, fishy look and say, "We don't hire Japs!"

Two weeks of this and I began to feel sort of low. My eleven dollars had shrunk down to eleven cents and I had to do something. I was getting mighty tired of a menu of soup, bread, and a few odds and ends.

One morning I met a Caucasian friend down on Market St. and he told me that the National Shirt shop was looking for a stockboy. I rushed over right away for an interview. The manager received me politely enough, but he said he needed an experienced boy.

"Oh, I can learn easily enough," I said. "There's nothing complicated about learning the duties of a stockboy. Let me try it for a few days, won't you?"

Frowning and obviously ill at ease about something, he answered, "I'm sorry, but we can't use you. You're too green."/

I knew damn well that maybe it was the racial issue and not my greenness which was at the basis of his refusal, but I didn't say anything. Later I found out, from my Caucasian friend that he had talked with the manager who happened to be a close friend and the manager had told him that he didn't have anything against me as an individual, but it was impossible to give me the job because on Saturday mornings the stockboys were trained in saleswork upstairs. If the public saw me.....a Japanese.....in the place, they would think the store was a Japanese establishment and perhaps avoid doing

business there.

It's such a vicious circle: Can't get work without experience.
Can't get experience because you're a Jap. And who would hire a Jap?

August and September passed. I had scores of similar experiences. I was bewildered, uncertain, scared. Wasn't I good for anything? Was being a "Jap" worse than having leprosy? The Caucasian bosses certainly acted that way. Ye gods, do they think I'm a fifth columnist trying to sabotage their joints?

At the beginning of October, I was ~~felt~~. My stomach overruled my pride, so I got off my high horse and humbly asked for a domestic job at the Japanese agency where I had applied two months previously.

I took a houseboy job in a Jewish family for four dollars per week. My duties were to cook, wash, clothes, clean the house, and take the dog for a stroll every afternoon. The poor dog took an awful beating, and I bet he never saw so many alleys in all his canine existence until I came along. I didn't mind all this, but the explosion occurred after eight days of patient work.

One morning the lady of the domicile comes in and sweetly drawls, "Joe, I want you to move your bed down into the basement and bring Fido's doghouse up to your room. He's got a cold and I'm worried!"

The next job was cooking for a German official and his Teutonic clan. I worked three days. Mrs. German Official hurt my tender feelings and fired me because I used an egg to shampoo my curly hair. After all, I have to keep up appearance, don't I?

Maybe that was only an excuse because I don't think she liked my culinary talents, especially after the first night when I burned the roast which she was going to feed to a distinguished German guest.

The payoff was the next night, however, when she had her intimate friends over for a wedding anniversary dinner party.

Mrs. German Official was as excited as a 16 year old having her first date. She fussed around the kitchen all afternoon, getting in my hair.

"Now, Joe," she cautioned, "use my best plate for the turkey and bring it to the table like they do in the movies.....with poise and dignity."

"Yes, ma'am," I muttered, "I will."

By eight o'clock, the group had had sufficient liquid nourishment under their belts to loosen up their tongues. I could hear them in the front room ranting about the Jews and praising Hitler and his mob. Finally they sat down to enjoy my delicious seven course turkey dinner a la hotel style. I did a magnificent job of serving up until the turkey was ready to be carried in.

This was my supreme moment of triumph. I carefully hoisted the platter high up in the air with the intention of bringing it into the dining room balance on one hand. But the Fates were against me. Just as I reached the door I slipped, and to my immense horror, the turkey and platter took a flying leap into the atmosphere. Not having time for any thinking, I grabbed instinctively and wildly and managed to catch the huge planter just before the big crash. The turkey, left to its own devices, made a graceful three-point landing and slid across the carpet to Madame's feet. What could I do? I picked up the fowl, muttered my apologies, and told her that I would get the "other" turkey from the oven. So I stalked out into the kitchen, wiped off the elusive turkey with a dish towel, and then brought it in again.....this time without disaster. The next morning I was

given a permanent leave of absence.

So back to the streets I went. I haunted the employment office for work, any kind of work. I still sought a job with an American firm but my enthusiasm had dampened with so many reverses in this direction. My spirits reached a low ebb. Daily I sought work..... looking.....looking.....but no job. It got so I couldn't sleep nights.

I must have had quite a vacant look on my puss the morning the boss of a Japanese trucking company suddenly hailed me.

"Hey, you! Want to work today? We need an extra helper."

"How much?" I eagerly asked.

"Three bucks," he shouted. "Get on the truck and help them pack the stuff going back to Japan from the fair."

The foreman put me to work nailing boxes and carrying chinaware to some of the expert packers. Towards the end of the morning, I was busily engaged in carrying large vases to the cases. I suppose I was so happy to be working that I was a little careless in handling the delicate wares.

I remember jokingly saying to a fellow worker, "I bet I'd be out of my day's pay if I dropped this one, huh?"

I tossed it up and down a few times to emphasize the point. At this moment a bald-headed Japanese official ran up and excitedly let loose a torrent of Japanese words at me. I couldn't understand his high class Japanese talk and I didn't like his bossy attitude, so I got a little fresh and snapped out with,

"Okay, okay, can the chatter, I'll hurry up if you want this thing so badly."

Leisurely I sauntered over to the packing case across the room, all the while juggling the vase which I wouldn't let the chattering official get shold of. The foreman, hearing the disturbance, rushed over and told me that I was fired. The vase was worth eight hundred smackers and he said I was too careless with the property of the Japanese government. How was I to know that the object was a rare, expensive piece of satsuma ware?

Back to San Francisco I went with my morning's pay in my pocket. A melancholy mood descended upon me once more. Hell, I wasn't even fit to work for a Japanese. While I crossed the bridge, I silently resolved to be more humble and earnest in future occupations.

October was a lovely month. Remember? Even with my worries, I enjoyed the delightful Indian summer. After resting up for a week or so in order to regain my shattered confidence, I prepared once more to take up the battle in the economic world.

The employment office finally got tired of seeing me loafing around. They sent me out to a Greek restaurant downtown to see about a dishwasher's job. The fat boss hired me and immediately started me off on my "pearl-diving" career. The soap had so much lye in it that it blistered my hands. I was wondering how I would be able to stand it for fourteen hours a day when the fat owner solved all my problems.

He said, "Hey, you Jap, hurry up!"

I didn't like his method of addressing me and told him so. Words led to action and he pushed me. I sprawled on the hard concrete floor. On the rebound I let go with a terrific haymaker, which caught the glossy Greek flush on the puss. Without collecting my pay, I made a hasty but orderly retreat. Hurray for me!

The next day I got a job as a delivery boy for a drug store. For two weeks I worked 10 hours a day, 60 hours a week, for a salary of \$8.78 per week, minus 18 cents for social security. My weekly expenses for carfare and lunches amounted to two dollars. Even with the greatest of skimping, I could not manage to live on the balance of \$6.10. I resigned to hunt for a better job.

I haven't had a job since then. I know it sounds like I'm moaning, but what I've said is the gospel truth. I don't want any sympathy. I'll settle for a half decent job. I know what the employment office will have to say when I drop in.

"You don't want to work. You're too choosy and lazy. All Nisei are lazy. You think that you're too good to work like we Issei have done. You have no ambition, no initiative, etc.....etc....."

Entering the winter season, the score for me so far stands at five jobs, no hits. Wow! I guess I'll go to the show and see Hedy LaMarr make love to Clark Gable. Tomorrow is another day, and I'll be in there pitching again as usual. The game of life normally lasts for 70 years, so I've got plenty of time to make a home run.

--Current Life, Jan., 1941

~~Things got much tougher for us as winter drew on. We often had to scrape to get a meal for the day. We went out on all kinds of job calls on our own, but this did not bring sufficient income. Jack finally took a school boy job. He managed to put some food aside for us each day during the period when we were absolutely broke. One day he was caught doing this, so that his employer discharged him. We then heard of a job cleaning out one of the Japanese beer parlors. We were to get paid \$10 a month to do this. The three of us managed to live on this for a while because we appropriated eggs and other food stuffs from that beer parlor. We began to eat at a Filipino restaurant because food was much ~~cheap~~ cheaper. This food was rather greasy and it did not agree with me, so that I had a sudden attack of appendicitis in November, 1940. I didn't have any money at all, so I had a difficult time in getting into a hospital. Finally, my sister's ^[Alice] employer, who was a doctor, took me into his hospital and performed the appendectomy free. I had to borrow money from my former employer and my sister to pay for other hospital expenses. I was not able to do any sort of work for about a month.~~

After I came out of the hospital I began to look for a white collar job again because I felt that I wasn't getting any place. The Xmas season was just starting, so I finally received a job as a clerk in one of the art goods stores on Grant Ave. I was supposed to put in 10 to 12 hours a day, 7 days a week for a salary of \$50 a month. I didn't see the sense of working for such slave labors so I attempted to talk some of the other Nisei boys into organizing a union. These Nisei were afraid to take such actions because their livelihood depended upon it and they did not think that it was proper to protest against an Issei employer,

so they/ refused to take part in any organization movement. My employer heard of my activities, and I was immediately dismissed. I started to walk the streets again for another job.

One day I heard that a Japanese fish market was looking for a worker. I went down immediately and got this job. It was one of the dirtiest jobs I've ever done. I only received a salary of \$12.50 a week and I used to scale those fishes and load them on a truck for 10 or 12 hours a day. I just couldn't see the sense of doing this so I finally gave the job up in disgust. It wasn't that I was afraid of hard work; I just didn't like to be exploited in that manner. There didn't seem to be much of an escape for Nisei, because the job possibilities were so limited. The registration for selective service first started in December, 1940. At that time I felt that possibly the Army would be the answer so I went down to volunteer, for the second time. I was again refused because the sergeant said that I was not eligible, due to my race. This sort of answer made me boil inside, but there was nothing I could do about it. I was conscious of the fact that the world seemed to be drifting toward another war and I felt that this country would eventually become involved. I didn't follow world politics too closely at that time because I was too busy trying to make my own living.

During that winter I did all sort of odd jobs and somehow managed to get by. I took several civil service tests and I was placed upon an eligible list, but a call for me never did come through until after I was in camp.

In the spring George, Jack and I lined up a job to wash all of the windows of a Japanese garage. These windows had not been washed for several years and they were covered with grease. We

had to buy our own equipment to do this job. The contract called for a window washing job for which we would be paid \$6. The job was harder than we expected it to be and it took us about 14 hours before it was completed. Then it suddenly began to rain. The Issei wife then didn't want to pay us for our work and that certainly got ^{us} angry because ~~were~~ we were getting less than \$2 each for doing that job. It seems that all the Issei I worked for were stingy with their money and they did not have a conscience about exploiting Nisei workers because they held the upper hand.

During the spring of '41, I did a series of jobs but I never lasted more than a week at any of them. I worked in a Japanese hotel for 2 days. I worked in a tofu factory for about a week. I worked for several of the Japanese transfer companies. I helped in a Japanese laundry for a day or so. <(describe these jobs in detail and the Nisei connected with this work)> I even was offered a job to work as a reporter for the New World Sun, ³⁸ but I turned down the offer when I found that my wage would be \$35 a month plus meals. (~~ask Louise about life of Nisei newspaper workers~~)

About this time I met William Saroyan through an accidental contact because he was interested in the Nisei problems. It was through his influence that my philosophy on life changed drastically for a while. I had been rather discouraged by my failure to achieve economic stability, but Saroyan emphasized the philosophy that everything was good and beautiful and that one should expand one's experiences as broadly as possible. After my meeting with him I decided to follow his advice, so I went down/to the waterfront in order to enlist in the Merchant ^(?)Marines. However, the Union did not permit anyone of oriental ancestry to join, so that this possibility was eliminated. I next attempted to get into cannery work up in Alaska, but there was so much competition for jobs of this sort that I was not able to get a call due to my limited experience.

Once more I went back to my hand to mouth existence, but things were not so bad after this because I began to look upon my experiences more optimistically. For a while I worked as a janitor in a Japanese beer parlor, but this was not enough to support me entirely. I was rather disorganized throughout this period and I spent a great deal of my time at the gambling club in order to increase my financial returns, without much success. <It was also during this period that I worked with a Japanese trucking concern at the Japanese pavilion at the World's Fair. Our job was to unload the exhibits coming from Japan. I was unaware that the vases we were handling were so expensive and I became rather careless. The Japanese commissioner of the Fair did not approve of my attitude, so that my termination notice was quickly served. The owner of the truck company, however, realized that the misunderstanding had been caused chiefly because of ^{my} the lack of understanding of the Japanese language, so that he gave me a \$2 a day job to help build his home down in Gilroy. >

In the meantime, I didn't know what I was going to do after returning to San Francisco. My application to the social welfare curriculum had not been answered, so that the prospects did not look promising. I didn't care to go through another winter of such uncertain living, so I made tentative plans to work my way east in order to find a job and possibly save up enough money to do graduate work. This was not necessary, because a telegram suddenly arrived from the graduate school at U.C. saying that I had been accepted as a student. I immediately packed all my belongings and quit the peach picking job. I had about \$56 saved up for the summer's work/and I made arrangements for a \$300 loan to see ^eme through the school year.

begin → [When I got on the campus, I quickly readjusted myself back to the student life. I discovered that the basis of the school's refusal of admission was because it could not find a field work placement for me. Up to that time all students of oriental ancestry had been assigned case loads in the agency which carried a number of Chinese and Japanese. When it came my turn to receive a public agency assignment for field work training, I refused to accept a case load of this nature. After several conferences, the supervisor decided to allow me to carry a case load like any other beginning student. In all the weeks that followed I never had a single instance of difficulty, as the clients all accepted me as a regular case worker. My school adjustments on the whole were very good, and I managed to make satisfactory progress. It was my intention to obtain my certificate in social work and then continue immediately for the M.A. degree.

Financially, it was a much more difficult matter for me to get adjusted on the campus because I never had enough money to live on a liberal budget. I got in with 2 other Nisei boys and we rented out the front of an old barber shop and converted it into our living

quarters. We only paid \$10 a month rent for the 3 of us. Our food budget was only about \$9 a month each so that we were living most economically. ~~On~~ some months we only spent about \$14 a month for room and board. We would cook up huge pots of stew in a bucket and eat that for half a week and then cook another bucket of beans and eat it for the rest of the week. <Some of our friends felt/sorry for us, but they were wasting their sympathies, because we did not feel that we were particularly unfortunate, since we all believed that it was worth while sacrificing in order to receive an education.>

While I was on the campus I became acquainted with a group of Nisei for the first time, but the results were not favorable. I soon discovered that most of the Nisei students were quite limited in their outlook and they did not care to mix in with the general student body. I did not wish to be segregated on the campus, so that I began to avoid the Nisei group entirely. Most of my friends were fellow students in the welfare curriculum, and I used to visit them quite often. There were several of Jewish origin, and it was through them that I became more acquainted with the Jewish Youth problems. There was also a Swedish girl with whom I was quite friendly, and we used to go out together quite often. This brought about a severe criticism by the Nisei students, because they felt that it was not desirable for any social mixing of that nature to take place. I just ignored them, because I felt that they were the ones who were losing out.

<Not all of the Nisei students on the campus were of this conservative group. There were several who attempted to be quite liberal in their outlook, and they were all labeled as "radicals" and "queers" by the general Nisei students just because they joined various campus clubs which ~~was~~ ^{were} not exclusively composed of Nisei students. Some of them were quite politically conscious and they were in the habit of

joining political discussion groups. It was this small group which took over the leadership of the Nisei students on the campus after the outbreak of the war. >

In one of my classes during the early winter of 1941 I attempted to make an analysis of the Nisei students on the campus, and I concluded that they were a sorry lot. I suppose that I was particularly severe on them because they did not act in the way I expected them to. I could not understand that their family background had contributed mostly to the development of their reserved personality. There was a great deal of cultural conflicts^b within their homes of which I was totally unaware. The thing that irritated me was that most of them sat on the fence politically and they tended to identify themselves as Japanese rather than American. They isolated themselves on the campus, and their primary interest were in social activities. They were unable to realize the economic plight which faced them upon graduation. There were some who felt that most of the Nisei college graduates would have to return to agricultural pursuits because there was little chance for them to enter into the business world outside of the Japanese community. A few of the Nisei students were specializing in agriculture, and they felt that if the Nisei entered the cooperative movement, they could make a great success out of farming.

< Cut to p. 52
The problem was much more difficult for the urban worker. The general outlook was quite pitiful, as over 95% of calls for ^{Issei} ~~Japanese~~ and Nisei workers were for domestic work. Only a few were able to get jobs such as stock boys, messenger^s, bookkeepers, etc. Many of the Nisei were going into civil service work, as that seemed to be the best outlook. The rest drifted into casual jobs which did not give them an opportunity to utilize their training. A few professional people were required by the Japanese community, but this field was

quickly saturated. It was generally agreed among the thinking Nisei that they should make a strong effort to get into Caucasian firms, but nobody knew exactly how this could be done, since there had never been a precedent set for it. Very few of the Nisei on the campus were interested in skilled occupation, since they all wanted to be white collar workers.

Because of the general inability to face this economic problem, the vast majority of the Nisei in college attempted to escape from the reality by trying to imitate the Caucasian college student in social activities. The Japanese Student Club on the campus held its own Big Game rally and dances and they attempted to function along sorority and fraternity house lines. It was only the sons and daughters of the better off Japanese families who were able to live in the Japanese Student houses, because most of the Nisei students on the campus could not afford the \$40 a month room and board charge. They were all living on a minimum budget of between \$20 and \$30, particularly those Nisei students from the agricultural areas.

As the fall semester drew to a close, I discovered that I had very little contact with the Nisei students on the campus, and most of my information was obtained from my room mates. In one of my classes I had been assigned to write a paper on the personality of the Nisei, so that I made some attempt to contact different types of students in order to gain further information. I discovered that most of the students were quite insecure and they did not know what they were going to do in the future. (see attached paper)

"ROLE OF CULTURE IN PERSONALITY"
(The Second Generation Japanese)

This paper was written on October 17, 1941 for S.W. 205 class at the University of California.

Limiting myself to a single cultural group, the Japanese in the Bay Area, this paper will be an attempt to show some of this process of cultural clash and change and its influences upon the personality. This will be done with the consciousness that the personality conflicts of the Japanese in America is not an unique situation, but a phase of the rapid cultural changes and resultant disorganization of the wider American Society. Any interpretations made will be in terms of the San Francisco Japanese, my own home, and those I have observed on this campus.

Reared under a dual system of cultural symbols, the second generation Japanese American or Nisei (Nee-say) group has been moulded into a duality of personality--a divided self with all its implications. Some of the forces have been good, some harmful. Stonequist calls the product of two divided cultures, which belong to neither group, the Marginal Man.

On the Japanese side, our parents brought with them the culture of a semi-feudal country which was stable, although static, and one of authoritarian control, a system in which the family was most important and the individual significant only as a member of his group. Relationships were intimate, close, personal. The family name was valued above all earthly possessions, males supposedly supreme due to their direct descent from the Sun Goddess. (The Japanese also believed that they are a heavenly chosen people.) Customs and traditions were rigid, marriage was for the purpose of carrying on the family line and, therefore, the concern of the family elders. In

brief, it was a society where the individual was submerged into a strict family unit.

Stepping into the midst of a gigantic economic system of exploitation of labor in California by the large land Barons, the first generation Japanese gradually bought their own farms or drifted into the city, into the segregated slums. It was in these tiny rooms behind the shops in the slums that the clash of traditions and the moulding of personality began slowly to embroil as the Nisei grew up.

The symbol values of the Nisei are neither entirely Japanese nor American. Many of the values of the two cultures are conflicting, making choice a terrific struggle. On this campus there are many examples of the Nisei with serious personality maladjustments due to their inability to cope with the internal and external conflicts. Because the second generation are such a young group, few studies have been made of them. Therefore, I will have to rely chiefly on personal observations as interpreted from my readings in this course.

Unlike the stable system in Japan, the Nisei are living in an ever changing society; they do not have the stability of organization under which their parents lived. Besides the traditional type of family discipline that their parents have attempted to inflict upon them, the Nisei have learned of a different, more democratic procedure in the schools. In general, the American values have been stronger. The Nisei have assimilated many of the American cultural symbols due to this thorough conditioning by the American educational system. But the struggle is by no means over. They have been forced to go to the Japanese Language schools where they are infused with the Japanese culture. The inconsistencies of the two conflicting cultures have been numerous, and many have rebelled.

The cultural conflicts vary in degree of bitterness between the first generation Japanese and the Nisei in the home. The first generation are desperately trying to hold on to their children, who, on the other hand, rebel against the old-fashioned autocratic family control, traditional in the Oriental pattern of life. Many of the Nisei do not even have a sufficient speaking ability of Japanese to carry on conversation with their parents, whereas most of the Japanese parents know little English. The parents have little in common with the Nisei in his interests and beliefs. They would like the Nisei to develop Japanese traits such as modesty and suppression of the emotions, while the American culture influences the Nisei to be extrovert, individualistic, and outspoken. The parents are naturally sympathetic to Japan and they get the Japanese government interpretations of political events, as released to the Japanese language section of the daily newspapers; whereas the Nisei only read the English section with its democratic sentiments. This has resolved itself into many disputes in the home life of many of the Nisei.

In the simple home life, standards between the two groups differ on such things as foods, ideas of sex, bathing practices, manners, clothes and makeup, and many other things which are accepted in the purely Caucasian American home. The conflict often becomes bitter when attitudes are involved.

The Nisei girls with hardly an exception resent male domination as practiced by the first generation males, and they are not backward in showing that resentment. The Nisei male, although he advocates greater freedom for the woman, still has been influenced by the Japanese concept of male superiority. The girls also resent the strict Japanese tradition of mother-in-law control over their marital life,

they wish to live according to the American practices. This has created some serious problems as the first generation interpret such actions as further evidence that the Nisei are indiscriminately throwing aside the inherent Japanese idea of family relationships.

The Nisei are violently opposed to the Japanese system of forced marriages as arranged by "go-betweens" and the parents. The negotiations are carried on secretly without the involved pair being given much opportunity to pass judgment on the suitability of the other. Where no choice is allowed serious personality conflicts may result. A few weeks ago the Japanese language paper reported a case near Sacramento of a Nisei girl who committed suicide rather than be forced into a marriage with an unknown first generation Japanese.

This is an extreme case as such instances now occur infrequently because of the terrific struggle which the Nisei have put up against this practice. The parents have made concessions and today the function of the "go-between" is merely to act as the representative of a Nisei couple who have made their own choice. In the rural areas of this state, however, there is still a great deal of the other system in modified form. Even now, the "go-between" will check up on the family history for the past hundred years to insure the parents against any tainting of their family line. The Nisei couple who elopes is practically ostracized by the older generation.

The symbol of religion has a wide variety of meanings for the Nisei. The Western religion appears to be concerned primarily with sin, while the Oriental philosophies stress the more pleasant things in life. Although most of the Nisei have broken away from the Buddhist religion of their parents and adopted Christianity, they have found satisfaction in neither. They have not found a workable solution in

either and consequently there is a tendency for them to become irreligious. (Unless they use it as a refuge from the problems of the inconsistent world pressing in upon them.) Even in the Buddhist religion western influences have entered so that it is a queer mixture of the East and West.

The immediate barriers, however, of the outside society have contributed chiefly to the serious Nisei personality disorganization. The factor of race and discrimination evolving out of the American caste and class society has a direct bearing on the Nisei maladjustments. Adopting the American symbols of status, the Nisei are now faced with the question that perhaps this pattern of opportunity he learned in school is not for him. To some, the existence of discrimination was realized gradually; to many it came as a sudden shock. In my own case it was first experienced after I finished high school and came down to San Francisco from a small rural town where they had no other Orientals. Thus, when an unthinking barber refused me a haircut and forced me out of his shop because I was a "Jap", the shock of learning that I was "different" filled me with anger, hurt, bewilderment and a variety of other mixed feelings. /

In the face of these experiences, many of the Nisei have become over-sensitive. Plant points out that the realization of difference often results in rebellion as shown by such symptoms as defiance, fear, anxiety, uncertainty, nervousness, restlessness, and chronic pessimism. Many of the Nisei feel that they are being persecuted. I have attended many of the Nisei discussion groups on the campus since enrolling this year and the general undertone of all these meetings appears to be one of bitterness, hopelessness, and fear of discrimination. As a group, they are confused. The fact that they

are physically "different" makes their assimilation into the dominant American pattern difficult because of the prevailing attitudes towards the "color" symbol, accentuated because of the present political struggles in the world. But the Nisei looks at the problem with a limited and personal perspective. It is hard for them to reconcile democracy with prejudice and the fact that they can't go to certain bowling alleys, barber shops, swimming pools, and hotels. They resent the Berkeley housing covenants which prevents^b their parents from buying property in certain restricted areas. All of these things, important or unimportant, do contribute to their mixed emotions and personality complexes. They have not accepted the superior-inferior symbol, but they have not yet worked out an acceptable solution.

The plight of the Nisei is especially critical now. They are now coming of age in California (which has 70% of the total Japanese population in the continental United States) at a time when there is a great dislocation in our American economic life. Infused with the American symbol of opportunity for all and the desire to improve the "inferior economic status" of their parents, the Nisei have poured in great numbers into the Universities of the state to get "educated." (According to a survey I made recently/for the California State Department of Employment, I found that 97.7% of the San Francisco Nisei are high school graduates, of which 60% have gone into college.) Now they are beginning to pour out of the cloistered Ivory Tower existence of college life, only to find that there apparently is not a place for them in the American economic society. Caucasian employers won't hire them because of the current attitudes against the Japanese--based upon the past traditions of the feelings against the earlier Japanese immigrants and the present disfavor of the political connect-

ions of Japan. There is an apparent lack of distinction between the Japanese of Japan, and the Americans of Japanese ancestry, largely due to facial resemblance.

Largely inexperienced and naive, the Nisei keenly feel the refusal of opportunities in Defense jobs and in the general American business world. The only opportunity that they are given to prove their loyalty to America is in the selective service where large numbers of the Nisei are making excellent records. For the others the only other alternative has been up to the present time to drift back into the dead end jobs of the Japanese community. Thus I found that 15% of the group I studied are already college graduates, but who are working for an average wage of \$60.00 a month for an average ten hour day. The chief types of work offered to them by Caucasians are largely in domestic work. The resulting feeling of frustration and inability to solve their economic plight has reacted harmfully on the individual personality adjustment of the Nisei. /

On one extreme a large number of the Nisei are trying to be intensely "American." They have completely adopted "American" conventions; but this does not seem to be a solution to their difficulties. They are not "accepted" by the dominant group as "Americans." Some tend to be ashamed of their parents and their culture; others are attempting to adjust themselves to both sets of conflicting values. Some have ~~xxxxxx~~ taken a more passive reaction and embraced religion strongly for their answer.

On the other extreme, in much smaller numbers, are the Nisei who tend or pretend to accept their parents' Japanese traditions. Many to not differ noticeably from their elders in attitudes and beliefs. They are what is known as being "Japanesy." They accept the practice

of arranged marriages and other customs of Japan. Most are unhappy, but they remain submissive and Oriental in their outlook on life. Those of this group on the Campus tend to bury themselves in their studies and make excellent grades, but socially they are immature.

The majority of the Nisei belong to neither of these two extremes, but move more or less confusedly between them. They are the true "marginal man" or "cultural hybrid," many of whom are to be found in the various minority groups of America. Like most of them, the Nisei are trying to overcome the current symbol of status on a color basis, while at the same time they try to achieve a "higher class status." Thus, they accept symbols from one set of values for some things, and reject it in favor of another set of symbols for something else, never being wholly positive.

Torn between two cultures, the Nisei finds no place or security in either. Going to Japan would only be jumping from the "frying pan into the fire," and those that have gone have had more re-adjustments to face over in the Orient. Most remain in America. Some of these become intensely bitter and develop a defeatist philosophy. Some fatalistically drift along in their limited circles. They rationalize their difficulties as a pure racial barrier; at the same time smugly assuming that they are "superior" to the Negroes. Because of this vast disorganization, there has been a breakdown of values among the Nisei. Many have lost confidence in themselves and become frustrated. Too few have arrived at that inner harmony essential for a stable personality.

Today under the shadow of war, the future for the Nisei looks far from rosy, and should actual war break out, the personality maladjustment of this group will undergo further drastic repercussions.

Granted that the Nisei do have a serious personality problem as a group, the inevitable question arises: what can be done about it? Obviously the Nisei must remain in the realm of reality and face the situation realistically. Waving the flag and proclaiming 100% loyalty to America will not solve the problem as the most representative Nisei Organization, the Japanese American Citizen's League, seems to believe. The problem goes much deeper than that.

It is my opinion that the Nisei should re-examine themselves and their philosophy of life. Some of their symbols of values, along with the rest of America, are twisted and distorted. America, cluttered up with its past, thinks of itself in terms of what it was before the streams of immigrants poured in. The Nisei indiscriminately accepting American symbols have lost all perspective on just what being an American really means. True Americanism is not solely trying to get ahead in an American industry. It would be very difficult to even define an American business, e.g., Chop Suey place, Greek boot-black, Giannini, Chinese laundry, etc.--these things are essentially American. Thus, the Nisei need to recognize the fact that Americanism is or should be a sustaining feeling about America and one's place in America. This necessitates a well balanced inner harmony, something which the Nisei, and most Americans, do not have.

The Nisei in their present confusion want to enter an American industry desperately in order to provide themselves with some sort of badge or assurance that they "belong," that America wants and needs them. They want to bolster up their hurt, uncertain ego. Unless the Nisei do re-examine their values, both within and outside, especially for the good and weak and strong points within them, there will be many more personality maladjustments in the next few years.

The tendency to withdraw in a shell is evident in many of the Nisei who are now bitterly stewing in the thin, sour juice of frustration. If all Americans adopt this solution, we will never create a really great American culture with its emphasis on a well developed and meaningful personality growth. However, I am optimistic enough to agree with Lynd when he says "we may yet make real the claims of freedom and opportunity in America." >

(Also see paper written Dec 8, 1941)

Nisei

On Sunday, December 7, a couple of friends and I had gotten together for a bull session and the conversation turned to the subject of possible war. We were discussing the particular hardships which the Nisei group would face because they had not taken a firm stand on the dispute between this country and Japan, and it was pointed out that the Japanese language paper was more or less an apologist organ for the Japanese government. All of us remarked that we would be very willing to fight against Japan in the event of a war, because we felt that it was coming quite soon. We had been following the negotiations going on between the 2 countries quite closely and we did not see how a conflict could be avoided, because neither country was willing to make any concessions.

Right in the midst of this conversation, another Nisei ~~ka~~ boy rushed in to announce that Pearl Harbor had been bombed by the Japanese air force. We all took it as a joke and we continued our discussion. The boy tried to convince us, but we just ignored him. Finally, one of us turned on the radio, and the news flash came over. We still did not believe it until several other friends came running in to announce the news. Our group quietly broke up, and I suppose that we were all pretty shocked. My first reaction was one of vague fear because I somehow felt that I would be identified with the enemy. In order to reassure myself that this would not happen, I walked up to the college library and mixed in with the other students who were trying to study for their finals. Everyone was excited so that not much study went on that day. When I returned to the house I attempted to put on a cheerful front in order to reassure my room mates that things were not so bad. I suggested that we all volunteer into the Army and organize an expeditionary force to Japan. They felt that it was not the time for joking, but I really felt that I

really should do something direct about it. I didn't see much sense in continuing on with school. I lost all interest in my final examinations, but fortunately that did not affect my grades at all. When war was declared the next day, I felt more strongly than ever that I should volunteer into the Army. I talked it over with my room mates, and they believed that it was a foolish move to make, particularly in view of the fact that I had only 3 or 4 months of school to complete. I did not have any family responsibility at all, so that I felt no obligation pulling me back. The next day I quietly went over to the Civic Center in San Francisco and asked to be inducted into the service. I was refused for the second time because the officer there said that a policy had to be set for the Nisei first. I did not press the matter but returned to the campus and I did not tell any of my friends of what I had tried to do.

In my opinions I became outspokenly anti-fascist and particularly anti-Japan. I joined the politically conscious Nisei group in the Bay ~~area~~ area but this organization quickly dissolved because of all the confusion going on in that period. In the Berkeley community, we were not much affected by Filipino incidents, FBI round-ups and restrictions placed on enemy aliens, so that I was not too much aware of what was going on for quite a while. I avoided the Japanese community in San Francisco, partly because I didn't care to be identified with it and partly because of a feeling that it would only remind me of the difficult position I was in.

For a while, I thought that things would go back to normal and I would be inducted into the Army in a short time. However, it was announced that the Nisei would be placed in a 4-C classification temporarily, and that really did irritate me. I began to realize that there were forces in California which ~~was~~ attempting to take advan-

tage of the war in order to stir up the anti-oriental agitation which had been going on for many years. After February 1, it was clearly evident that these groups were contributing to the general public hysteria and that they would have their way. When the Tolan Committee came for its hearings to the Bay area, one of my friends testified, but the committee as a whole was definitely unfriendly. All sorts of accusations were made about the sabotage which had occurred at Pearl Harbor. The Nisei organizations were very ineffective because of lack of strong leadership and a progressive policy. There was a great deal of conflict between the various organizations, and none of them ever took over leadership, even though the national JACL offices were located in San Francisco. (I will not attempt to discuss the development of these Nisei groups and my reaction to them, because it has already been done by Tom and others.)

When the first restricted zones were declared in the middle of February, I began to take an active concern in my family in Vallejo for the first time in my life. They were living in the area facing the Mare Island shipyards, and they had to be removed by February 22, Washington's birthday. They had no place to go, so that after a conference with my other brother and sisters, we decided to move ~~the~~ ^{our} parents to San Francisco, while my older sister remained in the home with the younger children, so that they could complete their school term. We still could not believe that a general evacuation was going to take place.

Since my family had very little financial resources, I felt that I had to do something to help them out. Since I was doing my field training at the San Francisco ^Public ^Welfare ^Dept. that semester, I arranged ^For emergency assistance for them through the Federal Security ~~F~~unds. I wanted to quit school, but I was advised against

taking such a drastic step by the head of the department, because I only had 2 more months to go. I decided to continue in my classes, but I had little interest in it, even though my grade average kept up to its former level. I was very gratified, because my fellow students and instructor were particularly sympathetic and they were very angry that such a thing as evacuation could take place in America. They believed even more strongly than I that such a thing would not happen, but I was not sure. <When the general evacuation was declared, I became quite angry, because I felt that it was a violation of our constitutional rights, and I thought that the Nisei should take a strong stand against it and refuse to move, but they were all too worried about their families to fully realize the implication of the military order. They all took it for granted that it actually was a military necessity, because of the scare headlines about an imminent invasion by the Japanese forces. I began to rationalize that it was a military necessity, but I never could convince myself of it. Throughout this period I never had any feelings of bitterness against the country, as I felt more strongly than ever that I was a definite part of it and I couldn't understand how a minority pressure groups could sway the military to the extent of ignoring constitutional provisions.>

When we saw that nothing could be done, we decided to bring the children ~~family~~ to San Francisco to be with the parents. My older sister left for Chicago at the last minute in order not to be caught in the evacuation, so that I had to take more responsibility than previously. My sister had arranged for the disposal of my father's business, and she was only able to realize \$200 out of it. My brother had been doing most of the business arrangements from San Francisco and I had only a small part in family affairs, since the ties were still not very strong.

I was offered a job as a social worker with the Federal Security Board, but I decided to complete my social work course first before the deadline of evacuation. I wanted to escape the general evacuation by going east, but I did not have any money. One of my college friends offered to write to a friend of his in the midwest and he felt that I could go there, but I was so indefinite about the future that I decided very reluctantly to go to the center. I did not feel very cooperative with the Army regulations, and I ignored them at every opportunity. These regulations were not strictly enforced in Berkeley. I carried a Chinese student body card around, and that became useful on the one occasion that I was stopped by a patrol car. During all of this period I continued my field work course in the agency and I never experienced any difficulty with my clients, although there was one Negro client who threatened to slit the throats of any Japs he saw so that I had to tactfully make a retreat. I was busy with my finals right up to the last minute, so that I neglected my packing until the very end.

It was at the evacuation control station that I first felt sympathetic towards all of those old people who were being forcibly removed from the settled life that they had been living. They had to go through a great deal of red tape in order to get processed, and many of the receptionists could not explain things to the Issei. The social workers tried their best, but there was too little time to dispose of all problems adequately. The people were given tags and forms to fill out with their names and numbers, and detailed instructions about where to meet was given to each individual. The people were told not to take a lot of belongings, so that many of them only left with a small brief case. I remember that I felt this was all wrong and yet I knew that I was powerless. However, I tried to look

This is all that is left of
the Paul Hunter to March 1942
long - the use was for a
time of recreation. This was in
my copy of "For My Friends"

Copy this to paper
- not + everything
the not here

I Read / Journal

December 7, 1941

We are at War! Jesus Christ, the Japs bombed Hawaii and the entire fleet has been sunk. I just can't believe it. I don't know what in the hell is going to happen to us, but we will all be called into the Army right away. Wang says he has to do a report, but he is so stunned that he does not know what he is doing. He is worried about his relatives as the radio says there are rights in L.A. and they think it is sabotage. I can't believe that any Nisei would do anything like that, but it could be some of the Kibei spies. I don't know what is going to happen to us, but I just can't think of it. I think of the Japs coming to bomb us, but I will go and fight even if I think I am a coward and I don't believe in wars but this time it has to be. I am selfish about it. I think not of California and American but I wonder what is going to happen to the Nisei, and to our parents. They may lock up the aliens. How can one think of the future. We are behind the eight ball, and that question for the Cal Nisei, "Wither Nisei?" so true. The next five years will determine the future of the Nisei. They are now at the crossroads. Will they be able to take it or will they go under? If we are ever going to prove our Americanism this is the time. The Anti-Jap feeling is bound to rise to hysterical heights and it is most likely that the Nisei will be included as Japs. I wanted to go to S.F. tonight, but Pierre says I am crazy. He says it's best we stick on campus. In any event, we can't remain on the fence and a positive approach must be taken if we are to have a place in fulfilling Promise of American. I think the U.S. is in danger of going Fascist too, or maybe Socialist. Those Nisei progressives think it will be Socialists but the Sacramento crowds sure sound like Fascists. "These are the days which try men's souls." I don't know what to think or do. Everybody is in a daze. Maybe I should do my report on the Nisei daze. Everybody on campus is in the same boat and they will clear us all off to the Army and no more time for college for anyone.

December 8, 1941

"Tolerance is not enough." I was very upset yesterday as we are in a war now. I am afraid that there will be violence and it is a hell of a mess. I should have confidence in the democratic procedures but I'm worried that we might take a page from Hitler's methods and do something drastic towards the Issei. I hope not. I don't give a damn what happens to me but I would be very disillusioned if the democratic process broke down. It's a mess, but every draft age fellow probably feels the same as I. Nobody can predict the future and things do look bad, but I just feel we will win the war and I will survive nicely as things do turn out for best and I'm not pressing my luck any since it won't get any worse. I have to speak to the UC students today as Pierre is in Nisei campus politics and he thinks I am a good loyal American. I think that is a joke, but it is true in a way. I don't have any doubts about where I stand even if I am worried about what happens to us. I guess this is what I will have to say. God, was I excited yesterday. Now I feel more normal, but less afraid, to hell with everything attitude, whistling in the dark. We shall see. Maybe I'll go to S.F. tonight and chase girls. Wang says chase the girls for tomorrow we die and he tries to act like he is a man about town but he is a virgin and he really wants me to take him when Angelo and I go to Chinatown to chase girls. The Yamato garage guys don't even know I am back in college as I am just a bum to them and I refuse to take Wang and Pierre Kenny over there and corrupt them. Their friend, Jim Sakoda is a Kibei and he is more worried than any of us but he says Kibei are loyal. Having bull sessions are so meaningless now. It's action which counts, no more words. FDR says Pearl Harbor will be a day of infamy. Last Fall I tried to get into the Army, but now I want to be a student as it is going to be hell in the Army.

December 9, 1941

Holy Christ! San Francisco last night was like nothing I ever saw before and everybody was saying that the Japs are going to get it here in the ass. I ran into Jimmy Lee on Grant Ave, and he says I'm not allowed to screw Chinese girls anymore. Angelo too cause he says he is a wop. Jimmy was kidding and he will give me some kind of a badge which says that I am Chinese as he says some of the Japanese boys from U.S. got beat up. I didn't hear anything about that. Kenny told me it was true when I got back and he said that all the students are going to be restricted to the campus. A lot of them want to get the hell out of here and go home, but I don't know what good that will do. I don't know what good it will be to stay here. Kenny has a friend, Shibs, who is full of wild stories. I don't know where he gets them. He says Bill is spying for Navy or the FBI. I don't believe that, but I guess the FBI do have guys on the campus. They have picked up some suspicious Japanese already. I say Alice and she is worried about Pop because we live so close to Mare Island and she thinks that Jack should go over and tell the Major that Pop was in the Navy. I think Pop would praise Japan but he is not going to blow up anything. It may be dangerous for him in the barber shop with all these Mare Island guys coming in. I told Alice to tell Mom to have Pop's Navy discharge framed and put on the wall next to the barber license and take that Buddha statue the hell out of these. Alice says The Army should put me in charge of Patriotism because I am suspicious of my own father. I did not mean it that way, but it is true I don't trust the Issei. If just one of them sabotaged something, what hell there would be to pay. Mrs. Jarvis seems very calm about the whole thing I must say. She told me to study hard and become an officer in the Navy. What a laugh! The Navy would not even let me be a messboy. Jack says it's going to be bad and he wants to go East to study medicine but he can't walk out on the family like that.

December 10, 1941

The Japs are running wild all over Asia and they may wind up this war before we get a fleet back there. I heard that some of the battleships are on the way back so maybe I'll go over to Mare Island and see. There is some question that college may end for the term as nobody is studying. I went to S.F. again and everybody is in a daze in Jap Town and all sorts of wild rumors going around. They are going to lock up the Issei. If they are spys I don't see anything wrong with that. That's war. Wang and the guys have a ball session every night and they are going to organize the Nisei progressives on campus to make a statement to the Daily Californian. I am for that. Kenny and I are supposed to work on this letter, but I will let Kenny do the writing and I'll pretend that I'm giving him the ideas. He is a hell of a good writer. Wang can write too but he has an inferiority complex. He keeps pestering me to take him to S.F. to a whorehouse because he says he may get drafted into the Army and be sent off to war and he does not want to ~~be~~ die a virgin. Kenny gets sore when we talk like that because he is a Christian deep down and very pure in heart and he thinks that we should keep our minds on the war and think progressive thoughts. He says I am a bad influence on the guys in the house because I go to chase girls every night and he disapproves of my fooling around with Sachi because he thinks campus Nisei girls don't fool around. He should ask Bob K. about that! Anyway, all this running around and not studying is a diversion because none of us know what in the hell it is all about or what is going to happen. I feel like the condemned man who wants to be a glutton before they lead him to the gas chamber. Kenny and his friend Shibs think that we have to be intellectuals and lead the ~~ssas~~. I don't see how we can do that if we are in the army. Germany is now in the war and things are never going to be like it was before.

December 19, 1941

All kinds of rumors, and I am worried. There is no way to have a normal life and I can't be a student anymore. But I don't want to leave the campus. Talked to Shibs and he says there will be a report on the Nisei on campus and that we should all write up everything that happens. I don't think I would be very good at it but I might give it a trial. All the so called intellectuals like Shibs, Kenny and Jimmy Sakoda says that we just document everything. They are so cold and impersonal and I don't know what good that will do if any violence starts. There have been houses stoned in Placer county and some of the newspapers are raising hell and making all kinds of wild statements about even the Nisei. Kenny should see a lot of clippings and it is very dangerous. Yet, I feel that we are so helpless. Who in the hell is going to worry about the Nisei when we are at war. Maybe the thing to do is to get into the Army. Anyway they will kneed Nisei for interpreters. That's one thing I won't qualify for. I think that the Nisei should forget all things Japanese and not attract that kind of attention to ourselves. We must wave that old flag like the very first Patriot. I think the Nisei are loyal, but we may be too short for the army and I refuse to be a messboy. There is a lot of hysteria going on. Went to Vallego and the family does not know what to do. All kinds of restrictions coming in. I don't know what to say to them as I really don't feel I am a part of the family. Jack will have to be the one. Mariko is talking of going East is the hysteria against Japs gets stronger. She says that the Japs are going to invade California and she is convinced of it and she says she is going to get a Chinese card too and she asked me to get a few more from Jimmy Lee for the family. I don't think things are that bad.

KIKUCHI DIARY

Item 1 - Pearl Harbor

December 7, 1941

We are at war! Jesus Christ, the Japs bombed Hawaii and the entire fleet has been sunk. I just can't believe it. I don't know what in the hell is going to happen to us, but we will all be called into the Army right away. Wang says he has to do a report, but he is so stunned that he does not know what he is doing. He is worried about his relatives as the radio says there are riots in L.A. and they think it is sabotage. I can't believe that any Nisei would do anything like that, but it could be some of the Kibei spies. I don't know what is going to happen to us, but I just can't think of it. I think of the Japs coming to bomb us, but I will go and fight even if I think I am a coward and I don't believe in wars but this time it has to be. I am selfish about it. I think not of California and America, but I wonder what is going to happen to the Nisei and to our parents. They may lock up the aliens. How can one think of the future. We are behind the eightball, and that question for the Cal Nisei, "Wither Nisei?" so true. The next five years will determine the future of the Nisei. They are now at the crossroads. Will they be able to take it or will they go under? If we are ever going to prove our Americanism, this is the time. The Anti-Jap feeling is bound to rise to hysterian heights, and it is most likely that the Nisei will be included as Japs. I wanted to go to S.F. tonight, but Piere says I am crazy. He says it's best we stick on campus. In any event, we can't remain on the fence, and a positive approach must be taken if we are to have a place in fulfilling Promise of American, I think the U.S. is in danger of going Facist too, or maybe Socialist. Those Nisei progressives think it will be Socialists

but the Sacramento crowds sure sound like Fascists. "These are the days which trys men's souls". I don't know what to think or do. Everybody is in a daze. Maybe I should do my report on the Nisei daze. Everybody on campus is in the same boat, and they will clear us all off to the Army and no more time for college for anyone.

December 8, 1941

"Tolerance is not enough". I was very upset yesterday as we are in a war now. I am afraid that there will be violence and it is a hell of a mess. I should have confidence in the democratic procedures, but I'm worried that we might take a page from Hitler's methods and do something drastic towards the Issei. I hope not. I don't give a damn what happens to me, but I would be very disillusioned if the democratic process broke down. It's a mess, but every draft age fellow probably feels the same as I. Nobody can predict the future and things do look bad, but I just feel we will win the war and I will survive nicely as things do turn out for the best. I'm not pressing my luck any, since it won't get any worse. I have to speak to the U.C. students today, as Pierre is in Nisei campus politics and he thinks I am a good loyal American. I think that is a joke, but it is true in a way. I don't have any doubts about where I stand even if I am worried about what happens to us. I guess this is what I will have to say. God, was I excited yesterday. Now I feel more normal, but less afraid, to hell with everything attitude, whistling in the dark. We shall see. Maybe I'll go to S.F. tonight and chase girls. Wang says chase the girls for tomorrow we die, and he tries to act like he is a man about town, but he is a virgin and he really wants me to take him when Angelo and I go to Chinatown to chase girls.

The Yamato garage guys don't even know I am back in college, as I am just a bum to them and I refuse to take Wang and Pierre and Kenny over there and corrupt them. Their friend, Jim Sakoda, is a Kibei, and he is more worried than any of us; but he says Kibei are loyal. Having bull sessions are so meaningless now. It's action which counts, no more words. FDR says Pearl Harbor will be a day of infamy. Last fall I tried to get into the Army, but now I want to be a student, as it is going to be hell in the Army.

December 9, 1941

Holy Christ! San Francisco last night was like nothing I even saw before and everybody was saying that the Japs are going to get it here in the ass. I ran into Jimmy Lee on Grant Avenue, and he says I'm not allowed to screw Chinese girls anymore. Angelo, too, because he says he is a wop. Jimmy was kidding; and he will give me some kind of a badge which says that I am Chinese, as he says some of the Japanese boys from U.S. got beat up. I didn't hear anything about that. Kenny told me it was true when I got back, and he said that all the students are going to be restricted to the campus. A lot of them want to get the hell out of here and go home, but I don't know what good that will do. I don't know what good it will be to stay here. Kenny has a friend, Shibs, who is full of wild stories. I don't know where he gets them. He says Bill is spying for the Navy or the FBI. I don't believe that; but I guess the FBI do have guys on the campus. They have picked up some suspicious Japanese already. I saw Alice and she is worried about Pop, because we live so close to Mare Island and she thinks that Jack should go over and tell the Mayor that Pop was in the Navy. I think Pop

would praise Japan; but he is not going to blow up anything. It may be dangerous for him in the barber shop with all those Mare Island guys coming in. I told Alice to tell Mom to have Pop's Navy discharge framed and put on the wall next to the barber license and take that Buddha statue the hell out of there. Alice says the Army should put me in charge of patriotism because I am suspicious of my own father. I did not mean it that way; but it is true, I don't trust the Issei. If just one of them sabotaged something, what hell there would to pay. Mrs. Jarvis seems very calm about the whole thing, I must say. She told me to study hard and become an officer in the Navy. What a laugh! The Navy would not even let me be a messboy. Jack says it's going to be bad, and he wants to go East to study medicine; but he can't walk out on the family like that.

December 10, 1941

The Japs are running wild all over Asia, and they may wind up this war before we get a fleet back there. I heard that some of the battleships are on the way back, so maybe I'll go over to Mare Island and see. There is some question that college may end for the term as nobody is studying. I went to S.F. again and everybody is in a daze in Jap Town and all sorts of wild rumors going around. They are going to lock up the Issei. If they are spies, I don't see anything wrong with that. That's war. Wang and the guys have a bull session every night, and they are going to organize the Nisei progressives on campus to make a statement to the Daily Californian. I am for that. Kenny and I are supposed to work on this letter, but I will let Kenny do the writing, and I'll pretend that I'm giving him the ideas.

He is a hell of a good writer. Wang can write too, but he has an inferiority complex. He keeps pestering me to take him to S.F. to a whorehouse because he says he may get drafted into the Army and be sent off to war; and he does not want to die a virgin. Kenny gets sore when we talk like that because he is a Christian deep down and very pure in heart, and he thinks that we should keep our minds on the war and think progressive thoughts. He says I am a bad influence on the guys in the house, because I go to chase girls every night; and he disapproves of my fooling around with Sachi because he thinks campus Nisei girls don't fool around. He should ask Bob K. about that! Anyway, all this running around and not studying is a diversion because none of us know what in the hell it is all about, or what is going to happen. I feel like the condemned man who wants to be a glutton before they lead him to the gas chamber. Kenny and his friend Shibs think that we have to be intellectuals and lead the Issei. I don't see how we can do that if we are in the Army. Germany is now in the war and things are never going to be like it was before.

December 19, 1941

All kinds of rumors, and I am worried. There is no way to have a normal life, and I can't be a student anymore. But I don't want to leave the campus. Talked to Shibs and he says there will be a report on the Nisei on campus and that we should all write up everything that happens. I don't think I would be very good at it; but I might give it a trial. All the so-called intellectuals like Shibs, Kenny and Jimmy Sakoda say that we just document everything. They are so cold and impersonal, and I don't know what

good that will do if any violence starts. There have been houses stoned in Placer County, and some of the newspapers are raising hell and making all kinds of wild statements about even the Nisei. Kenny showed me a lot of clippings, and it is very dangerous. Yet, I feel that we are so helpless. Who in the hell is going to worry about the Nisei when we are at war. Maybe the thing to do is to get into the Army. Wang says they will need Nisei for interpreters. That's one thing I won't qualify for. I think that the Nisei should forget all things Japanese and not attract that kind of attention to ourselves. We must wave that old flag like the very first patriot. I think the Nisei are loyal, but we may be too short for the Army, and I refuse to be a messboy. There is a lot of hysteria going on. Went to Wallego and the family does not know what to do. All kinds of restrictions coming in. I don't know what to say to them, as I really don't feel I am a part of the family. Jack will have to be the one. Mariko is talking of going East as the hysteria against Japs gets stronger. She says that the Japs are going to invade California; and she is convinced of it, and she says she is going to get a Chinese card too. She asked me to get a few more from Jimmy Lee for the family. I don't think things are that bad.

TANFORAN DIARY OF A JAPANESE AMERICAN EVACUEE, 1942

By

Charles Kikuchi

Foreword by Dorothy S. Thomas

Introduction

At the outbreak of World War II, I was twenty-four years old. I was an American citizen born in California of Japanese immigrant parents. I had graduated from San Francisco State College, and was then a graduate student in the University of California (Berkeley) School of Social Welfare. I began my diary on April 30, 1942, the day of my evacuation to the Tanforan Assembly Center. However, the idea of a diary covering the wartime crises facing Japanese-Americans had been conceived shortly after Pearl Harbor in a discussion with two fellow students at the University, James Sakoda¹ and Warren Tsuneishi². Sakoda, in particular, urged the historical value of a daily record, and all three of us kept diaries, independently for varying lengths of time. Unfortunately, I lost the major portion of my pre-evacuation diary during the confusion of the evacuation itself, but was able to retrieve part of the experience from letters to a sister and a girlfriend. Ultimately, as a "participant observer", I wrote more than 10,000 typewritten pages covering the period April 1942 to August 1945. The complete diary, now in the hands of Dorothy Swaine Thomas, will, by agreement, be deposited in the Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley.

The present abridgement was carried out under the guidance of Professor Thomas who, as Director of the University of California Evacuation and Resettlement Study, employed me as a research assistant from 1941 to 1945 and encouraged me to keep a daily record.³ In 1951, she secured grants from the American Philosophical Society and the University of Pennsylvania in support of editorial work, which was undertaken by Dr. Donald Kent,^{3a} and Mrs. Barbara Fitts. However, this work was never completed because of the difficulty in abridging 10,000 pages satisfactorily for a one-volume format. In 1968 - 1969, therefore,

I took on the task at the suggestion of Dr. Thomas, and limited the time span to the first four months of the evacuation experience which were spent at Tanforan. This meant adding to rather than subtracting from the Kent-Fitts abridgement.

The guidelines for abridgement were originally determined by Dr. Thomas, Dr. Kent, Mrs. Fitts and myself in 1951. We all agreed that my daily entries were frequently so detailed as to spread important information over a considerable period of time and thus necessitated editorial decision to unify some sequences by elimination of extraneous material. We have all scrupulously avoided linguistic tampering; the only corrections are for obvious typing errors and an occasional gross grammatical lapse. The material eliminated from this abridgement has been of three types: 1) information which is of no importance either to history of the evacuation or the experiences of the Kikuchi family (e.g. weather reports, minor illnesses, etc.); 2) repetitious details concerning camp living (e.g. menus, block meetings, etc.); 3) information about the camp that is better presented in other sources (e.g. its administrative organization).

The story of the Kikuchi family in America begins with the immigration of my father at the turn of the century. After a few years as a migrant worker and four years enlistment in the U.S. Navy, my father settled in the waterfront district of Vallejo, California, across from the Mare Island Naval Shipyards. My mother came to the United States in 1914 as a "picture bride", 17 years younger than my father. She lived in the same house in Vallejo until the evacuation of 1942.

There were eight children in all. Mariko, the first born, was 25 at the outbreak of the war and she resettled in Chicago shortly before the mass evacuation began. As noted, I was 24, and living in Berkeley; Jack, aged 23, was a student at San Francisco State College; Alice, aged 21, was doing domestic work

in San Francisco; Emiko, aged 17, Bette, aged 15, Tom, aged 13, and Miyako, aged 10, were living with my parents in Vallejo.

I spent the years from 1924 to 1935 in an "orphanage" in Northern California as a result of discord between my parents and I did not return home even after they were reconciled. I rejoined my family at the time of the evacuation, having been separated from them since I was _____ years of age. My siblings grew up at home until they went off to work (Mariko and Alice), or to college (Jack). My early experiences are related in a chapter called "A Young American with a Japanese Face" presented in an autobiographical style in Louis Adamic's book FROM MANY LANDS.⁴

For a year following college graduation in 1939, I was unable to resolve my vocational problem because the job market for the Nisei was limited. Partly as a result of this experience, I became interested in the problems of minority groups and during 1940 and 1941 I worked as a research assistant for the National Youth Administration assigned to the California Junior Counseling Service of the Employment Service. In this capacity, I did a study on the Nisei Youth in the Job Market⁵, and decided to continue graduate work in the School of Social Welfare at the University of California in Berkeley in the Fall of 1941.

During the two years following college graduation, I went through a period of personal disorganization. I drifted into the Japanese community in San Francisco, and this represented my first real contact with a Japanese group. The experience influenced my intense identification with American culture, which was reflected in my total commitment to integration while in the concentration camps, and later, my service in the American Army. My main social contacts in the Japanese community were with a group of Nisei "rowdies" known informally as the Yamato Gang and I spent a good deal of time drinking, gambling, visiting houses of prostitution, and leading the disorganized life of a gang member. While working as a chauffeur during the summer of 1941, I suddenly

resolved to continue my education, and I had no contacts with the gang after I was admitted to graduate school (except for a brief period following Pearl Harbor).

With the declaration of war, events moved swiftly for the Japanese and Japanese-Americans on the West Coast. On December 7 and 8, President Roosevelt issued proclamations declaring all enemy aliens - Italians, German and Japanese -- subject to restrictions; they were forbidden to travel except within certain limits, prohibited from possessing certain contraband articles, and excluded from areas around vital defense installations.⁶

The alien Kikuchi parents, living across a narrow body of water from the Mare Island Naval Station, were forced to leave Vallejo in February 1942, but the children remained behind with Mariko until March. The burden of these early forced moves fell upon Alice when Mariko voluntarily migrated to Chicago in late March 1942. At this time, I began to take part in family affairs, and directed my main effort toward getting family financial assistance from Federal relief agencies. My entrance into family affairs marked the emergence of conflict between my sister Alice and myself. My father looked to me for leadership in family problems as I was the oldest son. Alice, although welcoming a brother's aid, resented my exercising authority, and this struggle was to mount in intensity once evacuation took place and to continue until I was drafted in 1945.

Two months after the family was forced to move from Vallejo to San Francisco, they were uprooted again. On March 2, 1942, it was announced that persons of Japanese ancestry would be excluded from a wide belt along the Pacific Coast, designated as Military Area I.⁷ The proclamation covered all Japanese-Americans regardless of birth or citizenship and was to be carried out by a

series of orders clearing the area piecemeal. This evacuation was for a time considered to be "voluntary", inasmuch as the evacuee had free choice of destination beyond the restricted area.

The first "voluntary" migrants who moved inland were met by increasing hostility and economic discrimination and even physical violence. Newspapers carried daily reports of this hostility together with statements by Governors and other officials indicating that the Japanese were unwelcome. In the face of such threats, many parents of Japanese ancestry were afraid to move independently. In all, only about 9 percent of the Japanese-American population left Military Area I, nearly half of whom moved to an area just inside the coastal zone, in the mistaken belief that it would not be evacuated.⁸

It was soon apparent that voluntary evacuation had failed, and on March 27, 1942 the Army issued an order "freezing" all persons of Japanese ancestry who had not left the coastal zone. Henceforth, the evacuation was to be "controlled". All evacuees were ordered to report to control stations for assignment and processing, and they were then taken to temporary assembly centers to await transfer to the interior states.

Fifteen "Assembly Centers" were chosen because of pre-existing facilities -- fairgrounds, racetracks, and other locations where it would be possible to house quickly 100,000 or more people. These quarters were intended to be used only long enough to allow the newly organized War Relocation Authority to construct more permanent "Relocation Centers" inland. The controlled evacuation to the Assembly Centers began on March 21, 1942 and within three months all Japanese and Japanese-Americans had been cleared from the coastal area.

The Kikuchi family was evacuated to the Assembly Center at the Tanforan Race Track just outside of San Francisco on April 30, 1942. I had registered for the evacuation under our "family number" so that I would be assigned living quarters with them at Tanforan⁹. Here, we were completely united (except for Mariko) for the first time in 18 years. It was at Tanforan that I was approached by Professor Thomas to become an assistant on the Evacuation Study¹⁰. I then agreed to turn over my diary to be used as source material for this study. However, I had earlier made a decision to exclude all material regarding my sexual escapades because I believed that these were best left unwritten in order to protect others, and because of my increasing feeling of responsibility for my younger sisters. Other than this self-imposed limitation, I had no reservations in reporting in my diary all other aspects of my camp life and thoughts. This attitude is discussed in a June 2, 1942 addendum to my diary.

Our family spent four months at Tanforan, and this is the section covered by the present abridgement. After the family moved on to the Gila Relocation Center in September, 1942, the period was not a particularly happy one. My father had a stroke en route and was removed from the train at San Luis Obispo. He never recovered, although he was able to be transferred to the Gila Hospital where he died in July 1943. Jack stayed at Gila long enough to help the family get settled, and he then left to take a scholarship at Drew University in New Jersey. Subsequently, he moved to Chicago to marry Dolores, and he later moved back to California to complete his medical training at the Stanford University Medical School when army restrictions were lifted. Currently, he is practicing medicine in Concord, California. He has four children.

Alice stayed at Gila for four months before she was able to join Mariko in Chicago. Her engagement became a casualty in this process. Subsequently, she married a Nisei serviceman and she now lives in Brooklyn with her two

children, and she holds a responsible job with Japan Air Lines. I left Gila in April 1943, taking Emiko and Bette, with me to Chicago. My mother came with the two youngest, Tom and Miyako, in mid-1945 shortly before I was inducted into the Army. My mother made a new life for herself. She worked for a number of years, made a pilgrimage to the Island of Father's birthplace and erected a burial memorial in his name. Now at the age of 79, she travels around the U.S. visiting her 20 grandchildren. Tom went into the Army at the time of the Korean conflict and now works in an industrial firm in Chicago. Miyako works for a computer company in Chicago. My oldest sister, Mariko, also remained in Chicago. She is married and has two teenage children.

Emiko completed nursing school and married a psychologist (non-Japanese) and has four children. Bette also married a non-Japanese and she lives in San Francisco with five children.

I left the family in 1945 at the time I went into the Army. Later I moved to New York City to complete my Master's degree at Columbia University. Since 1948, I have been employed as a clinical social worker with the Veterans' Administration. I married a dancer, Yuriko, in 1946. We have a daughter at the University of Rochester and a son in private school. After many years as soloist with Martha Graham Dance Company, my wife, Yuriko, received a Guggenheim grant to establish her own dance company and she now teaches and tours in the United States and Europe.