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## HOUSING

During the first three weeks of March, 1943, Margaret stayed at the Friends hostel on Belden Ave. on the North Side. The Friends Service agency found an opening for her in the Eleanor Club. She was the first Nisei girl to ever live there, but a quota of three resettlers was set. This was filled by Margaret's sister and another girl.

When Margaret's second sister left the center, it was necessary to find some other housing since the quota was already filled at the Eleanor Club. A Quaker family became interested in Margaret and offered their home on the South Side since it was open until September, 1943. Margaret, her two sisters, and four other Nisei girls moved into this home in June, 1943. In August Margaret started house hunting again for the six girls. She was not able to find a large enough place so the group finally split up. Late in September, 1943, Margaret and her two sisters moved to a home on the far North Side in anticipation of their parents' resettlement. In the meantime, Margaret began teaching at the University of Chicago and she found that it took her three hours a day to commute so that she finally moved to a smaller apartment near the University with her two sisters after parents decided to resettle in Colorado.

Margaret's future housing plans were still indefinite in June, 1945:

"Most apartments out here are sub-standard and it is almost impossible to find a place for a family group. We are anxious to bring our family together again, but we just can't find a large enough place.



All of my friends are in the same kind of fix.

"We are crowded in our present apartment and a family group just couldn't live there. We don't have any trouble with the landlady as she is nice to us, but that is not enough for us to want to remain there permanently. We have always planned to get a better and larger place, but the months go by very swiftly. It isn't an urgent problem with me right now as my parents are out of camp already, and I have to think more of my job future. I don't know if I want to remain in Chicago permanently, but I don't want to be on the jump from one city to another."<sup>1</sup>

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1. From C.K. Diary, pp. 8077-8078.



HOUSING

Yasuko was employed as a domestic worker during her first two years in Chicago (see employment section). In M April, 1943, Yasuko decided to work in a factory so she moved into an apartment building on the North Side with some friends. Five girls lived next to each other and they ate their meals together in one of the rooms which had a pullman kitchen. Yasuko believed this was only a temporary arrangement because she had plans to (1) go to New York for a job or (2) find a flat and bring her parents out of camp. Yasuko's chief dissatisfaction with her housing was the cramped quarters, and the high rent.



HOUSING

During his first few months in Chicago, George lived in several different hotels on the Near North Side and on a Great Lakes boat. In August, 1943, he moved into an apartment.

"At the present time George is paying \$8 a week for his apartment. The landlord is a German alien and very sympathetic. George's apartment is ~~xxxxxx~~ completely furnished and rather comfortable. It includes a large living room, bedroom, closet and a kitchenette. The apartment is located on the second floor of a fairly old building and it has a front view of the street. The furnishings include a modernized davenport, arm-chair, bureau, three small chairs, table and heater. There is also a large fireplace in the living room. George's brother is maintaining a separate apartment and his parents are living on the ~~Near~~ North Side in a hotel where the father is a time-keeper."

In August, 1944, George moved to an unfurnished house after his marriage. The rent was only \$17 a month, but the initial furniture expenses was rather high. George did a great deal of building about the house so that by the end of the year, they were fairly well settled. The present plan is to remain there as long as they live in Chicago. A friend of ~~Mrxx~~ his wife's now occupies the spare bedroom and shares the expenses for the flat. George's wife is dissatisfied with the lack of facilities there, but she feels that she will have to put up with it for the duration. Her chief complaint is that it gets too cold in the winter and in the summer the odor of the tamale factory downstairs penetrates the whole building.



## HOUSING

After Yuri quit her domestic job in October, 1943, she moved **into** the Benton Settlement House where she was given her room in exchange for some evening work at the switchboard.

"The Benton House is a pretty big social settlement house. There is a gymnasium over on the other side and a Nisei fellow Tom Imai and his wife are the directors there. They take care of the activities of the children who come here. We also have a branch of the public library downstairs. But I haven't been down there to get any books yet. The director is very nice to me and all of the people living here are friendly. There are about five other Nisei in the house but I haven't gotten to know them very well yet. I have my own here and there is a living room where I can see my visitors. We have almost all of the facilities here and it is even better than living at the 'Y'. It is something like a large family, but the other people don't try to pry into your business and they leave you alone."<sup>1</sup>

~~xxxxxxthat gave me a very full~~

By May, 1945, Yuri still felt unsettled as "I don't have any deep roots here." (p. 76) In June, 1944 she had moved out of Benton House "as it was too far out on the west side." Yuri was admitted into the University Cooperative, where she lived with 10 other girls, but,

"I had to pay \$18 a month there for just my room alone and my meals were taken out. This proved rather expensive for me so that is the reason why I started looking around for another place. In November, 1944 one of my friends told me about the Concord Co-op House on Hyde Park Blvd., so I applied for membership immediately. I was accepted so I moved in and I have been living here ever since. We only pay \$33 a month for our room and board here so that it is very reasonable and the atmosphere is most congenial."<sup>2</sup>

After living six months at Concord House, Yuri decided that

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1. Case History, pp. 52-53.
  2. Case History, p. 76.



she liked it very much and she planned to remain there indefinitely. Her description of the Co-op house and its membership follows:

"This house has 23 members in it now. More than half are boys. There are three Nisei fellows and two Nisei girls living here at the present time. In all, there are only eight girls. Everyone of the members work at full time jobs and they are mostly in the white collar group. George Akahoshi is the newest member of the group as he only moved in last week. We have a varied occupational range in this group. There are five social workers, a couple of civil service employees, some office workers and Co-op workers. My room-mate, Jackie is a professional Co-operative worker. She is only 20 years old. She got her training in the Rochdale Cooperative principles in the George Williams College, I think. Right now she is visiting her parents in Connecticut. I get along with her the best and we are always doing things together. She is of Irish nationality and she has flaming red hair, but not the temperament to go with it. She certainly is a most intelligent girl and I wish that I had her brains. She is the one who wants me to go to New York with her next June. She is working full-time in some Co-operative company right now.

"All of the members of this house are supposed to put in 5 hours of work each week. We have a work manager who assigns the various duties and it is rotated among members. For certain types of work we get more credit than for others. We are responsible for our own linen so that we wash them. The boys usually sand theirssout to the laundry. We have a cook who comes in five days a week and the girls pitch in and do the cooking the other two nights. Whenever we have a guest come to dinner, we have to pay 35¢ extra. We can have a guest room here free for three nights and after that they have to pay.

"It's a very good set-up and I enjoy the experience of living here immensely. We all get along well together and there is a good cooperative spirit around the house all the time. A couple of the fellows tend to be a little lazy and they do the minimum amount of work, but eventually the cooperative spirit is forced upon them or else they will be ostracized. We have a house council to set the policy and we usually vote on different things during our semi-monthly meetings. The group is well educated and liberal in their outlook so that I am learning quite a bit from them. They do the best type of reading and they are very aware of current events so that I am beginning to learn a little



bit about world affairs from them. I plan to stay here indefinitely as it is an economical way of living and I like the companionship."<sup>3</sup>

Yuri's only disturbing thought in mid-1945 was what to do about her family resettlement. She did not feel that she could find housing for them, or that she could be able to support them once they left the center. (To be treated more fully in family resettlement section.)

".....My hand are tied and I feel that I am helpless in the matter. I just don't earn enough to support them so that it is impossible to even consider such an idea. My folks are too old to work and I don't see how we would be able to make out if the WRA does close the camp. I don't think that it is being very fair to those of us who are trying to advance ourselves. I have no idea of what my parents plan to do. I'll have to go to camp and talk to them if the WRA really does close up and force us to make a move."<sup>4</sup>

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3. Case History, pp. 76-78.

4. Case History, p. 78.



# HOUSING

When Hiromasa arrived in Chicago with friends, they roomed at the "Y" for a week while looking around for an apartment. A friend referred them to Maple Manor Hotel, located ~~xxxxxx~~ in the Near North Side in a transient area, where they were able to find a vacancy. The WRA later sent many resettlers to this hotel so that over 50 of the 100 roomers were of Japanese ancestry by the spring of 1944.

"I haven't tried to move from the Maple Manor Hotel because I have run into a little discrimination in housing. Actually we have never looked too hard for another place and if we do move, it will be because the rent is cheaper and we will be closer to our job. There are 5 of us living here in this apartment. We have no other bedroom on the other side of the kitchen and bathroom which separates the living room from the back part of the apartment. The place here is convenient for my work as it is only 10 minutes away by street car. However, we do plan to move eventually to a place out of the Loop because the neighborhood is not so good. The electricity is D.C. current and it is very inconvenient for my phonograph. The rent we pay is too high for this place also. For the five of us, it adds up to \$90 a month. We get very spotty maid service because maids are pretty scarce these days. About the only other Nisei we drop in on in this hotel are the two groups from Minidoka that we knew before. The others that we knew have already moved out. The rest of the 50 Nisei living here are strangers from California. They are mostly single fellows. There are a few Nisei girls in our building, but they don't stay long because the atmosphere is not very good."<sup>1</sup>

Hiromasa's relationship with the landlady and other occupants of the house were casual.

"The landlady has no objections to the Nisei and she does not care about the congregation because the Nisei pay their rent properly and they don't tear up the place. Some of the Caucasian

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1. Case History, p. 77.



roomers here are of doubtful characters anyway. They don't object too much. There are several single Caucasian girls living here and a few families. The young girl who is the night clerk here is a Hawaiian and she lives with her family in this building. Most of the occupants of the hotel are older people. The landlady lives in the building also, and she acts like a madam for a house. One of her daughters is just like a prostitute and she hangs out in the hotel around the corner."<sup>2</sup>

Hiromasa was the oldest of the five young men living together so that he took leadership in the group. They were all known to each other prior to the war, and they engaged in social activities together. Hiromasa's brother and sister lived nearby so that Hiromasa occasionally visited them. After a year in Chicago, Hiromasa was still very dissatisfied with his housing situation.

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2. Case History, pp. 77-78.



## HOUSING

Frances had extremely difficult housing adjustments during her first few months in Chicago in mid-1943. She and her friend took an apartment on the South Side, but Frances never did like the location "as people stared at me all the time." (p. 68) Two weeks later, a crisis developed.

"Our landlady was very nice to us for the first two weeks but after that she began to complain a lot. We did have a lot of visitors in our apartment so maybe it was partly our fault. At that time a lot of Nisei were coming out of camp and they called on us. The landlady didn't like this because she said that the neighbors thought that so many Japanese around that area looked suspicious and it was dangerous for them. I found out later that the real reason why she kicked us out was that we had so many visitors. The people in the area made a petition to get the Japanese out of there and I got so worried about that. Now I think it might have been a rumor, but I really believed that it was true at that time. I felt funny when the people stared at me when I walked w down the street.

"Finally the landlady made it so unpleasant by being rude and hinting that we should leave that we decided we couldn't stand it any more. We caught on to what she was trying to do and we felt that it would be better to get another apartment which would not have such an uncomfortable attitude. I had a girl friend from Detroit who came to visit me and the landlady made me pay \$1.00 a night for her to stay in my apartment. I told the landlady I could not afford that much and I would report her to the OPA. Then she said I would have to pay 50 cents a night for my friend. It was after that that the landlady told us to get out in five days. Her husband told us that the neighbors threatened to throw stones in the windows of his house if they did not get us out. There was nothing we could do about it and we did not feel like reporting the matter to the OPA because we didn't want to live there anymore anyway. The landlady's husband also told us that his wife's father and other relatives had told them to get us out. I told him that his wife should have told us directly instead of giving us nasty notes telling us not to do this and that."1

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1. Case History, pp. 63-64.



The girls decided to split up and Frances became quite desperate in her house hunting. The University of Chicago housing bureau got her a sleeping room for \$5 a week. In October the bureau referred her to the George Williams College dormitory where 14 other girls roomed. Frances enjoyed living with the other girls, but she felt that it was not enough of a home atmosphere so that she began to look for a more permanent place where she and her sister could live.

"Although the life in this college dormitory has been pleasant enough, I'd rather live in my own home any time. That is why I have been looking around for another place where I can stay. It is not because I am dissatisfied with the people living with me now or with the place here. The house is very nice and it is quite comfortable in many ways. However, I do not have the privacy which I would like very much. I miss my family life very much, but it does not look like I can have that for quite a while yet. The next best thing to that would be to have an apartment of my own. The life I am living here is more of the college dormitory style and I am definitely through with that stage of my life since I am no longer going to college. I come home all tired from work and I would prefer to have calmness and privacy. I just can't get it here.

"Another thing is that I can't enjoy my meals as I have to eat out all of the time. Usually I eat on the University Commons but occasionally I go to some of the other restaurants around the University. Every once in a while I go to a Chinese restaurant to eat. That is why I don't miss Japanese food too much. Eating out is all right if you don't have to do it all the time. I miss the services that my mother used to do for me. Nowadays I have to do my own laundry and everything else for myself. I'm not saying that I miss my family for this reason. I miss the contacts of the family very much and it does get lonesome once in a while. Everybody is to herself out here and I don't have anyone to discuss mutual problems or other things with. The girls living in this house are only staying here temporarily and they go to their own homes for vacations. I can't very well do that because my family lives too far away.

"I suppose the thing that gets me is that I am to myself too much. And it is more noticeable to me because the rest of the girls living in the dorm here are students. Their problems and ways of living are



definitely so different from mine. They don't have a career yet and we have different purposes. I get along with them very well but we are not of common interest. I got out with them once in a while but not too often. I wouldn't like to see more Nisei moving around here though. That would make the problem even greater."<sup>2</sup>

Frances managed to get another lead through the University of Chicago housing bureau, but "I wasn't feeling so bold when I went up to the place to apply. The landlady did not seem very cordial at first and I was quite nervous. My first impression was that she wanted to turn me away, but after I told her that I worked on the campus she took a liking to me and gave me a vacancy." (p. 68) Frances was very fearful of her position since the landlady had told the other tenants that she was Chinese. Therefore,

".....I hope that other nisei don't move near my place, especially if they are the wrong kind of nisei because I may be put out of my new place and I am tired of moving around.

"I guess I'm selfish about it, but that is the way I feel. I think that the nisei should scatter around all over Chicago for their own good. If they cluster up in one place, it won't be any good for any of us. It will only make more problems and I am tired of having to face all of these problems. It makes me worry when I think that something like this is going to happen."<sup>3</sup>

And,

"I don't think my landlady wants me to have very many nisei visitors. She asked me about that once the other day and I told her I didn't know too many nisei. I'm going to keep my place a secret because I don't want to be chased out again. It doesn't bother me not to have a lot of nisei visitors because I don't care so much for that right now. I don't have the time to

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2. Case History, pp. 66-67.

3. Case History, p. 69.



be entertaining a lot of people anyway. I guess I'll have to suffer from the social point but it won't be too hard. The hakujin get too suspicious and prejudiced if they see too many nisei coming around. I'll never make the same mistake I did in the Oakenwald St. apartment that I lived in before. We did have a lot of nisei visitors and that is what aroused the people in the neighborhood against us. Since I have been in the dormitory here, I have not encouraged many nisei to come and see me. I was so embarrassed one time when a nisei fellow I knew called upon me unexpectedly and he hollered for me outside the building instead of coming to the door and ringing the bell. I bet that certainly attracted the neighbors because it was after 11:00 o'clock at night. I didn't think it was very good manners to do that."<sup>4</sup>

Frances and her sister lived together in this apartment until September, 1944 when their cousin came from Nevada to join them. By this time there was one other Nisei couple living in the building, but Frances was not as sensitive about her housing position by the middle of 1945 as she had been a year previously.

"We don't get along with the landlord very well as she wants to charge us extra rent for the third person. She tried to force it on me recently and for one of the few times in my life I really stuck up for my rights and I said that I would go to the OPA. I told her that we ~~were~~ weren't living unsanitary and we kept the place neat so that she should not have any objections. She sadly went home with her head hanging down when I told her I would report her to my major! I think that we pay too much rent as it is. The one good thing about this apartment is that we have a private bath so I like it here. I wish that our landlady would not be so nosey. We had a 120-watt globe in our lamp and she came in and replaced it with a 60-watt globe. She said that the electric company ordered this change but I know that she was lying.

"I don't know what we can do about finding another apartment because all of the Nisei have such a hard time in finding such a decent place. It seems that the landlord in most of the places where Nisei live is always objecting to something or another in order to take advantage because they know we are having a difficult time and we won't protest too much. When we first moved into this apartment, the

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4. Case History, pp. 69-70.



landlady came and warned us about having too many Nisei visitors in this apartment as she said it was too conspicuous. At first I listened to her but I have told her that we had a right to have relatives and friends to come in. She then said they shouldn't come too often. I argued quite a bit but I don't care now as the landlady can't do anything about it even if people do come here. We only have company on week-ends anyway. There are a number of Nisei living in this neighborhood but I rarely see any of them and I know very few. As far as I know there haven't been any neighborhood objections to us. I'd like to move to a larger place but we know it's impossible to find one so it's no use looking. Finding a decent apartment is mostly luck and we don't have the time to go around and look. We have to take what we can get anyway. Some of my nisei friends have tramped weeks and weeks for an apartment while others are lucky to find one right away. I don't know what I will do if my family decides to come out to Chicago, although I don't think they are planning on it."5

At the present time (June, 1945) Frances is looking for a larger apartment to bring her family out to, but she finds it impossible to get another location because of the present ~~acute~~ acute housing situation. (see family resettlement section)



## HOUSING

When Ikuko arrived in Chicago in April, 1943, her initial housing problem was solved by accepting a domestic job. A few months later she decided to take an office job so that she moved in with a friend on the west side (see job adjustment section). Ikuko had a great deal of difficulty in finding housing, but she felt that she had to move out of her temporary apartment as "there were bedbugs in the place." Two of her girl friends decided to share an apartment with Ikuko and her brother so they proceeded to look for an opening.

"At first I was afraid that we would not be able to find a place at all because of the housing shortage. I thought that some of the places would discriminate against us. The three of us began to look in the newspapers and we decided to break up into three groups and each of us take a different section of the city in our apartment hunting. I walked around for several days without any success and May and Lucy did not have any luck either. I had a chance at a couple of places but they were too dirty. Finally I went to the WRA and they had a list of available apartments. I told them that I was interested in a 3-room apartment on the North Side and we were willing to pay up to \$50 a month but the man at the WRA told me of two places on Geneva Terrace and one of them sounded very good to me. It was rented for \$55 a month and I decided to come out immediately.

"When I got here I found that the landlady was very nice and I was so happy that she would rent the apartment to us. I was impressed with the neatness and cleanliness of the building so that I put a deposit down for the apartment right away and then went to get May and Lucy to come and look at the place. When we came out all together they looked and liked the place immediately so that we moved on October 1, 1943 and my brother was out by that time so he came with us."<sup>1</sup>

Ikuko was satisfied with her new apartment for which she paid

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1. Case History, pp. 71-72.



a rent of \$55 a month for three rooms as she felt that it was better than her pre-evacuation house. But her chief complaint was the lack of privacy.

"At times it is hard living with other people and I can't feel completely at ease. It's not like living with your own family. I'm busy all the time so that I don't get to enjoy my apartment completely. The relationships between those of us here is fairly good. Occasionally we do have some friction. The reason for that is that the three girls are all of the same age so that there is no older person around to show respect to. I mean by that, we don't show too much deference for each other and we are not so willing to make personal sacrifices as we would to an older person."<sup>2</sup>

There were a few resettlers living in the neighborhood, but,

".....I wouldn't want them to move into our building at all or even into the next building because I feel that a concentration of Japanese around here would change the public feeling towards us. Right now the hakujin are very friendly and we are not too conspicuous."<sup>3</sup>

Early in 1944, Ikuko got married and moved up to Minneapolis while her younger brother went to live with his parents, who had resettled to Evanston.

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2. Case History, p. 72.

3. Case History, p. 73.



## HOUSING

Shizuko had no housing problems during her first year in Chicago as her employer arranged for room at the George Williams College dormitory. She adjusted herself easily to this living arrangement, and she made many friends.

"I get along swell with them and we do everything together. They are a lot of fun and I am always being invited out by them. During Christmas I went to Green Bay, Wisconsin, over the holidays with one of the girls in the house and I got along wonderfully with all of her parents and friends."<sup>1</sup>

Shizuko's main dissatisfaction was with the city itself and she did not think that she would live here permanently because

".....I don't like Chicago itself. There are too many things here to distract me. And I don't think I will be able to keep up with this fast tempo of living permanently. Another thing is that the people around here do have distinct racial attitudes. There is too much prejudice against the Negroes and they can't even move to the other side of Cottage Grove. Another thing is that there are too many slums here and there is no family living ways at all. All I do is go to work, go out on dates and have fun, come home and enjoy myself with the girls in the house, visit friends occasionally, etc. There is nothing constructive about my life at all and I don't think that I will be able to do this all the time. Sooner or later the novelty will wear off and I will have to settle down and really belong to the community."<sup>2</sup>

When the dormitory closed in the summer of 1944, Shizuko went to live with another Nisei girl friend. (needs follow-up)

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1. Case History, p. 53.

2. Case History, pp. 56-57.



## HOUSING

Richard lived at the "Friends hostel during his first three weeks in Chicago and he thoroughly enjoyed this experience as it "definitely contributed to my development as I went out of my way to make friends with everyone." (p. 133) Richard was in no hurry to move out because of these pleasant contacts. In fact,

"I hated to move out as I felt lonely after getting out of camp and I was making new friends. I met another Nisei there and after we became friendly, we decided to batch together. Our house hunting wasn't too difficult a task. All we did was walk around the district surrounding the hostel. We found a few openings but the rooms were not so good. In one place we actually moved in for one day then the landlady said that she didn't want any Filipinos in the house. I didn't tell her I was a Nisei because I didn't like her attitude, so I went back to the hostel. The following day we found this building and we got a room here. I stayed with my friend for two weeks and then my present room-mate, Hisao (CH-27), came out here so I reserved our present apartment for the two of us. My other room-mate got another job on the South Side so that he moved out there. I have been in this place ever since June, 1943."<sup>1</sup>

Richard gradually overcame his fears about the landlady as she changed her attitudes about the Nisei and soon other resettlers were moving into the building and "they brought a lot of their friends" until about 15 in all became tenants. Richard's reaction was unfavorable because it "threatened his own security."

"At first I didn't want any other Nisei around here as I thought that it was too conspicuous. It was pretty difficult because I wanted to have my friends around me all the time. However, I felt that it was better to draw a line some place. More

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1. Case History, p. 134.



and more Nisei moved into the area so that there are now quite a few in this district. Right across the street a whole mess of them, about 15, moved in later. Then around the corner there are about 15 more in another house. On Geneva Terrace there are a lot of Nisei girls who live along the street. Two blocks north, on Hampden Court, there are a lot of Nisei fellows batching. I don't know the exact number of Nisei in the whole district but I would guess there must be 200 in all. I don't know very many of them and I rarely see them."<sup>2</sup>

Richard paid \$5 a week rent, but "this room here is a dump and it couldn't begin to compare with my Berkeley house." (p. 135) However, he felt that it was only a temporary arrangement so that he did nothing about finding another apartment. His complaints were numerous.

".....The room is not too clean and cockroaches run all over the place. We have to cover up all of our food in order to keep them out. We haven't had any bedbugs yet so that is one consolation. It is rather difficult to wash all of the dishes in that small washstand but we manage to get along. One of the things I don't like about the place is that it has a musty odor but all the buildings in Chicago seem to be this way. On the other hand we get very good linen service and we don't have any trouble with other tenants. The landlady is very congenial and she is a good friend of ours. Since this is only a temporary place I haven't much to kick about as I couldn't afford a better place right now since my income is limited."<sup>3</sup>

Richard had only a slight acquaintance with the other Nisei occupant in the buildings after two years of living there because of the large turnover. "We don't even say hello to each other." (p. 136) He missed the home atmosphere and for a while he thought of working in a Caucasian home in order to get this.

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2. Case History, pp. 134-135.

3. Case History, p. 135.



Early in 1944, Richard made an attempt to move into a settlement and cooperative house, but nothing came of his application.

By May, 1944, the complete building was occupied by resettlers, but Richard only developed a close friendship with the Nisei girls who was talked about for going around with Negroes socially.

".....I don't take the trouble to get close to the other Nisei living in the house because they don't seem to be too interesting. There are a couple of Kibei living in this building and they talk loud in Japanese all the time and every once in a while they play the Japanese records. I never pay any attention to anyone in the house because I am busy with my own activities. Most of the Nisei living in this building are working and they are single but 3 of the girls have gotten married since they moved in here. One of them even has a baby now.

"On the whole, it is a very dull household and nothing very much happens. The Nisei living here just chase around all the time like they used to and they don't seem to have improved themselves in any way since resettlement. Two of the girls go out on dates almost every night and a couple of girls go out on dates once in a while, but most of the girls living here lead a very quiet life. They don't belong to any clubs at all and they aren't interested in outside activities. They don't seem to do anything except go to work and come home. There was one girl who was supposed to be going into a business school at night, but she dropped out and she is getting a little wild now. She is one of the girls who goes out on dates a lot and I think she's only about 19 years old.

"Most of the Nisei living here in this house belong to their own small cliques and they don't inter-mix even with one another very much and they seem to have a definite limitation in interests. I have never talked to them very much but I think that all of the girls are worried mostly about how they are going to bring their families out from camp. One girl was saying that she and her parents could start a paper flower making business and that there was a good opportunity in it. The fellows aren't too worried about the closing of the camp because they all think that they will be drafted before they can do anything about it anyway.



"It seems to me that most of the Nisei living in this house don't even go to the Nisei activities out here because they aren't too interested in it. They aren't interested in anything. They just go to work and amuse themselves at home in the evenings in some way. The single fellows just go out to visit girls because they aren't interested in reading or anything like that. They just seem to be drifting along but some of them are saving their money and working for the future. The married girls in this house are a lot more settled because they are thinking in terms of a family future and they're not as restless as the others."4

Richard's relationship with the landlady were excellent after he had lived there for two years. She liked the Nisei as "they paid the rent on time and they were very courteous to her.. ...I guess they feel they have to treat her respectfully because she is a hakujin." (p. 164)

"None of our Caucasian neighbors around here have objected about us and the swarm of Japanese that I thought was going to move into this neighborhood did not materialize. The reason for that is that most of the single fellows got drafted and the movement for the rest was toward the North Side further up around 4000."5

Richard had no definite plans for moving except that there was a possibility that one of his friends would open a co-op house.

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4. Case History, pp. 162-164.

5. Case History, p. 165.



HOUSING

Johnny made good housing adjustments after arriving in Chicago because he entered a family situation.

"I was pretty glad when I left Denver. I knew I would have a better home life in Chicago with my relatives and I would be more settled. When I first arrived I felt completely lost because I didn't know the city at all. My brother-in-law and sister helped me get settled and I moved in with them."<sup>1</sup>

After three months, he volunteered into the Army and he was inducted in March, 1944.

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1. Case History, p. 56.



## HOUSING

When Doris arrived in Chicago at the end of 1942, she moved into a single room in the apartment house where her sister lived. A few weeks later, she moved to the Near North Side with her sister and brother-in-law. After two months, Doris decided to find an apartment of her own so that she could call her brother to Chicago. Doris found a large apartment in April, 1943, but her brother changed his mind about coming so Doris invited two single girls to live with her. This arrangement did not work out too well because of the cramped quarters and personality differences of the girls.

"At first the three of us living together like that was all right, but none of us felt settled. It was not living at all as we just worked, shopped, ate, and slept. None of us knew each other too well so that it took us quite a while to get used to each other. We kept more to ourselves at first. Then friends started to drop over so that we soon got to be like sisters. The three of us had been playing lonesome and unsettled so we kept in our own shells until we found out that we were alike in many respects. Susie was much older than us and she had a boy friend at last so Ellen and I began to go around with each other more and we spent a lot of time together. We went to shows and visited friends and did other things like that. It got to be a little problem for a while because Susie's boy friend was courting her intensively and he stayed all hours of the night so we could not get our proper sleep."<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, Doris' younger brother had resettled so in September, 1943, she took another apartment.

"When after I made all of these plans and moved into this place, my younger brother did not want to come and live with me because I was a girl and he liked his friend better."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Case History, p. 62.

2. Case History, p. 63.



This new arrangement did not work out so well.

"I began to encourage Hana to look for a place of her own. But she is the kind of a girl who is lost when it comes to things like this. I knew that the three of us would get on each other's nerves. I had to get up at 6:00 in the morning in order to clean the house because I couldn't stand to leave it messy while Hana liked to sleep until it was almost time to go to work. I knew that this couldn't work out so after two weeks I told Hana that she would have to move. Hana liked to stay here with us but the place was too small. My older sister offered to take her in temporarily so that arrangement was made and Hana is still living with her although she has to find a place soon because she is getting married at the end of this month (May). I felt mean in telling Hana to move out but it just wouldn't have worked out. Now Ellen and I get along very nicely and we never get into each other's way. Ellen is thinking of bringing her younger brother out of camp so I may let her have this apartment if she can't find a place of her own. I can go live with my older sister after Hana moves out or else find another room mate and an apartment of my own."3

Doris had no worries about housing because "I've never had the door slammed in my face or be called a Jap." (p. 64) However, she had some minor complaints to make about her relationship with the landlady.

".....We don't get our hot water in time. The First Nisei fellow who moved into this building spoiled the landlady as he bought his own sheets and he offered more money when he brought his friend into the building. So when the rest of the Nisei started to move in, the landlady said that we had to bring our own linen and she refused maid service to us. Later on, she started to cut down on the coal and heat and we still did not moan. About two months ago I began writing her notes asking her to please have hot water for us when we came home from work but she blamed it on the war.

"The landlady tried to raise my rent from \$42 a month to \$45 just because she thought that I was making a lot of money. I refused to pay this amount and I said that I would go ask the OPA so that she backed down. Yet, she always comments on how clean and quiet



the Nihonjin in the building are and she likes us because we pay our rent on time. There are about 14 Nihonjin living here now out of about 24 people in the building. The Nihonjin all live on the second floor. I know about 10 of the Japanese living in this building. I only knew about four of them from camp and I met the rest here. I know all of the hakujin in the house too."<sup>4</sup>

Despite the large number of resettlers living in the building, Doris felt that it would be more desirable if they did not concentrate so much.

".....I would like it better if there were less Nisei around here. I don't particularly want any more to move in but I can't say anything about that because they have a right to move in if they want to. But I do wish that they would spread out over the city a little more because people will start to call this a Jap house if too many Nihonjin live here and ~~we~~ should avoid that.....

"I never encourage any of my friends to move into this building. I knew that the apartment next door was open and I was hoping that some Caucasian would move in instead of Nisei. One thing that discourages the Nisei from moving here in greater numbers is the high rents. #35 is the cheapest rent here and that is only a sleeping room. The other rooms average from \$42 up to \$52.50 for a three-room place. I think that Ellen and I have the nicest room on this floor as we have a Pullman kitchen, open couch, rugs on the floor and a private bath. There is only one other private bath on this floor and the rest of the rooms have to share a bathroom."<sup>5</sup>

In comparing her apartment with her pre-war house, Doris had the following comment to make.

"Of course, this apartment of mine can't begin to compare with my home in Pasadena. I feel so cramped up in this one room. I don't know what my housing plans for the future are as it will depend upon what develops. My housing future is most uncertain and I

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4. Case History, p. 65.

5. Case History, p. 66.



don't plan to settle down permanently in any one place for the duration."6

In the fall of 1944, Doris moved in with her resettled family (mother and three brothers), but early in 1945 she left to enter the Cadet Nursing Corps.



## HOUSING

When Hana arrived in Chicago at the end of December, 1942, she lived for a week with a Nisei girl friend on the South Side. She then moved in temporarily with another girl friend into a basement apartment on the Near North Side. Hana and her girl friend began to look for a more permanent place, and they had a very difficult time because it was in the middle of winter.

"A lot of times we got turned down because we were not wanted. Other places discouraged us by charging much more than the sign said or else they would say the place was just taken. In some places they asked us what nationality we were and when we explained they said they were sorry they could not take Japanese. All of this was most discouraging and it wasn't pleasant for a newcomer to be welcomed to this city. I began to realize that everything was not a bed of roses. We went house hunting for days and we got this sort of reception all the time."<sup>1</sup>

Finally Hana and her friend found a vacancy in a basement apartment on the Near North Side and they immediately moved in. The rent was only \$25 a month, but the kitchen had to be shared with the occupants in the rear apartment. At the end of the first month (February 1943) the landlady asked them to vacate because she needed the apartment for a single man who agreed to stoke the furnace in exchange for room.

".....At noon time I went out with a hakuji girl friend from the office and she helped me in house hunting. We ran into a place on Rush St. near the Loop and the landlady was very cordial when she showed the hakuji girl the rooms since she thought it was for her. Then she found out that it was for Aiko and me and she became very hesitant. She said she had never taken Japanese before but finally decided to give us a chance when the hakuji girl talked up for us. The landlady let us take an apartment on the

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1. Case History, p. 41.



second floor and now the whole second floor is occupied by Japanese. We paid \$37.50 for our apartment."<sup>2</sup>

When Hana's girl friend moved to New York, Hana could not afford to keep the apartment up so she moved in with three other Nisei girls in the next block and she gave her former apartment up to two friends who had just resettled. Under the new arrangement, Hana only paid \$11.60 a month for rent. Hana's room-mates both got married so she went back to live with another girl friend on Rush St. in February, 1944. The following month, Hana went to live temporarily with another Nisei girl friend on Dearborn St. in a basement apartment. By this time Hana was planning to get married so that she began to look for another apartment, but she was very discouraged with the prospects.

"All of my friends have had a great deal of trouble in finding housing. A lot of places are pestered with bedbugs, I would say most of them. A lot of other places charge the Nisei too much for rent too but there isn't much choice because these Nisei can't sleep out in the streets."<sup>3</sup>

In June, 1944, Hana got married and moved to the Far North Side, but she still had intentions of finding more permanent housing. (needs follow-up.)

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2. Case History, p. 41

3. Case History, p. 43.



HOUSING

When Chizu came to Chicago in September, 1943, she lived with her sister "on the fourth floor of an old building in the slums of Dearborn St." (p. 110) After two weeks,

".....I couldn't stand it any longer so I rebelled. It was so cramped and it reminded me too much of the cheap rooming houses of Los Angeles. Our apartment was a very dingy place and the bathroom was filthy. It reminded me too much of all the places I didn't like in Pasadena and I was ashamed to live there. I felt I was lowering my standard of living by living in such slum conditions. I moved to a sleeping room downstairs but that didn't satisfy me because I didn't like the general neighborhood.

"One of my girl friends visited me and she told me about the nice apartment she had on E. Pearson St. so I immediately asked for an apartment in this building and I got it. I have lived here ever since so that I didn't have any of the housing experiences that other Nisei complain about. I pay \$8 a week for this apartment and it is decorated in a most comfortable style. The owner here is artistic so that he tries to fix the apartment up in a modernistic manner. He is the type who is very understanding."<sup>1</sup>

In her new apartment Chizu established very friendly relationship with her landlord and she didn't want any more Nisei moving into the building because "the three of us have established a good reputation here and we don't want to spoil it." (p. 111) The basis for this reasoning was that other Nisei girls would bring in zoot suiters to visit them and that "would create a bad impression and it definitely would hurt our standing." (p. 111)

"The landlord at one time was planning to allow a batch of Nisei boys to come in here because he thought that they would keep the place clean and they would not use too much electricity. I sort of dis-

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1. Case History, p. 110.



couraged this because I told him it might not be a good thing if a number of Nisei concentrated in one building. He seems to be unbiased toward Nisei but he doesn't want his whole apartment filled with them. There are quite a few Nisei and Issei living in the neighborhood but I don't know them at all. I rarely see them except when I got up around Clark St. I know there are several houses filled with Nihonjin around here."<sup>2</sup>

After living in the building for a year, Chizu expressed satisfaction with her housing adjustment.

".....I like the tenants in this building as they are different from the ordinary run of people. We have artists, writers, clerical workers, foreigners and even a couple of queers living here. There is one German girl upstairs who is quite interested in the Nisei problem and I go up there and talk to her once in a while. She is trying to get me interested in poetry. We are one big happy family and we borrow sugar and other things from each other."<sup>3</sup>

Chizu felt that it was through her influence that her landlord had persuaded other apartment house managers to adopt a more tolerant attitude toward resettler tenants.

".....The landlord has a friend who also manages an apartment house. This friend told my landlord that a taxi driver pimp, protested about a Nisei boy living in his building. My landlord's friend stuck up for the Nisei boy and he said that if the Army was willing to have him, he was good enough for his apartment. He was going to kick the taxi-driver out of his building. He gave the Nisei boy a week's free rent before the fellow went away into the Army. Before I moved into this building my landlord did not know anything about the Nisei and he was the one who told his friend about it so there was one example of how it turned out well there was not too much Nisei congestion here."<sup>4</sup>

Chizu realized that the housing situation was difficult, but she believed that part of the fault was due to excessive

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2. Case History, p. 111.

3. Case History, p. 111.

4. Case History, p. 112.



"choosiness" by those who were not in a position to be so. However, she concluded that discrimination was the chief obstacle in the way of satisfactory housing adjustments.

".....There is an older Nisei fellow I know who has a wife and child and he had a very hard time in getting a decent apartment. Part of the fault was his own because he was expecting to find a home equal to the one he had in California, and the Nisei can't afford to be that choosy about housing out here because the standards are much lower. I've heard of discrimination cases too. One of my Nisei friends came out here from camp and stayed at the Brethren's hostel. She started to look for a place of her own but several doors were slammed in her face. She went to the WRA out of desperation and she was sent to some very dumpy places. She had such a hard time that she finally went to stay at a place owned by a Nihonjin. This girl has a friend who phoned her one night right after the news about the Illinois Central Railroad difficulty and this friend told her that they were being kicked out of the apartment on account of that news. The landlord read that the Japanese workers were invading the city and she got worried so she decided to get rid of all her Nisei tenants. The girl didn't even protest but she moved out quietly.

"I feel that many of the Nisei face discrimination in housing because they don't know how to go about picking an apartment. They barge into any district in a headlong way and when they are turned down they always call it discrimination. I feel that there are certain areas in Chicago which are not advisable to seek housing in because of the existing tension there. For example, it wouldn't be advisable for Nisei to try to find an apartment just outside the Negro areas because the Caucasian owners are very touchy about a colored invasion into their own blocks and they would be more likely to turn a Nisei down. There are also many areas which are occupied by an upper middle class income group and the Nisei would not be able to afford the rents charged in such places. Chicago is a very big city so that there are still many neighborhoods untouched by Nisei and they would have a chance to move in. The trouble is that the Nisei tend to concentrate into a few districts, especially the Jewish and German ones. I have a feeling that they could spread out into other neighborhoods which are predominantly occupied by other nationality groups. The whole westside is untouched by Nisei yet. I suppose the Nisei like to live near the Loop and that is why they are beginning to



congregate in several sections in the North and South sides."5

In June, 1945, Chizu was still living in the same apartment building.

(needs follow-up)



HOUSING

Kisako had no place to stay when she arrived in Chicago with her girl friend in March, 1944, but she refused to register in the Newberry Hotel on North Clark St. as

".....I thought the building was a dump because it was so dirty. The bathroom was just filthy. I knew that I couldn't stay in a place like that."<sup>1</sup>

The Brethren's hostel took her in and Kisako and three of her friends immediately began apartment hunting.

".....We had a terrible time finding a place for us four girls. We went all over to look at the different places advertised in the newspapers and we asked the people at the hostel to help us too. All of the places that the WRA sent us to were slum places and not fit to live in. We hunted for over a week and we finally did find a place. We were discriminated in a lot of places because I knew they didn't want any Japanese living there. Finally, through the hostel we found an apartment which we took. We rented three rooms upstairs in a private home. We were to pay \$12 a week for the four of us. The rooms were very dirty and we did not have enough conveniences. We had to scrub the whole place up in order to make it clean. On top of that we had to do our own linen. The landlady was awfully kind to us though.

"I didn't know what was the matter with the other three Nisei girls, but they were very scornful of the old landlady. She used to weep for us because we were so alone, but the other girls didn't appreciate that and they would laugh. After a week we moved out as we found a better place where we could have more privacy. The girls' brother found us an apartment at 2835 N. Clark St. This place was much cleaner and we only paid \$11 a week rent. We had a refrigerator and clean linen service provided. There were 3 rooms which were fairly comfortable. The building was owned by a Japanese and over half of the tenants were people from the camps."<sup>2</sup>

Kisao, in describing her relationship with her three room-

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1. Case History, p. 62.

2. Case History, pp. 62-63.



mates, soon discovered that she could not get along with them because of a lack of common interests and other factors.

"Those three girls were always going out on dates and that was all they could talk about. It got on my nerves. One of the girls was quarrelsome and it was irritating to me. I suppose that they didn't like it either. It got so that I finally didn't care to be around them anymore. They gossiped too much and I thought that they were too narrow-minded. They never talked about anything but boys and the dates they had gone out on. I was disgusted with all of this because there was too much of it. I never knew these girls before I left camp anyway. We had come out together just for the convenience of it and we had never intended to live all together. Living with these girls really brought out to me the fact that the average Nisei was restricted in thinking about anything besides social affairs. I did get to find out how the average Nisei live. All of them were better off than I was, but they came from homes where the parents were strict so that they spoke Japanese around the apartment and I didn't care for that.

"These girls were also more extravagant about spending money than I was. I didn't like to spend so much money because I was poor before and I wasn't used to splurging. I kept all of the money I could save. We lived on a budget of \$5 a week each for food but the other girls were always being extravagant and buying unnecessary things. They also had boys coming in for dinner all the time so that ran the bill up. I didn't care to pay for the expenses of this when I didn't particularly want them around."<sup>3</sup>

After two months, Kisako decided to move into a single room in another building where a Nisei girl friend was living. She found that the new environment was much more satisfactory, and within a short time she had established excellent relationship with the landlord and tenants. Kisako felt that it would jeopardize her housing situation if other resettlers moved into the building so that she was very much opposed to the idea.

"I like this place very much as the people here are friendly and they seem to be better educated than

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3. Case History, pp. 62-63.



most of the people I've met in Chicago. There is only one other Nisei besides Chizu and I in the house and that is her sister. I don't want any more Nisei to move in here as that would be awful. But it would change the atmosphere and maybe the other people won't be as neighborly as before. I intend to stay in this place as long as I can and I don't want anything to spoil it for me. It wouldn't be so good for the other Nisei who move in here either. It would be better for them to be scattered out as thinly as possible and then there wouldn't be so much gossiping among the Nisei.

"I get along with the landlord very well even if he is always drunk. Chizu said that the manager of this building is a 'Fairy' but he never bothers me. I liked all the people in the building."4

In June, 1945, Kisako was still living in the same place and she had no current housing complaints to make.



## HOUSING

Amy, Mrs. N. and her daughter had reservations in a Japanese owned hotel on North Clark Street when they arrived in Chicago at the end of May, 1944.

"I was expecting it to be a nice place. We were so disappointed when we found the hotel such a dirty place. We didn't even feel like unpacking because we planned to move to a better place as soon as we could."<sup>1</sup>

Amy believed that her housing adjustments were made much more difficult because of discrimination.

"We began to look at advertisements in the newspapers and we felt that we should get a good place if three of us were working as the rent would be divided three ways. We phoned a few places and they told us to come out. When we got there, they suddenly changed their attitude when they saw we were Nihonjin and said that the place was already taken. Some of the other places we looked at were not acceptable as the place was too dirty and we couldn't think of living in such a dirty place. We discovered that rents were high ~~in~~ so we worried a little. There was one apartment open way up on the west side and it was a nice place but the landlady changed her mind at the last minute and cancelled the opening for us. I'm sure that was prejudice because she mentioned that some of the other people didn't like the idea of any Japanese moving in. We became very discouraged so that Mrs. Nakase asked her friends to help us find an apartment.

"One of them told us that there was a building up on Belden St. which had quite a few Nihonjin and she said there was an opening there. We came up immediately and we found this apartment and a small sleeping room upstairs so that we took it. It wasn't what we had planned upon but we couldn't be choosy anymore. We felt that it would be impossible to find a 3-room apartment so we moved into this place on June 7. We are still looking for a larger place. We have been here for five months now and haven't been able to find quarters because Mrs. Nakase has to cook on that little stove ~~right~~ in the same room. I guess we are a little particular but I'm sure we should be able to find something better."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Case History, pp. 47-48.

2. Case History, pp. 48-49.



Adjustments were very difficult in the cramped quarters and Amy soon began to resent Mrs. Nakase's domination of her life, but she felt that she had to resign herself to the situation because she had promised her parents that she would "obey" Mrs. Nakase as a condition for her leaving camp.

"I'm not satisfied at all with this place even though I have my small room upstairs. Mrs. Nakase would like to get a flat and buy furniture for it so she would have a decent place to entertain friends. It is embarrassing for her to bring friends into a room 10 feet by 12 feet where the bed, dining room, refrigerator, stove and everything else is located. If we were able to get a flat, I still would get my own room because Mrs. Nakase promised me that. I'd have to move with them wherever we went because Mrs. Nakase says my mother asked her to be my guardian and I can't very well go my own way now after promising that I would follow Mrs. Nakase's advice. I don't think I need such close supervision at my age (23) but I guess I will go with them because Mrs. Nakase doesn't try to be too bossy with me and I get along fine with her.

"Even though my room upstairs is very small, I could bring in another girl to sleep with me in the double-bed but obasan (Mrs. Nakase) might feel hurt if I took in a girl friend to live with me and cook ourselves. She might think I want to get rid of her and I don't want her to think that. I think it might be better if we moved into a flat because there would be much more freedom. I haven't had any conflict with Mrs. Nakase yet because she is getting more liberal and she isn't trying to keep a close watch over me as that. She doesn't tell me too many things to do and her advice is usually good. Fumi minds everything her mother says and she wouldn't think of doing anything on her own. Fumi is the same age as I am. I'm glad things aren't that strict for me even though I know I don't have the freedom that a lot of Nisei out here have. Maybe it's better for me because there are a lot of bad influences around here and I wouldn't want to do anything that would disgrace my parents. Mrs. Nakase is nice even though she has a lot of Japanese ideas. I am helping Fumi to get her to change some of them because we are not living like we were in California and the Nisei have more to say.

"We talked quite a bit of Japanese here because Mrs. Nakase doesn't understand English very well. When our Nisei friends come to visit we speak English. We



try to explain to Mrs. Nakase right away so she doesn't feel out of place. She does all of the cooking and management of the household so we eat a great deal of Japanese food. Mrs. Nakase got a job in a factory sewing through a friend of hers and she seems to like it well out here because the Issei she works with speak in Japanese and nobody tells them not to. Fumi like it here better than camp and I am perfectly satisfied because it is different from camp life and I am not bored like I was back there for so long. There are so many interesting things to do out here.

"The thing that I dislike most about this apartment is cooking and sleeping in the same room. We don't have enough chairs for visitors to come sit in. It doesn't look so good. Mrs. Nakase pays \$8 for her room and mine costs \$5 a week. We don't have a private bath either. Back in San Francisco I had a home six times bigger than our present apartment. I wish that we had it out here now with all this housing shortage. I feel a little cramped here like I did in camp. All my friends seemed to be located in small one-room quarters too and they are all looking for bigger places but I guess it's hard because of the discrimination. The Nihonjin can't find housing so easy out here and that's the biggest problem for all of us. I wish the government would open a housing project for just resettlers.

"The district around here is a nice quiet residential one and it's not dirty so it's a good point about living here. Our partment is quite convenient to transportation facilities so we do not lose much time going and coming from work. In this apartment house the majority of the tenants are Japanese. There are two Nihonjin couples and a lot of boys and girls here. There are only six hakujin living in this building and all the rest are Nihonjin (15 in all). I don't know any of the other Nisei living here very well although I say hello to them occasionally. They don't seem to be too friendly toward each other anyway so we just leave them alone.

"I do know the three Nisei girls who are living upstairs and I go over and talk to them some evenings. I don't mind living around other Nihonjin as they don't bother me very much. The landlady here is very nice and she likes to have Nisei. For a while she preferred to take all Nihonjin into the apartments here because they kept the place so clean. But when so many of them moved in here she decided to take no more as her remaining Caucasian tenants don't seem to like it too much. There seems to be quite a few Nihonjin living in this district but I don't see them as I am busy at work. We would like to find a flat in this neighborhood but they don't rent the good ones to Nihonjin. I



wish that they wouldn't discriminate against us so much because we are willing to pay the rent. All my friends feel that they are paying more than the place deserves."<sup>3</sup>

In June, 1945, Mrs. Nakase returned to California so Amy decided to stay on in her apartment and plan for family resettlement.

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3. Case History, pp. 49-52.



HOUSING

W When Gordon arrived in Chicago in the spring of 1943, he did not have a housing problem since a place had been reserved for him in a Co-op house which was religiously oriented around Mr. Temple. The history of this group is related in Gordon's own words:

".....There were about 10 fellows in his group. Mr. Temple managed to lease a large house for a year down on the South Side on Jeffery St. It was supposed to be an experiment in integrating a small group into the community life about us and the location had been selected with great care. We lived cooperatively under Mr. Temple's leadership but after his death, we lived in a very uncooperative manner. Tom Temple had planned his whole integration program in a queer way and he was a very impractical fellow because he honestly believed that the process of integration could be accomplished overnight if the fellows became religious. I didn't think that this was necessary at all. Tom had not selected his Nisei fellows for the great experiment with cars so that he defeated his own purpose from the beginning. Some of those Nisei fellows were rather uncouth.

"I agreed with Tom Temple that the house we selected in a section of the city which was not populated by other Japanese was a good starting point. The real experiment was to be carried out here. We got into a 3-story house which was a very nice place. A couple of other Nisei fellows came out from camp so that there were 12 to 15 fellows with us altogether. After we lived there for a week Mr. Temple died suddenly so that we didn't know what to do. The opportunity for a group integration was past when Tom's leadership disappeared since there was not a strong enough personality left among us to take over and give direction to the group integration program.

"Each of us had put some money into the leasing of the house so that we didn't know if we should carry on or not. We decided that we should remain for the year since it was a nice location. We all contributed to paying the rent and buying furniture for the place. From then on, the entire group forgot about the integration program except as something to talk about idly in their spare time. One of the fellows was hired as a cook for the rest of us. Since it had been Tom's plan to create a sort of



family atmosphere for our group. We decided to keep on going for a year in an economical manner so that we could pay off our debts to the members of the house with the residue of the money left from our monthly expenses.

"Gradually the life in this house on Jeffery St. broke down into various segments. Some of the boys were rather backward and they didn't mix too well. I would say there were two general groups in this house. One group was interested in bettering their selves by education while the other group was more interested in saving money. There was no particular friction between the two groups since the issue of integration had died along with Mr. Temple as far as they were concerned and they didn't give it any thought. The whole experiment failed because there was nobody there in authority.

"In order to have a smooth functioning house, we attempted to set up a sort of self-government system but some of the members objected to this. Tom had planned that we should gradually enter into some of the community affairs but no one person did this after his death. The group didn't feel equal to the effort and there was nobody to push them along. They didn't feel up to the effort because of fear too.

"I was still determined to carry on by myself even though the others did not agree with my viewpoints. I didn't see why they should make such an issue of it when I felt that integration could be accomplished by a natural process. I just wandered into a church one Sunday and I got into the choir there after a short time. I was accepted right from the beginning. I tried to bully some of the other Nisei fellows in the house to get into some of the community affairs, but there was a strong resistance against it. I wanted each fellow to go to a different community affair and work into it if they found a common interest. The Nisei fellows hesitated about venturing out by themselves and they only wanted to do things in a group. These fellows would use all of their spare time to go off across the city to visit old Nisei friends on their days off or else they slept. One fellow went out to play golf. They just weren't interested in extending themselves at all for the purpose of integration since they felt no responsibility to the other Nisei and they did not believe in the program as intensely as I did.

"In spite of this failure, I think that our experiment did have some measure of success since a little educational work did go on. Some nice friendships were developed among those of similar minds.



We used to sit around evenings and have all sorts of sessions on politics and social problems along with debates on the Nisei problem. We had some very good conversation while we sat around the kitchen after dinner and we didn't degenerate entirely into talking about who fornicated with what girl. It wasn't an extremely educated group but the fellows weren't interested in discussing some subjects other than sex, their jobs, their salaries, and other Nisei.

"I suppose the desire to integrate was not too intense among them to begin with and that's why it soon became a dead issue as far as they were concerned. They never did understand the importance of preventing a future segregation of Nisei into a Japanese community because they were almost entirely unaware of the harmful aspects of it back on the coast. I think that they were really sincere in wanting to be accepted as an American when they first came out here but they didn't comprehend that this could only be accomplished by integrating themselves in a natural way as the effort was too great for them. It was much easier for them to carry on with their old Nisei friends that they knew from before. I was about the only one who talked to the fellows on integration and I kept it up all the time. Every single one of them agreed that such a program was okay and even necessary, but they just felt that I should be the one who should go out and break the ice. They said they would send their children to follow me in my efforts as they were too busy in their own affairs. They all respected me for my beliefs on this matter but they couldn't see it for themselves. They openly admitted that they were not interested in furthering the general cause of other Nisei because that wasn't important to them. They were more interested in wasting their time chasing Nisei girls. I tried to point out that they could chase Caucasian girls just as well if they became accepted into the community. I said that they did not have to eliminate Nisei girls entirely because my idea of integration did not mean that they should drop all of their close Nisei friends. I felt that they should extend their Caucasian contacts and at the same time maintain their normal Nisei contacts if they felt the necessity for it. I thought that they would be accomplishing a purpose for themselves and for the group by taking such a plan and really working on it, but they were too reluctant to do anything about it since they were only looking for a good time.

"I advocated that there was nothing wrong with inter-marriage with these fellows and they all agreed



with me. I even told them I could get dates with some of the Caucasian girls at the church for them but they would all go off for a Nisei date on Saturday night. My harangues fell on disinterested ears. They still believed that integration was a good theory but they lacked self-confidence and they think it was worth the trouble. They were afraid to take the initiative. My talks with them did a certain amount of good as few of the fellows really tried to get themselves well adjusted to Chicago life as they saw the importance for it. These were the ones who were open to it in the first place. The very fact that 15 of us fellows lived there in the one house made integration hard. They always brought up the point that the 15 of us got along fairly well so there was no reason for avoiding contact with other Nisei since they were Americanized too. They couldn't see my point that the important thing was to get more Caucasians to see how Americanized we were and we only had a limited time to do it in.

"One of the bad attitudes that some of the fellows had was racial prejudice against other groups. I insisted that they shouldn't express these racial prejudices to me. Most of them were fairly decent about it but there was one fellow who expressed anti-semitic idea quite openly and he still clings to it as far as I know. He worked ~~a~~ for a Jewish concern out here and he felt that he was getting exploited on account of his race so he took it out on all the Jews. He also claimed that his father was cheated by Jewish merchants in Los Angeles. I tried to explain to him that these exceptional cases should not be used against the whole group no more than a few Nisei should be used to judge all Nisei. The fellow could see my point when it came to discussing prejudices against Nisei, but he just couldn't get the point when it concerned the Jews. He was inclined to be indifferent toward the Negroes although he considered himself on a higher scale than them. It was fortunate that most of the fellows in the house did not have such deep prejudices.

"The fellows in our house ranged in age from 18 to 32 and they were all single. The majority of them were between 22 and 25. They all gave lip service to integration but practically everyone of them fell by the wayside after they got into their Nisei groups out here. Around the beginning of 1944 the Army made an announcement that the Nisei would be subject to the draft so that it complicated our housing problem. We went into a huddle to discuss what we should do. We decided that we couldn't keep up the house since all of us would be taken into the Army eventually



therefore we decided to dissolve our cooperative house and sell out our furnishings to get our money back. By that time several individual personality clashes were starting and it was better that we break up. As soon as the first person got drafted, we sold all of the furnishings and each of us went our own way.

"When we first went into that house, Mr. Temple had signed a lease for a year. After he died the lease was automatically cancelled. Some of the neighbors had objected about us living in the block and the real estate company gave us subtle hints to get out. We ignored them for some months and we were able to stay there for a year. We knew they couldn't evict us during that time. When it came around for the year's lease to expire, the real estate representative came around and he wanted us to continue our lease for another year since we had paid our rent promptly and we had kept the place up. We had made the yard very clean by putting in a victory garden. We had also established ourselves by some degree by making friends with some of the neighbors. The fellows in the house did not take full advantage of developing possible Caucasian friendships because they confined themselves to the house too much. All the people knew that we lived there and they didn't object to us so much after we were there for a year. This was a moral victory for us so we tried to sell the furnishings to another Nihonjin group so that they could continue the cooperative house, but this plan didn't materialize. The fellows are all spread out over Chicago now but most of them are in the Army, at least 10 of them. Two of the fellows are married and they have their own homes. In a way, it was a pretty good experience to live there and I think all of us gained by doing so because we weren't quite a Nisei conscious group as we were on the coast."1

Gordon and one of his friends then moved to Kenwood Ave. into a private home. Gordon was not entirely satisfied with the new place although he got along exceptionally well with the landlord. In April, 1945, he moved into the Hyde Park Co-op. (See Yuki (CH-20) for full description of it.)

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1. Case History, pp. 84-90.



## HOUSING

A friend of Hashiba's met him at the station when he arrived in May of 1944 and put him up in his room which he rented from a Caucasian family. After three months, Hashiba decided to find other housing because it was proving too expensive for him to eat out.

"I think that the boochies will all be able to settle down successfully as they have been doing fairly well so far. They should be able to keep on doing that all the way. There is a lot of discrimination in job pay, but the Nisei workers will be able to get by. A lot of times they don't give the boochies the same pay as the white man but we got to expect that until we get well known."<sup>1</sup>

The group eventually split up after the church, which bought the house, gave the boys eviction notices. Hashiba moved in with Ando (CH-31) when most of his group were drafted into the Army. Hashiba got along well with his new room mate, but he resented the landlord greatly.

".....He's a dirty guy though because he don't give us hot water and Ando caught him holding back on the mail once. That landlord never gives us our phone messages and sometimes when a boochie calls here he cuts them right off by saying it's too late. He's a dirty bastard. He tried to kick me out of here once because I gave him hell about the telephone messages. Blackie was the guy who got in the most fights with him. The landlord called the cops here one night and he said we were having a gambling house in Ando's apartment. We never worry about that bastard anymore as he can't kick us out as Ando has something on him.

"We never have any trouble with any of the neighbors around here and they don't give us any dirty looks. We got up to the drug store on the corner all the time and they don't kick us out or nothing. People around here mind their own business and they don't seem to be prejudiced against us at

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1. Case History, p. 60.



all, but I don't know what they are thinking. The landlord of ours has filled the house with boochies now and he can't complain because we pay our rent regularly and I think that he is charging over ceiling prices for some of the apartments.

"There are some girls living upstairs, but they don't have much to do with us. I guess they think that we are too rowdy. Some of them~~x~~ are beginning to get a little more sociable though. They have their own group and we don't know any of the guys who come to see them. They have to talk to me sociable like because I'm the one who answers the telephone out in the hall most and I won't give them the messages if they get too snotty. People in this house just leave each other alone and I guess it's better that way."<sup>2</sup>

Hashiba was very discouraged with the general housing situation in Chicago, but he felt unable to do anything about it because of discrimination.

".....It's too filthy here. I don't call our apartment much of a home but we can't get a better place. It doesn't feel like a real home when we have to sleep and eat right in the same room. We do all the laundry in the wash basin too. Another thing is that we never get any sunlight in the room and it's too dark. All those damn cocoroaches run around the room all the time. They have bedbugs in the room upstairs but we haven't found any in our room yet. One thing I don't like about this city is that there's too damn much garbage flowing around in the streets...

"It's impossible for a boochie to get a decent place out here. A lot of apartments discriminate against us and they won't let us in. They are nice about it and they just tell us that there isn't any vacancy. Everybody has a tough time to find a place to sleep. When we do find one, it's expensive as hell. I don't think that this apartment is worth all the money we pay for it."<sup>3</sup>

Hashiba believed that his pre-evacuation home was cheaper and cleaner than his present apartment. His solution to housing

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2. Case History, p. 41.

3. Case History, pp. 42.



problem was for all the resettlers to move into one district as "they would keep it a lot cleaner because they don't like dirty places." (p. 42) Hashiba had vague plans to go to a smaller city as he did not care to live in Chicago permanently.



# HOUSING

A part of Shimako's general dissatisfaction was her poor housing adjustments. Some friends reserved an apartment for Shimako and her brother when they first arrived in Chicago in May, 1944, but she resented the poor housing from the start, projecting her dissatisfaction to the general conditions facing resettlers.

"I've lived in this building ever since (May) and I know it's no use to go out and look for a better place because we can't get it. I don't think my housing condition has improved a single bit from camp. All that talk of going back to a normal life is a lot of baloney. We had a better time in camp and I don't think we deserve to go through all this. We should get more of a helping hand but what do we get? A kick in the face and we are called Japs. Why should I feel pleasant about the future when I know that these things will increase."<sup>1</sup>

Shimako's complaints about her housing maladjustments were not without some basis.

"All of us living in this building think that the apartment rents we are charged are much too high. My room-mates and I pay \$48 a month for a crummy 3-room apartment and we can hardly move around in it. The landlady is slow about furnishing us enough things to make our apartment half way comfortable. She doesn't even provide clean linens for us. It's a bed bug infested place and I hate it, but what can we do about it when there is no other place for us to move to? Any place we go, we'd have to move in with the bed bugs because that's all the housing which are offered to us and we have to pay much more for it than other people. The landlord doesn't like it when we grumble and he just thinks one way. He complains that his expenses are high too and he isn't willing to improve the place for us even though we know we pay above OPA prices. He makes off that he doesn't understand us and we can't do anything drastic about it because we have no other choice. We are trapped just like rats. I don't know how much

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1. Case History, p. 21.



longer we'll be staying here but I haven't made any plans for moving. I don't feel like moving after getting into this place because it will be too hard to find another place. And if we do move, the place would probably be just as bad as this. We would just have to take it."<sup>2</sup>

Shimako believed that she was able to tolerate the cramped quarters because she and her two room-mates were both out working all day and it was a matter of financial necessity to put up with these unsatisfactory conditions.

".....If it weren't for that, we would drive each other crazy. We have to live together in order to manage on our small salaries. The apartments out here come at a high price so we can't be too choosy even though we would like more privacy. God, it's much worse than camp here because I think we had more space in camp. I don't even sit in the upholstered furniture here because it is all filled with bedbugs. Once in a while the landlord comes around to spray but it doesn't do much good. It's terrible during the hot weather and I don't think I'll be able to stand it next summer if I am still here."<sup>3</sup>

Shimako commented that there was no escape from this sub-standard housing condition.

"Some of the Nisei think that they will be better off if they go to another city so they move around. I think they are only fooling themselves. We would have the same problems in any city that we went to so we might as well conform to the ways of living which is forced upon us. All that talk about the high standards of living in this country is not for us. I don't feel that I am a real part of Chicago, but I wouldn't feel settled in any place that I went to. Time is the only thing that will tell whether I will remain here permanently or not.

"I certainly wouldn't tell others to come out of camp and resettle out here. That would be punishing them too much....."<sup>4</sup>

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2. Case History, pp. 29-30.

3. Case History, p. 30.

4. Case History, pp. 30-31.



The majority of the tenants in the building were resettlers and Shimako was able to make fairly good adjustments toward them. Her relationship with them was described in this way:

"All of the Nihonjin living in this apartment house are youngsters. They tell us some fine talk about spreading out and getting integrated but we have gathered here because of the housing shortage and the landlords are not too willing to take us because they have dirty, suspicious minds. Most of the Nisei in this house are from our home town back in California. We were all thrown together in the same block in Poston so that's how we got to know each other pretty well. We kept up the contacts afterwards. There are nine or 10 living here who came from our block in Poston. I don't know how many other Nisei are living here. There is a whole houseful of them living here but I don't know them. Why should I go around and find out about them? There's a family on this floor who is from our camp too. The man was a good friend of my brother's and that's how he happened to come here. Most of the young ones are working in different plants but they seem to be contented but I know they are not. They get so restless and they don't know what to do sometimes. We just get together and grip like all the rest of the Nisei do. Some of the fellows work at night and sleep all day so I never see them.

"I don't think that the fellows in this house run around too much as they have their own friends here and they behave themselves pretty well. They are not as wild as some of the Nisei I've heard of. But they are not angels either. There used to be quite a few more fellows living here but they all went back to camp when they started to get called for the draft."5

A year later, in May, 1945, a close friend of Shimako's had the following comment to make about her housing and personal ~~and~~ maladjustments.

"That Shibata girl is having a lot of trouble now and she wants me to come over and talk to her one of these days just to release all of her feelings. She certainly is a disorganized girl. She has been having a lot of conflicts with her brother (foster?) who is 29 years old. He is a great big guy and they have been



having a lot of fights. They were living together in the same apartment but he threw her out after one argument. Five days later Shimako went to apologize to her brother and he just slammed the door in her face. They are living together again now and Shimako wants to give her advice on how she can get along together with her brother. That's hard to do because she doesn't realize that it is her personality. Her brother is also high-strung and I don't know how they can ever get along. The other day her brother brought a soldier home for dinner. He cooked suki-yaki for this soldier but Shimako was having her menstruation and her gall bladder was troubling her so that she got very nasty and insulted her brother's cooking and the soldier all evening. Her brother threw her out of the apartment again. Both of them tend to be neurotic and they clash violently in opinion. Shimako wants to help her brother out because he is ambitious, but they just don't get along."<sup>6</sup>

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6. C.K. Diary, p. 7649.



HOUSING

When Shigeo left the center, temporary housing arrangements had already been made for him at the Friends' Hostel. But, upon his arrival, Shigeo gave up his hostel reservation to a stranded Nisei family, and he went to the YMCA. Shigeo remained at the "Y" while waiting for his family to resettle. He was anxious that this be accomplished as soon as possible, but he was having difficulty finding adequate housing for a family group. "I want a home to come back to at night and not just a room." (p. 85)

"For a while I even thought of buying a home out here, perhaps in one of the suburbs in Chicago. But this is a little too expensive. I don't know how long I'll be in Chicago. On that basis, it is too temporary a thing to sink a lot of money into a house. I will have to have an initial outlay of \$2500. However, I don't have that much money so it would be out. But I will have to consider something like this if I can't find a place (apartment). There must be vacant apartments some place.

"The main reason that I have been having so much trouble in locating an apartment is that I work so that my time is limited. The best thing to do is for my sister to come out here ahead. I could support her during the time she looks for an apartment and she could stay at the YMCA. I've thought of this a lot but dismissed it because I would hate to have my folks come out here all alone. It is better if my sister is along with them to sort of manage affairs."1

Shigeo was very restless living alone and this was the source of his greatest dissatisfaction.

".....Most kids get a big kick out of 'batching' because this is the first time that they have ever been away from their parents. But I have had my share of it and I am fed up. Now that I don't have a home, a lawn to sit on and gab with your friends, a home cooked meal to go back to, and all those familiar sounds about the house, I do get lonesome.

"Once in a while I have a dream and I hear a rust-



ling sound and it sounds like my mother when she went down the stairs to make breakfast. I wake up with a start and it is only some noise in the YMCA corridor and nobody cares what happens to you. I like to remember how the gang would come around and we go to the corner drugstore or else lay around the house. It is all of these little things about a home life that makes it worthwhile.....

"This business of getting up in the morning, going to eat by yourself, going to work, and then coming back to my room in the evening is not very conducive to a happy life. I would most certainly like to do it all the time. Right now I am getting fed up with it. I would appreciate having my family around now. One thing this war has done is that it has broken up the Japanese family all up to hell. Home and family life is something I miss a lot now. It's not that I am lonely and I can't find anything to do because I do have my other interests. I have enough friends I can go to see and I could get plenty of entertainment, but it is nothing like having a home. It is not that I am a young boy who has not been able to break away from his mother's apron strings either as I have been around a lot. It is something intangible and it adds to one's life to have this family atmosphere. I think that this is the thing that causes most of the restlessness among the Nisei out here and so they try to get satisfied by running around a lot, but it doesn't help out too much.

"I'd rather live in a residential district and become an integral part of the community life. You never get to know anybody all jammed up like this. The sooner I get my parents out here, the sooner I can feel more at ease. I might as well make my indefinite stay in Chicago as pleasant as possible. I could not possibly do that living all alone in a room like this."2



HOUSING

Harry received temporary housing at the Brethren's Hostel when he first arrived in Chicago. After he found a job, he began to search for a place to live. Harry overheard the director of the hostel telling some other Nisei about a vacancy. "I beat the fellows out here and I got the room." (p. 42) It was a sleeping room in a private home.

".....I have lived here ever since. I live with a private family out here on the south side and it has very convenient facilities for transportation. I pay \$4 a week rent. The reason that the room is open is that their son is in the Army and there was a vacancy. My room is very comfortable and I like the people very much. They are of German extraction and I get along very well with them because they just accept me for what I am. I am treated like one of the family. I eat out and it costs me only about \$40 a month."<sup>1</sup>

Harry did not have any complaints about housing although he believed that he eventually would have to look for a more permanent apartment, but he was satisfied to remain in his present place as long as possible.

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1. Case History, p. 42.



HOUSING

Hisao arrived from Denver expecting to remain in Chicago only temporarily. His friend, who had a small apartment on the north side, invited him to room with him, and as Hisao's stay in Chicago lengthened, he continued to live with his friend. The apartment consisted of one sleeping room and a kitchenette. The small wash basin also served as a kitchen sink. Despite the definitely sub-standard quality of the apartment, he contrasted it favorably with his pre-evacuation home.

"The building has steam heat and I did not have this even in my home in Reedley. I think that my room physically is better than our home back in California even though this place is sub-standard. The only thing is that I tend to get a cooped-up feeling here so that coming home is not a particular attraction."<sup>1</sup>

Hisao was satisfied to remain there because of the cheapness of the rent, and the good relations with the landlady.

"I am fairly well satisfied with my present living condition. My room-mate and I share this room and it is fairly adequate for our purposes. We cook here and we only have to pay \$2.50 apiece a week for rent. We get gas, light and linen for this. We can also have maid service if we wanted it. The owner of this building was caught with his pants down when the OPA regulations came in so that he cannot raise the rent. The landlady is very nice to us. My room-mate and another friend were the first Nisei to come to this place. At first the landlady was skeptical about the Nisei. She laid down strict rules about not having any girls and that she would not tolerate any rowdyism. My room-mate made a very good impression so that she took a liking for him. Shortly afterwards he reserved a place for me. His friend moved out so that I became his partner in this room. After that the landlady got to like the Nisei more and more. She let us get two other Nisei girls into one of the rooms downstairs. They brought in some of their

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1. Case History, p. 159.



friends and these friends brought in a few of their friends. Now there are 15 Nisei in this house out of the 30 roomers. The landlady still likes the Nisei quite a bit. During Christmas we all chipped in and gave her a gift and also I gave her a bonus for the rent. My room-mate and I give her extra food stamps whenever we have them. In return she cooked and nursed me when I had the flu for about a week. She came to visit me three times a day to see that I was comfortable."2

Hisao was a little disturbed about the increase of resettlers in the building and neighborhood because of possible hostility from the Caucasian tenants. In fact, such hostility had already been displayed, and he felt that the Nisei tenants were partly to blame because of their "cliquishness."

"The attitude of the Caucasian borders in this building is not too favorable. They are rather aloof and some of them are distinctly hostile. I overheard one saying something about 'those damn Japs here; they should be sent back to Japan.' I feel that we should do more to counteract this sort of feeling. That is why I offered to carry the bags for the women when they come upstairs. After I did this a couple of times one woman did break down and now she is approachable. A few of the other boarders are very friendly to the Nisei but they are the minority.

"The trouble is that most of the other Nisei in this building don't think that it is worth their while to take any pains to win the Caucasians in this building over. They just ignore them. I only know about five of the Nisei in this building personally. They don't mix here at all even among themselves. They have their own groups and they stick to them. I would say that there are three primary Nisei groups in this house. There is one group that draws in most of the Nisei here now and they are always asking about vacancies. The turnover is fairly rapid because the fellows change jobs quite a bit and they move nearer to their jobs."3

Gradually, Hisao's fears subsided, and although he continued

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2. Case History, p. 158.

3. Case History, p. 159.



to believe that the resettlers would make better housing adjustments if they scattered out over the city and penetrated new locations, he recognized that resettler segregation was in part due to residential discrimination and the housing shortage.

"At first it bothered me quite a bit when so many Nisei started to move in. I thought that it would jeopardize my own position here and that housing was too hard to find. Another reason was that I thought it was not nice for too many Nisei to be living in this area. At the present time I have concluded that they have just as much right here as I do and there is not a specific focal point in this district where all the Nisei gather although there are several houses where they are beginning to congregate. Housing is rather difficult to find and they can't be too choosy about it.

"One thing I object to very much in this building is the bunch of fellows and girls who live downstairs. They tend to be too rowdy and they make all sorts of noise and they talk loud late at night. They have a continuous stream of other Nisei coming over and they are always running up and down the stairs. They go in and out in large bunches and naturally it doesn't create a good impression on the others living in this building. I think it reflects the Nisei as a whole when such a group as this has bad manners. It also disturbs some of the Caucasian families living here."<sup>4</sup>

Hisao left this apartment after 15 months when he moved to Urbana to enroll at the University of Illinois in September, 1944.

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4. Case History, pp. 159-160.



HOUSING

Barry came out of camp with an older friend, Sus (CH-45), who immediately found housing. "I moved in with Sus as he had an open bed." (p. 40)

"Just about this time Lester (CH-47) came to live with us.....~~xx~~ I had seen him once in a while back in camp but I never was friends with him until I brought him to our apartment. Another guy who was living with us went back to camp, and we needed another person to live with us in order to lower our rent cost."<sup>1</sup>

Barry ran into housing discrimination shortly after he and his room-mates arrived in Chicago.

"When we first came out here there were 10 boochies living in our apartment because a lot of them were on seasonal leave and we put them up. The other people in the house began to complain as they didn't like so many of us around. There were a couple of instances when they said their relatives were killed in the South Pacific so that they showed that they considered us as Japs. Once a lady got a phone call saying that her nephew had been killed and she went around yelling at us calling us Japs. I didn't say anything to her because I felt, what was the use. The landlord thought that it was best for us to move out. We looked all over and there were some dozens of places where we were turned down because we were boochies. Some of them came right out flatly and told us that but most of the landlords were more polite and they just told us that the place had just been rented out. We knew damn well they were lying to us because they didn't want us to live there. We were lucky to get the place that we have now and I don't think we will get booted out because we have something on the landlady."<sup>2</sup>

Because of his fears of again antagonizing the Caucasian neighbors, Barry felt that he would prefer not to have other resettlers moving into this district, but "I wouldn't hold it

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1. Case History, pp. 44-45.

2. Case History, p. 59.



against them if they did. I like to be around some boochies as I'm used to it. But it wouldn't be so good if too many of them moved in." (p. 60)

Although he felt that a "Jap town like we had before the war" would not develop in Chicago, he had mixed feelings about its desirability.

".....On top of that, all of those committees would get together and try to stop the boochies from getting together. I think that it would be good for the Nihonjin to get together as we have to stick with our kind since nobody else is going to fight for us that hard. It would be too lonesome for most of them to scatter out all over the country. Maybe it is best if we all scatter out for now. In this way, the hakujin would be made to get more used to the boochies being around and they will not believe everything they read in the papers against us. I don't read the papers very much myself so I don't know if there are many groups against us out here."3



HOUSING

When Lester came out from the center with a friend, he first went to his friend's brother's place on the south side on Drexel Boulevard.

"After living at 43rd and Drexel for a while, I decided to move. That house was full of boochies. There must have been at least 30 of them and there were only 15 hakujin living in the apartment building. I only knew Hank's brother and the six other boochies who worked at the same place. I never saw the rest of the boochies in that house as they worked in different places. It took us about three hours a day to go back and forth to work. I worked 10 hours a day so I only had time to sleep. We ate with Hank's brother and we paid him \$7 a week for the food. Rent was only \$3 each a week for us."1

Lester became acquainted with a Nisei at his place of work who suggested that Lester "come over to his apartment and eat and sleep once in a while." (p. 37) Since the latter apartment was closer to his place of work, and Lester's former room-mate left him to move in with friends on the north side, Lester asked to join his new friend, Barry, and his room-mate. The latter was agreeable, so Lester has been living with them since. Because Lester finds congenial gambling, horse-racing and sex interests with his new associates, he is satisfied with this latest housing arrangement.

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1. Case History, p. 37.



### HOUSING

When Tommy arrived in Chicago in October, 1944, his friends took him to the "Y" Hotel where he stayed a few days. In looking for a less expensive residence, the WRA referred him to a rooming house on the south side operated by a "Jew lady." Except for the first floor of the building which was used as an old folks home, the house was catering exclusively to resettlers, with seven girls and five boys on the second floor and 25 boys on the top floor. Five rooms on the top floor housed 25 single men; eight beds were placed in the living room thus permitting no place of leisure. The occupants of each floor shared the kitchen. Tommy formed a cooking arrangement with two male friends and a girl. There was no room service and the residents had to cooperate in keeping the house clean.

For these accommodations, the men paid \$5 a week, "but the girls have to pay \$7 as they don't know that we get it cheaper here." (p. 100) Most of the residents very shortly moved to more permanent locations, and the WRA stopped sending resettlers to this rooming house after numerous complaints about the high rent, but Tommy stayed on as he could not find another room in the area.

Among Tommy's numerous complaints about the housing, he emphasized the insufficient hot water and the lack of sunlight. But after getting a private room, he was satisfied to remain because "I can play my saxophone here and I wouldn't be able to practice in any other place." (p. 101) The presence of friends contributed to his satisfaction with the location.



".....The only trouble is that the landlady charges too much. I can't kick too much about that as it is too hard to find another place. There's always new guys moving in and out of this building as most of them use this place as a stop-over until they find an apartment of their own. I know most of the guys living here now except those who are on the nightshift. Most of the guys here work in different kinds of defense work and they don't have time to look for a place of their own. There's one guy going to school.

"I suppose there are about 25 boochie fellows and six girls living here now but the number is always changing. This place can take about 10 more boochies but I wouldn't want to see very many Issei around here. The only reason I stay here is that my Nisei friends are around and I don't mind them. I wouldn't want to see a lot of boochies move into this block too as there are enough of them living in this building. Usually the guys step out every night so I don't see them much."<sup>1</sup>

Tommy admitted, "this place is not like home," but he contrasted it favorably with center life since, "there's nobody around to get into my hair." (p. 102)

".....Usually my friends from the north side come over to visit me. We all have our own special groups and we just know each other casually around this building. As long as everybody minds his own business everything will be all right. That's one thing I hated about camp because everyone in the block used to snoop around in my private business. They just like to pass around bad rumors about everybody. The guys here better not try that stuff."<sup>2</sup>

Tommy decided in mid-December to move to the near North Side where he would be nearer the Japanese bars and gambling houses, a type of life that had strong attraction for him.

".....I owe about a month and a half rent to Mrs. Reynolds but I'm not going to pay it because she has charged me too much. I'm just going to

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1. Case History, p. 101.

2. Case History, p. 102.



pack my things and walk out. I don't care what she thinks. She is never able to check me around because I am working at night."3

Tommy's landlady was very angry about his not paying the rent; and she took steps to force payment but Tommy was determined to hold his ground because he thought he had paid enough in the four months he had lived in the rooming house.

".....I cut out on old lady Reynolds place and she is after me now. Nobody knows where I live now except you and a couple of my other friends. She tried to trace me but she couldn't. Then she phoned my father long distance collect in camp and she told him that I owed \$90 in back rent to her. That's a dirty lie. I just wrote my father and told him not to pay. Old lady Reynolds is trying to say that I owe her three months back rent and that is not true at all. It's only about a month and a half or two months at the most. I lost all of my receipts so what can I do about it? She is charging me \$1 a day back rent and she was only supposed to charge me \$5 a week until she went and raised the rent.....

"I'm sure that I owe only for two months at the most. I remember I stubbed my toe nail off on October 31 and I paid rent once after that. She is saying that I didn't pay since before that time. Even if I owed her for two months at her Jew rates, I would still owe her only \$63 month back rent at the most. She is trying to gyp me because I cut out on that place and didn't pay nothing. I don't think I did wrong because she was charging too much anyway and she got her money out of me when she raised the rent. The guys over there told me that old lady Reynolds is going to call the police and trace me down. Maybe I'll head back to camp because I'm not going to let that old bitch gyp me like that."4

Tommy finally compromised by asking his father to pay half of the back rent.

"If Reynolds raises a stink, I'll tell her that I will go to the OPA and report her for raising the rent illegally. But I am a little worried because

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3. C.K. Diary, p. 6615.

4. C.K. Diary, p. 6719.



she told some of the fellows at 5010 Drexel that she was going to take the thing to the court and I would be fined \$100 for fraud. She's got a hell of a nerve if she tries anything like that. She raised Ed Mura's rent up to \$10 a week just because he is in a room alone now. She's the damn dame who says that she wants to do so much for the Nisei too."<sup>5</sup>

Tommy's new apartment was no better than his first one.

The apartment house was located in the near north side and the occupants were primarily resettlers. By mid-February, 1945, Tommy had decided that it was not worthwhile to resettle in Chicago so he returned to the center to wait for his draft call.

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5. C.K. Diary, p. 6734.



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## Housing

(see also Davy, Watanabe, Kimoto, etc., on this housing situation)

Bob found his first housing in Chicago accidentally when a Nisei at the railroad station directed him up to the Wabash YMCA. The next day, he went to the WRA office and he was given a slip to inquire at 5010 Drexel. This building was an old reconverted mansion which eventually became a commercial resettler hostel, charging excessive rates. Bob was dissatisfied with the high rent immediately because "we thought that \$5 a week apiece was too much as we were not used to spending that much money in camp in a whole month for everything." (p.26) Bob describes the development of this commercial resettler hostel, his relationships with the landlady, and his satisfactions and dissatisfactions rather fully as follows:

"There were only 3 other Nisei living in this house when we first came in. My two friends and I made it six in all. A lot of Nisei started to come in later as the WRA sent more and more people until some guys squawked about the high rent here. Right now nobody new is moving into this place. I've lived here ever since arriving into Chicago as I couldn't find another apartment. I didn't know how to go about it so I just stayed on. I figured that this was the best place to live as I would be able to come home and have friends to talk to. It was more fun to live in a group and I didn't want to get a room of my own because I would get too lonesome. I did look for my own place once on the north side but it was too dirty.

"The landlord heard that a lot of Nisei were coming out to Chicago so she decided to rent out the top two floors to the Japanese. She ran a nursing home on the first floor and she couldn't get any patients on the upper floor. I liked this place so much that I didn't feel like moving out even if the rent was high. My two friends who came out with me are still here too, but they are waiting to get inducted into the Army pretty soon.

"The only thing that I don't like about this building is that the kitchen is too dirty. There are cockroaches run all over the place and the landlady doesn't do anything about it. There are about 20 fellows living on this floor (third



floor) and I know just about all of them. Some of them are much newer to Chicago than I am. Their friends tell them to come out from camp and come live here. I told a couple of my friends from camp to come here too when they mentioned about resettling in Chicago.

"Even if we have cockroaches in the kitchen, I think that this place is much better than my home back in California as we have a bathtub and flush toilets here. Back home we only had wooden tubs and out-houses. It is furnished much better here because we didn't have any big rugs back home. I like it because we are located pretty close to shows and I can go to the Loop easily. It's much easier for me to go shopping here than back home. If I come back to Chicago after the onion harvest, I will come live here again. I'll probably get called for the Army before then though.

"I get along with the landlady okay and she treats me nice. She still is a Jew though. She won't give us a maid to clean up the place and she tries to get along as cheaply as possible in order to make more profit. We have to furnish almost everything except the dishes. We didn't get enough hot water for baths until we complained. There are five guys living up in the attic room and they have to pay \$25 a week together for that stinking hole. It's a robbery but we can't do anything about it because housing is too hard to find here. The landlady must make two or three hundred dollars a week from the Japanese living in this building. Even though the rent is high, I've never made much of an attempt to move because it is convenient and I figure that I would have to pay just as much any other place. The Caucasian neighbors objected to us at first but they don't say anything now. I like to be near Nisei and I wouldn't mind if all the houses around here had some of my friends living in them."<sup>1</sup>



## Social and Economic Problems

Budget: Immediately upon arrival in Chicago, Bob began to realize how naive he was in assuming that he would be able to make a lot of money.

"We sure found out that expenses were high out here. My money went right down and I was glad to go to work so I could earn a little bit. When I had taken the job, I had thought that 55 cents an hour was plenty high wages as I used to work for 30¢ an hour in California. I never got that high wages before in my life so I thought it was pretty good. I didn't figure on the high expenses at all."<sup>1</sup>

After six months of work in Chicago he was only able to save \$100. He decided that it was no use to save after the Nisei draft announcement was made "as I wanted to have my fun." (p.31) From his average monthly wage of approximately \$200 a month, Bob estimated his expenditures as follows:

" I had to buy my winter clothes too and I did send quite a few things back home. It cost me quite a bit just to live. I paid \$25 a month for rent and \$25 a month for food. I eat with 3 other guys here and we share the expenses. That's \$50 just for my room and board each month. I spend about \$5 or \$10 on the average for clothes and my cleaning bill is about \$3. I wash most of my own laundry myself. I average about \$30 a month for recreation and all I do is go play pool, bowl and go to show. I haven't gone on any dates because I don't meet young girls of my age around here. I just go with my own gang and it costs quite a bit of money. I spend \$5 a month or more on carfare and I send anywhere from \$25 to \$50 back home to my family in gifts or cash.... That's how all of my money goes and I don't have anything to show for all my work out here."<sup>2</sup>

Two out-of-town trips to Milwaukee and St. Louis took about \$70 of his money and he also repaid \$80 he had borrowed in camp to his mother. He did not get a WRA travel grant when he changed his status from seasonal leave to indefinite leave.

### (b) Military Service

The draft reclassification of Nisei was at the basis of

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1. Case History, p. 26  
2. Case History, pp. 31-32



great deal of Bob's restlessness and inability to make adequate social adjustments in Chicago. His attitude is that the Army will protect his future, and he does not oppose the draft.

"I changed my plans all the time and that's why I don't have a definite plan of my own now. Just before I left camp I heard that Nisei would be drafted into the Army. That's why I thought I should come out and go to school. But I got my 1-A classification about a month and a half ago so that it was no use planning on anything. I knew all along that I would get 1-A sooner or later so that's why I decided to live every day as it came. I think that I would rather be in the Army right now than waiting around and wondering when I'll be taken. It wouldn't make too much difference to me. I've heard a lot of rumors against going into the Army, but I think that it will be fun. I'd feel so much better wandering around the different cities if I was in a uniform. I don't exactly care to go to Italy because I heard the Nisei are the spearheads there but I think that the war over there may end pretty soon and I'd rather be in a uniform when that happens. It will be better for my future. I think everyone is soon going to hate the japs when the invasion starts and it will be better if I were in a uniform because then they can't say anything to me then."<sup>1</sup>

His fear of unfavorable public opinion is greater than his resentments toward the Army.

"The only thing is that I think that the Army should have drafted us right from the beginning of the war. After they did all those things like evacuation to us, I don't feel like fighting too much for this country. But then, I feel the American people who say all those bad things against us are in the minority so that this country is worth fighting for. I don't think democracy is working so well after the way they treated us."<sup>2</sup>

Bob's racial identification is revealed in his attitude of not wishing to be sent to the Pacific area or the intelligence school when drafted. In addition he has mixed sentiments in regard to the Nisei combat team.

"I don't care to go to the language school at Fort Snelling as I would rather be a plain soldier. I don't want to fight against Japan though. If I ever got sent to Japan,

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1. Case History, pp. 35-36

2. Case History, p. 36



they wouldn't take pity on me. I'd hate to use my knowledge of the language against Japan as it is their tongue. I don't care to fight against Japan even though they are my enemies. I would much rather fight against Germany. I think that the Nisei combat team is pretty good and I'd rather be with them. However, I still think that the Nisei should be mixed up with the Army. It's just like racial discrimination if they are all put together. It would be more democratic if all the nationalities were mixed up. I'd like to get into the merchant marine or the Navy but there's not much chance for the Nisei to do that. I'd like to go to sea and travel around and see the world."<sup>1</sup>

His mother's objection to military service for the Nisei might have contributed to these feelings:

"My mother doesn't want me to go into the Army at all. She was very much against my brother volunteering when he did. She told me to stay in camp because she thought I would be drafted right away if we came out here. She was afraid I would get shot if I went into the Army as I would be sent overseas after training of 3 months. She was not exactly bitter about evacuation as we were not doing too well back home. She just didn't want us to go into the Army and get killed."<sup>2</sup>

But, he concludes that it would contribute to the future advancement of the Nisei if they made a good Army record.

"If I get into the Army and if we make a good showing, then the feeling of the American people will be better for us. There's a slim chance that this will happen although not many people know about the Nisei in Italy. If we fail in the Army, then it won't help any of us very much because the American people will say that we failed our chance to do our fighting."<sup>3</sup>

#### (c) Organizational

Bob has had a difficult time in making social adjustments in Chicago. He depends upon the WRA office a great deal for the solution of his economic problems. Since coming to Chicago, Bob has attended a number of Christian Church social functions. "I'm a sort of a member of the 43rd St. Christian church even though I was a Buddhist before" (p.45). This group sponsored occasional

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1. Case History, pp. 36-37.

2. Case History, p. 36

3. Case History, p. 37.



Nisei dances and socials. Bob is now interested in the Chicago Christian Church for social purposes "as I like the Christian people better now and I know them the best." (p.45). This, however, does not adequately meet his social needs, and he misses his former social life a great deal.

Prior to the war, Bob belonged to various Nisei social clubs but "the parents didn't like us to have too much fun as they expected us to work as hard as they did out on the farm." (p.11) In the high school Bob made basketball, football and track teams and he was a member of the Future Farmers of America for four years. After Bob got to Poston, he achieved his heights in social activities. He took part in many of the high school functions and he was on the student body cabinet, school yell leader, and class president. He says of these activities, "Gee, it was fun and I thought Poston was one swell place." (p.21)

Bob was greatly disappointed throughout his stay in Chicago because there were not enough Nisei social clubs and organizations for him to join. But he is a little fearful of the consequences if large Nisei clubs were organized.

"I think the best thing to do would be to have a big building where all the Nisei could meet. Then we could have a lot of clubs like we had in camp. I'd like to see a very large group so we could throw a big dance. I'd be happier if they had more of these social affairs at least twice a month and it would be something to look forward to besides pay out checks. They can't do it very well as there are too many Nisei groups in Chicago right now and they don't seem to get along with one another. About the only Nisei groups which seem to be organized are those with churches. I think Chicago is too big to try to get all Nisei in one place. Boy, if 6000 Nisei got into one place here, I get the hakujin would think the Japanese Army was invading."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Case History, pp. 46-47.



(d) Interpersonal relationships

Bob's close social circle consists of seven Nisei young men, four of whom live with him. They were all his classmates in the Poston High school. He describes them as "average guys who work in factories" (p.44). Bob has not had any dates since coming to Chicago. He would like to meet more young Nisei girls, but he feels that there are few opportunities. He does not care to know any Caucasian girls because he doesn't believe in intermarriage as "it wouldn't seem right for too many Nisei to marry Caucasian girls as the public wouldn't like it." (p.46) Bob's big complaint about Chicago is that there is no opportunity to meet more friendly Nisei.

"I don't like Chicago, as a big city is too much for me. I'd rather live in a smaller place where I can get to know everybody. Chicago is sort of funny and the Nisei living here think they are too good for one another. They aren't friendly at all and they just stare at us. It gets me down. I'd like to be friends but they don't want it so I have to stick more to my own group. That's why I think it would be hard to get all the Nisei together out here."<sup>1</sup>

(e) Limitation or extensiveness of interests

<sup>is</sup>  
Bob/primarily interested in a social life. He would like to have more dates. His other interests include shows, attending dances, going sight-seeing, and "having fun" with more Nisei friends  
His description of his activities:

"I don't think that I made too much progress out here during the months I was resettled. I didn't do anything at all but eat, sleep and play. I just roamed around with the rest of the boys on Saturday nights and we would go all over Chicago just to see the different places. Once in a while we would go play poker. Sometimes we just like to go down to the Loop and watch all the people going by in the street. I don't think that I have any bad habits, I just started to smoke recently but I don't drink although some of the other



do. We never go to the whore houses although the other guys in this building are always going. I would not mind going sometimes but I'm afraid that I might get some disease or I might get caught by the police. . . . I don't want to get a bad reputation because I have ambitions to make good some day.

"I haven't really done too many things since coming out here. During the week I never go but very much although we used to go over to the Hyde Park YMCA to swim and play basketball about 3 or 4 times a week. I used to be a member there. We just play basketball among ourselves as there weren't too many Caucasian fellows around. They are all in the Army. Basketball is my favorite sport and I used to make the team back home and in camp. I try to live a clean life out here because I don't want my mother to be too disappointed in me."<sup>1</sup>

Bob disapproves of the Nisei zoot suiters as he believes that they hurt the Nisei reputation. He condemns them for their begging habits and extreme clothing habits, and he further disapproves of their carrying knives and getting into fights.

"I hear about those Nisei zoot suiters all the time but they don't wear the extreme zoot suits so much. They just act tough and I see them hanging around on Clark St. the most. There are still a few on the North Side but I don't see so many of them down on the South Side. I don't think so much of the zoot suiters as they hurt the Nisei reputation. I sort of like the way they wear their hair but it shouldn't be so long. They wear their pants too tight too. Boy, they really have a bad reputation. My room mate tells me that they even go up and ask money from other Nisei who walk down the street. I never heard of any Japanese doing that before. Those guys go out with cheap Caucasian girls. One time I was walking down Clark St. with a friend and we passed by a bar and I saw 3 Nisei fellows drunk with Caucasian girls and they were pretty loud. It made me feel ashamed as I didn't think they were behaving right. I would never say anything to have an argument with one of those fellows because they carry knives and are always looking for a fight. They act as if they owned the town but they don't bother the others too much. I heard some of them look for fights with Caucasians just to beat them up. I never heard of such a thing before I came to Chicago. My friends tell me they were pretty wild in Los Angeles but I didn't know about that before. I bet they weren't as wild as they are now."<sup>2</sup>

(f) Family Adjustments

Bob feels a great sense of responsibility for his family.

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1. Case History, p. 43
  2. Case History, p. 44



He has tied in his future plans with family resettlement. His mother and younger brother and sister are still in Poston. Two married sisters live as separate family units in the same camp. Bob hopes that the solution to the family future will be a joint responsibility of the older children.

"I don't think that my younger sister and brother would want to go with my mother to Japan as we have more of the family control now and she can go on her own way without our support. We'll just make her come out with us some place and I know that she will stick with us. If we do that, we should be able to make out even better than we did before the war. My mother just dreams about going back to Japan because so many of the Issei in camp talk about it but we won't let her go. We would rather start out some place in the midwest after the war because it would be a better life to stay in this country. The way we figure it is that my mother is used to this country and it wouldn't be hard for her. Maybe she would like it better in Japan but none of the kids would like it there so it's better for her to think about all of her children instead of herself."<sup>1</sup>

The family had a strong solidarity in the pre-war days. The mother was left with the main burden of support for the children after a divorce from her husband. Before that, the father was described as being very strict with the children as "he had most of the power and we couldn't talk back to him at all." (p.7) The oldest sister quit school in order to help supplement the family income, but the rest of the older children were able to get through high school. Bob's family did "plain labor all the way through" and "we were pretty close as a family so we got along with each other and tried to help out." (p.8)

Bob describes the pre-war family as follows:

"After mother became the boss of the house it wasn't very strict for us. We never liked to talk Japanese so that we used English among us all the time except when talking to mother and her friends. We ate regular Japanese food as long



as I could remember and we had quite a few Japanese customs which we followed but I don't remember all of them. We wore Japanese slippers and things like that. Even out here I eat Japanese food all the time as I just don't feel right without it. I buy the stuff in one of the Japanese stores down on 43rd Street but they sure charge high.

"One thing that we never did do very much in our home was to celebrate all of the Japanese holidays because my mother was too busy working to tell us much about these things. The only thing we celebrated Japanese style was at New Years. We'd all have to get all dressed up and make formal calls on all of the other Japanese friends that we had. My mother was very fussy about cleaning the house before the end of the year and things like that because she had a superstition that it was bad luck to start out the new year with a dirty house. She told us stories about what the new year meant in Japan but I don't remember much about that now."<sup>1</sup>

It was difficult experience for the mother to take care of the family after the outbreak of the war as,

"My mother was pretty scared when the war broke out. She just worried a lot as she was afraid that something terrible would happen to the family. She didn't want to have us starve if she lost her job. She didn't think that we would be able to make a living anymore and that worried her a lot. My brother lost his job too and he felt quite bad about that because it meant that all of his income was lost to the family. We had to get out and do odd jobs for some of the other Japanese families after that in order to get along. It was pretty hard for my mother because she worried too much about it and she didn't have nobody to lean on."<sup>2</sup>

These fears convinced Bob's mother that the evacuation was a good idea as,

"She said that it would be a lot safer for us to be in a camp and we would be fed. She didn't think that we would be able to earn a living anymore if she stayed out. We heard a lot of stories that Filipinos were going around to beat up the Nihonjins but they didn't come to our town. We heard lots of rumors about Filipinos killing Japanese farmers and that's what scared all Japanese in our community. I was pretty scared too because I thought sure the Filipinos were killing Japanese right and left and that was what really got us down. My mother made us lock the door at night and she didn't want us to go out at all. We didn't know if all these rumors were true. I heard afterwards that a lot of Japanese did get killed by Filipinos so our community must have been lucky to escape them."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Case History, pp. 8-9.
  2. Case History, p. 14
  3. Case History, p. 16



(g) Social Attitudes

Bob has a fairly typical American attitude regarding the war, but at the same time he is confused and fearful of discrimination for the Nisei. He feels that he has a greater sense of identification with America despite these fears and that there is some indication for optimism for the Nisei future. He has concluded that he has a stake, as well as pride, in America and he only wants a chance to prove it. His long statement of this attitude clearly brings out this point.

"Sometimes I don't know what to think about this war. I wish that there would be a peace term between the United States and Japan as it would be easier on the Nisei. It would be bad for the Nisei if we win or lose this war to Japan. Either way, people will look down on us unless we can do enough now to make them think otherwise. I figure that we are going to get kicked around either way so I don't care too much about the war now. I don't believe in all the things we are fighting for. I don't give a darn about Japan and I'd just as soon they lost the war. But I'd feel funny if that happened as I have Japanese blood in me. At the same time I feel like an American when I do a lot of things. That's the trouble: it's a half and half sort of a feeling. In a way, I don't feel very much like clapping when I go to the movies and see the pictures about how cruel the Japanese soldiers are. I don't feel like clapping when I see the U.S. flag in the movies either. It's a funny kind of feeling because I don't know exactly where I belong. I would like to belong entirely to this country but a lot of people are not willing to let us do this.

"I still think that I am loyal to the United States and I'd do all I can to help it out if I were drafted. I'm an American because I get a lot of freedom out here like everyone else and I'm not discriminated against like the Negroes. That's why I felt more like fighting for this country after I came out of camp. I live just an ordinary life and I had my education here. I'd feel like more of an outcast if I were still in camp because all of the Nisei have left.

"I don't know nothing about Japan so I can't feel at home there. I only know a little bit about the language as I only went to Japanese school one year. I learned most of the language ~~as I only went to Japanese school~~ from my mother. I know more of the American things so that is the reason why I don't care to be sent to Japan. I heard that they might



even try to deport us but I don't think that can happen. There are some dumb Americans who want to do that because they don't want to give us a chance. I get pretty darn mad when I read of the American Legion who want to take our citizenship away from us. It's not up to them to decide because it's written in the constitution. When that happens, they only make the Nisei feel less loyal to this country. You can't beat a person down and expect him to kiss your hand. I'd be willing to forget everything that was done to us in the past and feel that no harm was done if they left us alone and gave us an equal chance with other Americans.

"No lie, man, I like this country quite a bit and I am proud of it even if some people think that I don't belong here. Everything is good and fine in this country except a few Americans who get on my goat. I feel that if one Nisei was bad, it could hurt things for all the rest of the Nisei. The same way is true about the Americans; if one bad American does something against us, it makes it look like all Americans are bad. I know that it isn't true at all. I believe that sooner or later the Nisei will get their right place in this country as they are willing to do everything to help out in the war effort. They serve in the Army and they work in war plants. What more can they do to prove themselves as loyal Americans. Some people are not even satisfied with that and they still don't want to give us a chance. That's why there might be quite a bit of discrimination in jobs after the war but I think this will pass over after a while."<sup>1</sup>

Bob has no great dislike for Caucasians. He would like to have a greater feeling of security. Not having developed a strong racial consciousness, his reaction to the war was no different from that of Caucasian high school students.

"When I got to thinking about the war, I thought that the Pearl Harbor attack was a pretty low down trick and I got mad just like my pals at high school did. That's the only thing that Japan shouldn't have done. If they wanted to start a war that badly they should have declared it and not sneaked up on this country."<sup>2</sup>

In this period which followed, the family was influenced by the general community fears so much that all Japanese cultural objects in the home were burned. Bob's self consciousness developed out of a reaction to the growing hostile public opinion.

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1. Case History, pp. 39-41
  2. Case History, pp. 13-14



"Before the war I thought that I was an American like anyone else, but I lost my hakuji friends after Pearl Harbor. We sort of drifted apart. My best pals were still for me but I felt that I was on the spot and I wanted to prove to them that I felt the same way they did about the war. Two of these hakuji pals and myself were known as the three Musketeers and we made all of the teams together. Gee, we used to do everything back home. After the war came I couldn't go out with my pals at night because of the curfew. This sort of wrecked our friendship because we did a lot of things together at night. They weren't mad at me but they didn't want me to break the law."<sup>1</sup>

This self consciousness increased until the time for evacuation. Bob then decided that "it would be fun for me to meet other Japanese kids." (p.16) He did not think much of the political aspects of evacuation, but he never had a deep bitterness as these events were not fully understandable to him.

"At lot of Nisei kids acted pretty sore about evacuation but they didn't say anything before we left. I guess they had more to lose than I did so that's why they got sore. There were some of them who acted pretty griped and I did the same thing once in a while before being evacuated but I didn't get sore. I just heard that it was against the constitution to get kicked out like that and that's why I felt that we should protest about it. I never thought much of this as I was looking forward to meeting a lot of Nisei."<sup>2</sup>

Bob was not very interested in political activities in Poston, but he did come to the conclusion there that evacuation had been caused by prejudice and discrimination.

Bob decided to answer in the affirmative to the Army registration questionnaire of Feb.-March, 1943, in the face of his mother's opposition and even with growing doubts about evacuation.

"When I had to sign that loyalty question in camp in March, 1943, I didn't have anything against the government so I answered 'yes.' A lot of people answered 'no-no' because they were bitter about losing property. My mother said to answer double 'no' but I didn't answer to her. I didn't think I belonged to this country after losing my rights.

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1. Case History, p. 15.  
2. Case History, p. 16.



She said that if I answered 'no,' I wouldn't get drafted at all. But the way I planned was that I intended to stay in this country all my life and I never wanted to go to Japan. My mother wanted to go back to Japan, but she finally answered 'yes' to the questionnaire because all of us answered it that way."<sup>1</sup>

His only complaint now is that he wishes "Americans would understand that I am for this country" since "I'm pretty sure that the majority of the Nisei will remain in this country the rest of their lives. The only thing that makes me boil inside is when people make cracks at me for being a Jap and that makes things tougher." (p.49)

Bob believes that it is desirable for the Nisei to integrate with the majority group, but he is rather pessimistic that this will not come about because,

"There is something wrong some place. It might be because the Nisei don't give a darn about Caucasian friends. That's the way I feel. So I stick with my Nisei friends. I know it's wrong but I don't have the time to go looking for Caucasian friends when there are so many Nisei friends all around. Most of the Nisei want to be with their own Nisei friends and they don't care to mingle so much because it makes them uncomfortable. I don't know a single Nisei who has a lot of Caucasian friends. I know we shouldn't avoid meeting Caucasians but that's what we all do. I would like to meet Caucasians but I don't have the time. I talk to the church lady all the time. I don't feel backward about talking to Caucasians like so many Nisei do. It doesn't make me feel low in morale just because I'm a Nisei."<sup>2</sup>

Bob expressed the opinion that he would personally be happier and less self-conscious living in a Japanese section as,

"I'd rather live in a Japanese town as I'd feel freer and more like I belong here. I'd be with more people like myself and nobody would stare at me. I'd like to open a Japanese restaurant right in the Japanese section so I'd get a lot of business."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Case History, p. 38.
  2. Case History, pp. 47-48
  3. Case History, p. 48



Bob concludes that he will be able to achieve happiness if he is left alone, but his expectations are vague and he is restless and uncertain of the future.

"I'm just hoping that I will be left alone. My aim in life is to make a good living and be happy. I'd like to raise a family and maybe own a farm or a business of my own so that my sons could take over when I got old. Maybe I'll get this wish some day if I keep working hard. Right now I'm more interested in fun but that's because I may be drafted soon. When I go to Nebraska next week I'll probably be working hard. I don't know where I'll go from there but I'm not worried. I'm still young and I've got a long time to make up my mind and I know I'll settle down sooner or later and I know I won't get bad. All I'll do will be to enjoy myself. That's one of the main objects of living. It's no use being discouraged all the time because that doesn't get you any place."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Case History, p. 50.



HOUSING

(This housing section is part of the Ihara family case, and it will be sketched only briefly here.)

Tamie, her child and her husband originally planned to re-settle in Detroit, but they extended their Chicago visit indefinitely at the suggestion of relatives when they discovered what a serious housing shortage there was in Detroit. And,

".....Allen agreed that I should not have to go through all the discomforts of getting an apartment up there so he went on alone to Detroit to look for an apartment.....But when he started to look for an apartment, it was an impossible task. He tramped around all day and night for the two days he was up there, but he could not find a single vacant apartment. Detroit is 125% overcrowded. When he came back, he was very discouraged. He did not think that the WRA office there helped him enough. We talked it over and Allen decided that perhaps he should get a job in Chicago since the living costs were not as high and a house would be easier to find. I did not want to live in a large city so we decided to look for a place in one of the suburbs."<sup>1</sup>

Tamie's housing expectations soon dropped to a much lower level.

"Since we have been in Chicago we have hunted high and low for an apartment. Allen thought of buying a house in the suburbs and then having some relatives come and live with us and help make the payments. We talked it over for quite a while, but had to give the plan up because we don't have enough money to make the downpayments."<sup>2</sup>

In desperation, Tamie and her husband finally took a damp basement apartment, but she occupied the flat cheerfully.

"We couldn't find an apartment in the few weeks that we have hunted. My sister-in-law's landlord acted funny so that we wanted to get out as soon as

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1. Case History, p. 40.

2. Case History, p. 40.



possible. Finally the landlord told her that there were too many Japanese in the building. There was an empty apartment in the building, but we decided not to take it after he said that. The landlord is a naturalized German and he said that the Army had sent a man out to tell him that there were too many Japanese there and that he could not rent out any more rooms to them. I think that this was only an excuse.

"(The apartment which Tamie and her child and husband occupies is in the basement of an old house located in the cheap rooming house district of the Near North Side. The entire neighborhood is very dirty. Most of the residents of the area are single transient men, although there are an increasing number of defense workers' families who have moved into the area. There are a few factories in the immediate vicinity. To the east, the area shades off into the exclusive Gold Coast district, the home of the extremely wealthy. A heavy smoke hangs over the district most of the time. The apartment is located near the back of the building so that a certain amount of sunshine is available in the room. In one corner there is a large double bed. Off to the side there is a small closet with an icebox in it. A large table is in the center of the room. On the upper end, there is a sink and stove. The door into the room has no top partition so that anybody could climb in. There is an old chimney stuck through this space with an uncovered end which is full of black soot. A hard slamming of the door would make some of this soot fall down. There are a number of other Japanese in this area. Tamie is determined to assimilate out more into the greater American society, but due to the housing shortage and other reasons, she may be forced back into an exclusive Nisei society. The very presence of a large number of Nisei in the area makes this development almost inevitable unless she moves out into the suburbs as she plans. The interviewer got the impression that they are still uncertain about their future plans.)"

In the late fall of 1943, Tamie was able to find a five-room unfurnished flat on the North Side. An arrangement was made to bring in a boarder in order to share the expenses after her husband was drafted into the Army in August, 1944, his fa-



mily gradually began to move into the apartment. In January, 1945, Mrs. Ihara finally took the second floor five-room apartment for herself and the two children. In the spring of 1945 Mrs. Ihara took in two single girls as boarders and charged them \$12 a week each for room and board in order to supplement her income since she felt that the Army allotment was not sufficient to meet all of her expenses. She had no plans for moving at that time as she believed that she was much more fortunate in housing than most resettlers, despite the difficulty of coal heating a wooden frame building during the winter time.



HOUSING

Rose and her child had no housing accommodations upon their arrival in Chicago in October, 1943.

"I came to Chicago on October 5, 1943. As soon as I got here I found that it was very difficult to find an apartment and I did not know whether I could find a place for us.....I got a temporary place through some of my sister's friends and then I went over to live with another girls for a few weeks. After that I moved in with my sister's room mate and stayed there for two weeks. It was during this time that Walter arrived in Chicago."1

A short time later Rose found a dingy two-room apartment in the back of a basement where she remained with her "husband" and two children until she left for California in January, 1945. She was never satisfied with the place, but she was not able to find a better apartment within her income level. Since 1940, Rose has been constantly on the move so that she has never been settled in any one place for a long period of time.

Her acceptance of the poor living quarters in Chicago was a part of her general disorganization. After going to California Rose stayed with a Mexican friend. She was not able to find housing there so she moved to Salt Lake City in February, 1945. The excessive traveling around was too much of a hardship on her second child and she died after reaching California.

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1. Case History, p. 83.



## HOUSING

Masako was never able to find an apartment in Chicago comparable to her pre-war home. She and her husband evacuated voluntarily to Chicago in June, 1942, and she was immediately shocked by the poor housing conditions.

".....George wanted us to move right in with them as he said that there would be room. Imagine my surprise when we had to go up to the third floor in a dimly lit building. I was shocked when I saw what the apartment was actually like. It was a two-by-four apartment and it was so untidy and dirty. There were bags laying all around the place and the beds were all unmade. I couldn't see how all six of us could possibly live in such a cramp place as that. However, I was too tired to even think about looking around for another place. George said that it was almost impossible to find an apartment, so we decided to stay for a little while.

"That evening we talked for a long time about our plans. I was pretty tired and I kept wondering how we were going to sleep. Riyo and her mother went to bed ~~right~~ first and they took the sleeping couch. George and his brother, Kenji, took the other couch. That meant that Yosh and I had to look around for a spot on the floor. It was stifling hot that night and I didn't sleep very well. Riyo discouraged my looking for another apartment the next day when she said that I couldn't find a place. She said that her landlady was an Austrian and that was why she was nice to the Nisei. However, I had no intention of sleeping on the floor for any length of time so I asked the landlady if she had another sleeping room in the building. Fortunately she did have one. Riyo and I decided to sleep in this single room. The next night Riyo went to bed first and about an hour later she came running in to tell us that there were hundreds of bedbugs in the bed. We did not believe this so we all went down to look and sure enough there were hundreds of bedbugs crawling all over the bed. It was an amazing sight to me. I think this crushed my morale and I almost broke down and cried. We had to sleep on the floor once more that night." 1



Masako and her husband took over this apartment from their friends and they continued to live there until January, 1943 when they moved to the north side.

".....In our apartment where we moved in January, 1943, the landlady was afraid to take us at first. She told the other tenants that we were Chinese. Later when the other tenants found out that we were Nihonjin, one lady said it was okay because we were different as she knew that we were educated. The landlady was quite relieved that there was a favorable attitude toward us. However, she was an Austrian and she did worry very much about our being in that building. There was one person who objected to us but I don't know who it was. At any rate, some FBI agent did check up on us at one time according to our landlady.

"Around March, 1943, a new Austrian landlady came in to manage the building. She and her husband were fairly decent people. I used to have long talks with her and she told me all about her life in Vienna. She was well-educated. At that time we were paying \$17 a week rent. When my sister came out from camp, she stayed with us for a while and then she took a downstairs apartment in the same building with two other Nisei girls. Yosh's brother was also staying with us for a short time. When my younger brother came out of camp we did not have any room for him so he stayed with another young Nisei fellow down the street and just ate with us. There was one Italian fellow who started to complain about all the Japs around all the time. Finally our landlord began to be afraid. She thought that she would lose her other tenants."2

After her separation from her husband, Masako decided to take a smaller apartment so she moved into a basement apartment on Dearborn St. "since there were no other Nisei in the building." (p. 76)

".....The place rented for \$6.50 a week and that was within my budget so I took it. There was a clause in the lease that forbid renting this apartment to Filipinos or Chinese but nothing was mentioned about Japanese so I got in. Later on,



another Nisei girl (CH-24) moved in. My apartment is large enough for my purposes. I am comfortable enough even though it is a basement apartment. I get enough light and the kitchen is large enough for my purposes. I don't have a private bath and that is one disadvantage. However, it is almost impossible for me to get a larger apartment with a private bath with the income I have since my school is quite an expense."Z

Masako continued to live in this apartment until her induction into the WACs in the fall of 1944.



## HOUSING

When Fusako left the center with her baby in November, 1943 to join her husband, she had high expectations of housing facilities, but this idea was quickly crushed by the reality of the situation.

".....Chuck brought me out to our new home the first thing.

"When I first saw this apartment, I was so disappointed as it looked like the tenements in the movies. Seattle is such a clean city and I couldn't get over the contrast. But I was glad to be out of camp and with Chuck so I resolved not to let the rumbling El overhead bother me at all. My express didn't come for three days more so that I had to put the baby in the dresser drawer to sleep that night. After that I got settled more and I found that it wasn't so bad. The neighbors are all friendly to me and I get along nicely with them whenever I meet them in the street."

Her husband thought that it would do as a temporary home because of the discrimination difficulties.

"It's a 3-room apartment or a flat. It's in a fairly nice district. The owner of the building cut up seven rooms into two apartments of three and four rooms. I got the one in the back with three rooms in it. I got the kitchen, but the other fellow who took the front apartment got the bath. You see, we've got a bathroom and a toilet in it all right, but the owner took out the bathtub and put it into the other apartment so we didn't have any bath there. I looked around in some of the second hand shops and found a bathtub to put in the place, so it's all right now. The owner is a Jew, but he's all right. He wanted me to take out a one-year lease but I did not want to sign it. I've got my eyes on another apartment that's a lulu and I'm not sure that I'll take this apartment that I've got now.

"The rent will be \$27 a month, unfurnished. I will have to buy all the furniture, but I've been thinking that I'll send for the stuff we've got



stored away in Seattle. I figured I might as well bring all of it out here."<sup>2</sup>

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

"One woman who had an apartment near the shop almost rented me an apartment and then she turned me down when she found out that I was Japanese. One of the workers at the shop saw the For Rent sign on her window and told me about it. I dashed over and took a look at it. It was the Greek kid who saw the place and he told the woman that I was Chinese, so I guess she kept thinking I was Chinese. I thought I'd take the place, but the next day she phoned me and said that her husband had already rented the apartment when she'd showed me the place, but when I continued to see the For Rent sign out even after a couple of weeks passed I knew that she was discriminating against me. It seemed that she called up Max Levey, the secretary of the YMCA where I'm staying now, and he'd told her that I was Japanese but a very good tenant who never made any trouble and paid my rent on time. I guess she backed down when ~~xxxxxxxskittingxxxxxxdxxxxxxandxxxxbegxxxxxxmxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxndyx~~ she found out that I was Japanese. One day I saw her on the streets when I was walking along so I stopped her and really told her off. I called her a narrow-minded bigoted Jew. That's what I called her. Boy, I was mad."<sup>3</sup>

But Fusako was not satisfied so she phoned to seek a new flat at the first opportunity.

"Of course, this flat does not compare with my former home in Seattle where we had all new furni-

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2. Case History Ch-307, p. 2.

3. Case History CH-307, pp. 3-4.



ture and a well lighted front apartment. This place is in the rear of the building and I don't get enough light. It's not so good for the baby. It still needs to be cleaned and wall papered. The building is so old and I feel so crowded here. But I like it much better than camp life and I wouldn't change it for anything. At least I am leading my own life without all of those restrictions and I feel free.

"As soon as the warm weather comes, we are going to look for a better place. We prefer to stay in this neighborhood now as it is close to Chuck's work. We can't afford to move into a nice modern area like before because the rents are so high. We don't pay very much for this place as it is only \$14 a month and that is much below the average of what the other Nisei are paying. Our utilities run to about \$15 a month."<sup>4</sup>

A year and a half later, Fusako was still living in the same building, but still dissatisfied.

".....Of course, I am not satisfied with my present housing yet. For a while last year we did look around a great deal for another place to live in because we felt pretty crowded. We wanted to get into a better place because we had moved into the first apartment with the understanding that it would only be temporary. I expected too much in the way of housing when I first came out here because I wanted a place just as good as our Seattle home. I didn't realize then that housing was so hard to get.

"During the past year we were continually on a lookout for a new place. On several occasions we just missed out because we arrived a little too late. The better places don't advertise in the newspapers so we had to walk about and look for the signs. You have to take a place just as soon as you see it because if you stop and deliberate over it somebody else will jump in and rent it from under your nose. A lot of places that I went to didn't have any baths. I was so amazed at this and I asked the landlord how he expected a family to keep clean. He said that many homes in Chicago did not have baths or showers but on Saturday nights they would bathe in the kitchen. I felt that I could not move into an apartment without a bath because that would be lowering my standard of living. Even during the poorest part of the depression I've

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4. Case History, pp. 52-53.



always had a regular bath. I guess the Chicago people have been deprived of so many things that they get used to it. One of the landlords was telling me that many apartment homes in the colored district didn't have any baths at all. I don't see how they can stand it. I don't see how any Nihon-jin can move into a place without at least a bath there. I just had to ignore those places that did not have baths.

"I did run up against a few discrimination cases at times. Once a woman opened the door and said, 'No' and slammed the door right in my face. The other places were not so direct and they gave me a long story about the place already being taken. I tried not to be sensitive about it, but I couldn't help but feel that it was discrimination when I would go the next day and see the sign still up.

"Finally last November the lady living upstairs got married so that we decided to move up here. It's the same number of rooms but they are a little bigger and the apartment has more light. The rent is only \$17 a month and that's only \$3 more than what we paid downstairs. I'm satisfied with my housing for a while, but I still would like to get a flat with at least two bedrooms. I gave up looking for this year, but maybe next summer I will start looking again because a lot of the defense workers may be leaving the city."<sup>5</sup>

Fusako preferred to remain in the district because she knew all of the stores and it was close to her husband's place of work. She had no complaints to make of her landlord or the other residents in the building as she had become very friendly with them so that she no longer feared for her position.

".....Anyway, I can honestly say that there never has been any discrimination against us in this house. In fact, this whole district is pretty good as no one has mentioned anything about our race to us, unless they ask us in a curious way. When I first came out here, I was very uneasy about my position, but I never worry about that anymore. A lot of it has to do with having a child as most of the people around here seem to like Sandy so much. That's how we get acquainted with them. This is a



family district anyway and a lot of Germans live around here. They are inclined to be more sympathetic because a lot of them suffered during the first war. A number of Nihonjin have moved into this district but they haven't caused any crowding at all. When I first moved into this area, there were only two other Nihonjin families. Since then about 10 families have moved in. They are mostly Californians so I don't know them very well.

"At first I felt very sensitive about other Nihonjins moving into this district, but I don't mind it at all anymore as I realize that it doesn't hurt me. There isn't any danger of great numbers moving in because there are few housing vacancies. I don't think a Japanese community could ever spring up around here. I still think that if too many came in, it would reflect against us but it hasn't influenced in that way yet. The district is full of old German families and there isn't much of a change over around here, so that not too many families can move into the area."<sup>6</sup>

But Fusako still did not plan to remain in Chicago indefinitely.

"Our present plan is to stay in Chicago for the duration. But eventually I would like to go to a smaller town for Sandy's sake. I don't like a large city as it is too hard for children. We were thinking of going back to Seattle after things got settled, but it depends on housing and job possibility. We don't have any property back there so that it wouldn't be very easy for us to get relocated. We can't be moving around indefinitely with children. But I still feel that Chicago is not the permanent place for us. I also would like to move to a little higher-toned neighborhood. It isn't because I feel superior to our neighbors, but I don't approve of some of the people around here who allow their children to run wild. A lot of the people around here are coarse and profane with their children and I don't want Sandy to get that from them. What I would like would be a house of my own.

"If I had a house of my own, there would be a lot more freedom. In a flat, a child can't express itself freely. We have to be considerate of the people living below us. We are going to have another child next December and we hope for a boy this time.



I'd like to have at least three children, and Chet says that this is the absolute limit. He came from a large family himself and he had to sacrifice all the time for the younger kids. He feels that it isn't fair for the children if they can't all get equal opportunities. If we have too many children, we won't be able to give them all that they want or should have."<sup>7</sup>

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7. Case History, pp. 70-71.



HOUSING

Mrs. Masako Matsuoka had a very difficult time finding suitable housing for her family during her first two years in Chicago. When she arrived in July, 1943 with her two children to join her husband, she was very disappointed with the small three-room apartment her husband had found.

".....I was never so disappointed in my life. It wasn't much of a place and it was so small. I wondered how on earth I could ever fix it up to make it livable. I didn't show Ben my disappointment as he was having such a hard time to even find this place and he was worried sick how to take care of us. That night we discovered that we had bedbugs in the apartment so we just picked up our stuff and left immediately as it was impossible for us to have babies in a place like that. We went to a hotel and we lived in a one-room place for about a week while desperately hunting for another place."<sup>1</sup>

Masako and her husband finally became so desperate for housing that they accepted a domestic job and for the next year they lived with their children in their employer's home (see job section). Masako was never satisfied with this arrangement.

".....We hunted high and low for an apartment for months. After living at the Walkers, our ideals were high and we couldn't get satisfied with the poor places that we did see. I sure wish we had taken one of those places now. We were too picky so that we lost out. Things began to get worse and worse the last two months we were there and it was really an awful situation all around. The best thing for us was to get out as soon as possible and get a fresh start."<sup>2</sup>

In June, 1944,

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1. Case History, pp. 50-51.

2. Case History, p. 58.



".....we started to look day and night for an apartment. We would even sneak out during the day to buy a newspaper to look through it for apartment listings. We had to find a place to move before Ben could take a job. Finally, we were supposed to get a week's vacation with pay. I thought of taking the kids to my folks in Cleveland and then Ben could pick a fight with the "alkers and walk out. They just wouldn't let us go otherwise. We talked it over very seriously and finally decided against it as we thought we might need the "alkers for reference some day."<sup>2</sup>

Finally, Masako and her family moved in with a friend temporarily, and.

".....I started to walk the streets every day looking for an apartment vacancy. I would take a certain district after looking through all the newspapers and then walk up and down the sections to investigate the best leads.

"Most of the places I inquired about were already taken by the time I got there. Other places didn't look very good so I didn't bother to inquire further. I walked about four hours a day and I really got discouraged. I wanted to live in the same neighborhood where we lived before as I knew the stores and I liked the general district. Each day I would go up and down different streets but there were few signs out. I didn't want to take a basement apartment because of the children and I wanted to find a place with a private bath. I was so disappointed at so many places I looked at. Some places I was turned down and I am sure it was discrimination. On Sheffield Place I found a place and I got all excited. But when I knocked on the door to ask about the flat, a short, stout woman stuck her head out of the door and just said no and slammed the door. I was mortified but I had several experiences like that so I just took it in stride.

"About a week ago I found a three-room unfurnished apartment notice in the newspapers. I was getting to the point where I would have taken anything so I just went to see. The lady in charge of the house was very nice but she said there was no private bath there. Then she thought for a moment and said that there was a possibility for a 5-room apartment on the third floor. She said to call her back about it the next day. I called back several times but she still was



not quite sure.....I certainly don't think I can stand much more of apartment hunting. It's the most discouraging thing in the world. Every time I got to a place I get a funny feeling and I just know that I will be refused."<sup>4</sup>

In desperation, Masako took her two children to Cleveland to join her parents while her husband moved into a hotel room to continue his apartment hunting.

".....After several weeks he finally did get a temporary apartment. He rented it from Mr. Toguri who owns the fish shop on the Near North Side..... He had just opened up a boarding house and there was a two-room apartment on top of the garage in back of the house which was rented to us. Ben sent me a telegram to return to Chicago immediately because he had found housing and I had expected it to be something good. My morale went way down when I saw the dingy two-room apartment. It was a horrible place and it was dirty and it faced an even dirtier alley. The place was very badly furnished and we were most cramped for space. I hated to live there and I insisted that we were going to move out at the first opportunity. Every day I tried hard to find another apartment but I just couldn't find a thing.

"We had to pay \$9 a week for that dirty old apartment and I felt that this was much too high a rent for a place like that. Mr. Toguri's rooming house was just as dirty and there were bedbugs all over the place. The building was full of Nihonjin who had come out from Gila and they couldn't find a permanent place so that they had to move in there. Most of them only stayed about a month because they couldn't stand the unsanitary condition. They would move on to another place as soon as possible. Mr. Toguri's daughter-in-law cooked so that everybody boarded there. They charged about \$40 a month per person for room and board and that was much too high for the family group. I think that they did give some special rate for family groups but most families couldn't afford that either."<sup>5</sup>

In the late fall of 1944, Masako moved into her present apartment. The three-room apartment is on the third floor and

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4. Case History, pp. 59-61.

5. Case History, pp. 69-70.



it rents for \$12.50 a week and it has a large back porch. After eight months of living there, Masako was fairly well satisfied, except for the high rent which took half of her Army allotment.

"The building is pretty quiet and I like it because I don't feel like I am forced to be nice to other people for fear of being kicked out of my apartment. The building is practically full of Nihonjin now. There are 10 Nihonjin living here and only five hakujin families. Most of the people here are young couples although there are some single Nisei on the first floor. A Nihonjin woman manages this building for a real estate company and her son and daughter help her. The former Nihonjin manager moved down to 18th and Clark to manage another building. The present manager gets a free apartment here and they pay the real estate company a fixed amount each month so that they must be getting a fairly good profit since all the rent in the building are fairly high. Some of the rooms were newly decorated so that is why they were able to raise the rent above the OPA ceiling. We redecorated our own building but we had to pay the higher rent too.

"When we first moved into this apartment, it was pretty filthy. The place was full of bedbugs so that we had to throw out a lot of the furniture and send for our own from California. We cleaned all the walls off and scraped the floors. It took us about 2 months for us to fix the place up. We did all of the wall papering ourselves. All I did was scrub and scrub. It's a livable place now and I hate to move out after putting all that work into it. It feels more like home than any other place that we have lived in since resettlement.

"I've thought of finding a smaller apartment since Ben got drafted last April, but it's too difficult to get any kind of housing because of the acute shortage here. I know how it is because I have looked around so much. I ran into a number of cases of discrimination in my house hunting before. The better places would give all sorts of excuses like it has just been taken, but I knew that they were lying. The signs would still be out there the next day when I went by. Very few of the landlords came right out and said that they did not take orientals, but I knew that was what they meant. It certainly was a most discouraging feeling and I wouldn't want to go through it again.



"In this building I get along with the landlord very well and I have no complaints against them at all except for the high rent. The Nihonjin manager who was here before was also very nice to us as my husband did a lot of plumbing here for him. That is why we got the place originally. When we first moved into this building over three-fourths of the 16 apartments were occupied by Caucasians. Now there are only five Caucasians left here. As soon as they move out, other Nihonjin moved in so that pretty soon it will be all Nihonjin. I only know the Caucasian tenants left here very slightly, but they all seem nice. I guess they do resent it because the Nihonjin seemed to be pushing them out.

"I don't know the Nihonjin living in this building too well, just the ones on this floor as we all mind our own business. The neighbors around here don't seem to object to us at all. I have done some housework for the people in the next building and they seem to be very nice. They don't have an superiority attitude against us and they didn't have any patronizing attitude towards me. There's not very many other Japanese living in this area but the number is increasing month by month. I don't think that too many more will be able to move in because there just isn't the housing available around here. Every once in a while I see a new Nihonjin face in the district but I don't think that there are over 100 in the whole area. There just isn't any danger of them flocking in too heavily because most of the families here have been living in the neighborhood for many years and they are not moving out too rapidly. I don't condemn the Nihonjin for taking advantage of every housing vacancy that is open to them because things are so hard for them as it is. However, I don't think we will ever have a Japanese district around here. I certainly hope not because I think that our area is reaching the saturation point right now. If too many people move in, then the hakujin are going to resent it very much. Right now they seem to accept the Nisei fairly well because the group has a pretty good education and they are not ignorant.

"The way I feel now, I think that I will stay right here in this apartment for the duration even though the rent takes half of my allotment. We've had some pretty difficult financial struggles ever since we left the domestic job. We never did get ahead very much because there was always one emergency after another coming up and we had to dig into our reserve fund until it was practically gone."



## HOUSING

When her husband was unable to find housing after some months in Chicago, Motoko brought her three children out of the center in the spring of 1944 to stay with her sister (CH-36) in her apartment temporarily.

"Eiji then said for me to hurry up and get cleaned up so that we could go hunting for an apartment right away. He had been unable to find a place for our family in all the months he had been out here. He thought that he had a place lined up, but I didn't like it when I saw it because the kitchen was too dingy. We tried to get into a lot of apartment houses but we didn't have any luck at all and I began to appreciate the hard time we had. For the next few weeks, all we did was go house hunting at every opportunity.

"We were very crowded living with Yone as she had a family of her own. All of her friends were trying to help us find an apartment. We could only find vacancies on the fourth floor in many places but I didn't want to take any of these as it would have been too hard for my children to go up and down those stairways. In other places I felt sure I was discriminated against because the landlady refused to let us look at vacancies. We tried to get a place on Sheffield St. but we were given the run-around by the owner.

"Finally we located a place on the second floor. The landlady there was a German lady and she had four kids of her own. She wanted to see me first so I went and talked to her and to inspect the apartment. I liked it fairly well after all those weeks of hunting so I said we would take it. Then she said that she had to get the apartment fixed up a little but couldn't find a carpenter or plumber to do the work. Eiji went out and located a plumber and a carpenter. We were relieved to be finally settling down. Eiji went to pay for the apartment. The German lady immediately began to cry when she saw him and said that it would not be safe for us to move in because the people next door had threatened to burn the house down if any Japanese moved in."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Case History, pp. 66-67.



Motoko became desperate for housing so she sought the assistance of the WRA. She was too fearful of moving into the apartment her husband found, and "I was just about ready to give up in discouragement when our luck turned." (p. 67) A roomy unfurnished flat was rented from a church, and the family immediately purchased a great deal of second hand furniture (over \$300 worth). Motoko made arrangements to seel most of her furniture stored in California. Motoko felt that the chief difficulty was the crowded space.

"I really would like to have another bedroom but these rooms are quite large so I am fairly satisfied with this arrangement. Most of the other Nisei seem to live in such dinky places on the third and fourth floors but we are on the first floor and there is only one other family in the building, Rev. Kelly's. One thing I miss here is a backyard and a place to hang up my laundry. For Chicago this is supposed to be pretty good but it wouldn't compare to our little home back home. I still would like to go back to California but if we stay here in Chicago we will stick to this house as I doubt if we can get anything better without paying a fortune. I would like to live more out in the country as I don't care for the city life too much."<sup>2</sup>

During the following months, excellent relationships were established with the minister, landlord, and the family gradually began to find social adjustments through the church.

By June, 1945, the family was well established and Motoko had postponed plans for returning to California because of fear of possible repercussions.

"I don't think that we will be going back to California for a while yet even though Eiji's brother has a farm out there. I own a home in Santa Barbara too but it's no use going there because the feeling isn't too good. I certainly don't want to



go where I will be discriminated against. It will be much worse from now on because of the war with Japan. But the main reason why we are not planning to go is that Eiji will probably lose his deferment even though he is almost 35 and has three children. I doubt if he could pass the physical because he has a weak back but I have heard that the California boards are drafting Nisei fellows almost as fast as they go back there. We have a friend who is 38 years old and he has five children but he is not going to make plans to return to California until he is 39 years old. He is going to have a big party on that birthday because then he definitely can't be drafted. From what I have heard, the Nihonjin aren't too welcomed back there and I'd just as soon stay out here because we are getting settled. Chicago is no place for children though. We would like to find a larger apartment but where can we find housing around here?"<sup>3</sup>

Motoko, at that time, still was not fully satisfied with her flat.

"Housing is still a problem with us, but not as acute as for other Nisei. We don't have enough room here, but it's the best that we can do. Our daughters are growing up so that one room for them isn't enough. Even then, our apartment is a lot better than most of those I have seen of my friends, and we have bought all of our own furniture now. I'm painting the bathroom right now and there is still some fixing up to do. If we only had another bedroom, I would be completely satisfied. I guess I can't complain because we are more fortunate than most Nisei. I feel sorry for those single Nisei who have to live in some dark room in a dirty old hotel or apartment house. The family groups get a little bigger place but they have their problems too. Our friends just find it impossible to get nice environments for their children as there is no other place to move."<sup>4</sup>

Motoko had tentatively given up her desire to move to a suburb because she felt that the social adjustment of her family was adequate.

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3. Case History, pp. 80-81.

4. Case History, p. 91.



"Eventually we will have to move to another house, but I'd rather stay in this neighborhood. I am thinking of reconverting this large living room into two bedrooms for my daughters and then we could manage quite nicely. There seems to be a few more Japanese moving in around here but not many. I've seen some of them at the store where I trade but it seems that more are going into the Wrightwood area about three blocks down."5



HOUSING

When Vivian came to Chicago from Ohio in July, 1944 to join her husband, she was unable to find housing so that she took a domestic job to solve the problem. The arrangement did not work out very satisfactory so the couple moved to a rooming house operated for resettlers at 5010 Drexel Blvd. and during October they searched for a more permanent apartment.

".....it was rather painful. Every day we spent hours and hours looking for a decent place to stay in and we didn't find a single good place during the first two weeks. I wanted a nice place of our own and I also wanted to pick out a place where I thought wouldn't be too many Nisei living because we preferred to be alone. There were a lot of places that I went to that had vacancy signs up but those signs were not supposed to be seen by me or any Nisei. I kept looking and I got pretty discouraged. I was even thinking of taking a place at \$80 a month at Maple Manor but it wasn't worth even one-third of that. We finally located this place and I am glad that we have a roof over our heads now even though the ceiling looks as though it's going to fall down and the electrical system is all hay-wire."<sup>1</sup>

Vivian paid \$54 a month for the single sleeping room, and narrow kitchen apartment with a private bath. She was not able to keep it by herself after her husband went into the Army in December, 1944, so she got two girl friends to move in with her.

In June, 1945, Vivian left Chicago to rejoin her husband in Minneapolis as he had been assigned to the language school at nearby Fort Snelling. She had no housing in advance, but a brother-in-law promised to put her up until she could find a more permanent location. Just prior to her departure from Chicago in late June, 1945, Vivian felt that she would be

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1. Case History, pp. 84-85.



living in Minneapolis permanently since her husband planned to settle down there after the war. Vivian's housing hopes for the post-war period were rather optimistic.

".....I have all sorts of good plans for the future. We plan to build our home eventually because I don't want to live in small apartments all of my life. That's an ambition we have anyway. That's why I am working and saving money."<sup>2</sup>

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2. Case History, p. 107-108



## HOUSING

Mrs. Wakamatsu and her husband were sent by the Chicago WRA to 5010 Drexel, a rooming house operated by a Caucasian woman immediately upon their arrival into this city in June, 1944. (See CH-50 and CH-52 regarding this house)

"When we got to this building we were given a bare room in the back immediately. It only had two pieces of furniture in it but we didn't care. All we wanted to do was to get into bed and sleep because we were exhausted. But first of all, we took our first tub bath in two years and then we tumbled into bed at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon. We were so groggy that we had no idea where we were. We slept for about 20 hours straight through before we got up."<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Wakamatsu's initial expectation in housing were soon crushed, and one disappointment followed another.

"First thing I did after getting refreshed was to try to get housing for ourselves.....I am still looking. I looked all through the Want-Ads and I was quite hopeful at first but I soon became discouraged because I found that the Chicago people weren't too receptive to Japanese or else housing was too scarce. I called many places and asked if they would take Japanese-Americans as tenants but nine out of ten landlords answered 'No'. On our housing rounds, we have not experienced any disagreeable incidents but the landlords tell us in a roundabout way that we are not wanted. They give some excuse about the apartment just being taken or something like that. I wish that they would be frank and tell us right out instead of building up our hopes and telling us to come back later when they have no intention of giving us a place later. I have even left ~~wikxxxxxx~~ my name with several big real estate companies to see if they could find a place for me. The agent for the South Company has been trying very hard to find living quarters for us but he has not been successful for the past five weeks. He is a very nice person but he tells me that he can't even find a place for his Caucasian friend.

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1. Case History, p. 91.



"Some of our friends have given us several leads out here but usually the apartment is too dirty and I wouldn't think of living in them."<sup>2</sup>

The Wakamatsu finally found an apartment on the South Side but they immediately moved back to 5010 Drexel because of the general unsanitary condition of the place.

".....I did find a three-room apartment on 51st St. but it was small. I thought that I could make this apartment a livable place so I spent a whole day scrubbing it up. The apartment was just black with coal dust. We moved all of our things over there and that night we were eaten up by bedbugs. The very next day we moved right back here. My husband's legs were so swollen from the bedbug bites that he couldn't even put his shoes on. I counted over 37 bites ~~thx~~ on my neck where the bugs had followed the lining of my pajamas. The landlord was very disagreeable when I asked her for my \$20 deposit and I had a most difficult time getting it back. The difficulty was that I had endorsed a check I had given to her. She claimed that she had a right to keep the money because we had brought the bedbugs in. That was a preposterous story and it certainly made me angry. I finally had to take the matter to a lawyer and eventually the landlady gave us \$15 of our money back. We had to pay \$5 just to get all bitten up by bedbugs one night. It was my guardian's cousin who handled the case. He was a very exclusive lawyer here in the city and I suppose I embarrassed him no end by bringing up such a small case to him in his big suite of office down in the Loop. He must have become a laughing stock with all of his partners. I was in need of that \$20 and that is why I made such a fuss."<sup>2</sup>

After three months, Mrs. Wakamatsu was extremely discouraged by the ~~acute~~ housing situation in Chicago.

"Ever since that time we have had a horror of house hunting. We pay \$60 a month here for one room and we have to share a bath. We get kitchen privileges along with other people on this floor. (Full description of this house has been given in CH-50, etc.) The only good thing about this place is that

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2. Case History, p. 91.

3. Case History, pp. 92-93.



it is free of bedbugs and that is a great comfort to me.....

"We expect to have a difficult time getting a good place. Most of my friends have moved eight or 10 times within a year, but they now have nice apartments. They have to pay rather expensive rents though. I still haven't given up hope and we just have to start out again because we are paying absolutely too much here for just a sleeping room. It's beyond me how they allow all those Ads for unsanitary apartments to go into the newspapers. Those places listed are worse than slums and we never had anything like that in California. I guess we are spoiled because we were used to living in a home of our own in California. Camp was different because we realized that was an emergency and we had no control about our housing. We had to take stalls and barracks and like it. But we figured that since we are now free people, we should have a choice about where we live and we would like it to be a fairly decent place."<sup>4</sup>

(Pp. 94-96 gives some description of the types of houses, residents and their problems.)

In July, 1945, Mrs. Wakatsu was still located at the same temporary rooming house. She had not given up apartment hunting in the interval, but part of the reasons for her difficulty was the lack of time because of her work and on insistence upon a fairly high housing standard.

"Oh dear, we still have our housing problem with us and I don't know when we are going to move out of this place. We keep looking around all the time and we have a real estate man looking for us too. I'm first on the list at the real estate company, but I don't get very many calls because there is such a housing shortage. I've followed all of my friends' leads but somebody always seems to beat me to the place because I can't get out so conveniently. I haven't run into any discrimination in housing this year. Mr. Gordon of the Seltz and Southman real estate company told me that more landlords are now asking for Nihonjin tenants as the resettlers have gotten a fine reputation in keeping up

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4. Case History, pp. 93-94.



up the apartment and for being prompt with the payment of the rent and for their neatness. That speaks pretty well for us. But the main difficulty is that there are so few places left open. I don't blame it on any attitudes toward the Japanese alone.

"The funniest thing happened to me last week. Hippo Shibata's sister called me up once and said that the WRA had given her a good lead for a five-room apartment vacancy and she wanted to give me first choice at it as I have been looking for so long. It was described as being such a nice place. When I went over there, believe it or not, it was the very same place where we had gotten bitten up by the bedbugs and were forced to move out. I wanted no part of that place even though the other Japanese there didn't seem to get bothered by the bedbugs. It seems that the only way to get decent housing is to get a whole house but most of the living accommodations in Chicago are in apartments and they are too dirty.

"In all this time that I've been looking, I have not been able to get a decent place. I've looked and looked and my time is limited because of my work. I've gone in and examined a lot of vacancies but not one of them have satisfied me because they were so awful. I feel that it has to be a better apartment than the one we have now or else we won't move. We expect to remain in Chicago for at least another year, but lately we have been hearing from some of our Japanese friends in California that conditions are much better out there now than expected."5

While Mrs. Wakamatsu was in California earlier in the year, she decided to cancel all negotiations for the sale of her home as she now expected to return to the Coast eventually.

"I went to see my home there. The tenant was very nice and she greeted me with open arms. Everything looked the same and I just couldn't give it up. The tenant begged me not to sell the house as she is only paying us \$30 a month rent. I had signed all the papers to sell our home except the final ones; but I decided then and there that I would not sell. We are going to fix the place up and I think that we might go back there to live in another year or so.



"I don't hate Chicago but I am very afraid of this cold weather out here because I am so susceptible to colds. California seemed so clean compared to the cities out this way. The weather was so mild there when I was visiting and I wanted to get back to the familiar things, but I decided that we had to be practical. I think that the people really live out there in California and they have much more of a delight in the home life. In Chicago everyone lives in an apartment and there isn't too much attention paid to the California way of living."<sup>6</sup>

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6. Case History, pp. 148-149.



## HOUSING

Mrs. Shigaki had several different housing changes after she came to Chicago because of dirt, bedbugs and attitudes of landlords.

"When we first got here we stayed at Newberry Hotel where Dick's friend lived. It was a dirty place but we considered it as the start of our honeymoon because it was the first chance we really had to be alone even though we had been married for over a year by then. After a day or so resting up, Dick went out to look for an apartment and to register at the college.....

"All this time Dick was going around looking for rooms. We finally got an apartment on Chestnut St. It was so dismal and dirty there that we could not stand it. Every place we went we found bedbugs. There was no way of getting away from it. We moved to another apartment on Superior St. but we didn't like it. It was too hard to get a better place so we just stayed on and on. We were there for over a year. Then in July, 1944, Dick got drafted into the Army so I went up to live on Winthrop St. way up on the North Side. The landlady was terrible there. She didn't want any Nihonjin friends to come around. I just didn't like her attitude even though I didn't have many Nisei friends coming around to see me. That's why I moved down here on Rush St. last October when Doris Ihara (CH-39) went to live with her family."<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Shigaki felt that the discrimination factor made the housing adjustments of all resettlers equally as difficult as hers because it prevented them from getting the more desirable places.

"We never had any real housing discrimination experiences ourselves but our friends have told us their troubles. The only thing was that the nicer places wouldn't take us in because we were Japanese. They would say that the place was just taken or something like that. They were always polite about

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1. Case History, pp. 57-58.



it so we didn't catch on for a long time that we weren't wanted. It certainly fed me up. We had to walk all over and only the dirtiest apartments with bedbugs were shown to us. It was pretty sad. I guess housing conditions are even worse now as the Nisei don't seem to be able to get any kind of a place.."<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. Shigaki was still living in the same apartment in July 1945. She had a number of complaints to make about the high rent and the attitudes of the landlady.

"I'm living in this apartment alone right now as I can't take a room-mate. There just wouldn't be enough closet space for two of us in this Pullman apartment. It's not very practical for me to live here alone because the rent is so high (\$42.50 a month) that I have to use my Army allotment to pay for it. But it's much too small to bring in another girl and it would be too inconvenient. The landlady here is very fussy and she complains because Vivian (CH-54) gets too many phone calls and she has too many visitors. The landlady told Vivian yesterday to get her own telephone or else get out. She scolds us if we use too much hot water. There are only seven Nisei in this building and we all live here on the second floor.

"The landlady has no kicks coming because I pay a high rent and I only sleep here. I furnish my own linen and I never cause any disturbance around the place. I have a lot of dissatisfactions about this apartment but I can't do too much about it. I don't have enough heat here and there are bedbugs. The only nice thing about my apartment is the private bath because it is so difficult to get one in an apartment in Chicago. Due to the present housing shortage, I think I will stay here as long as I am in Chicago. I may go home to Hawaii, but it all depends. I just can't make any definite plans about my future right now."<sup>3</sup>

Mrs. Shigaki believed that the best solution was to move into widely scattered places and she objected to other Nisei moving into her building, for fear that it would jeopardize her

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2. Case History, pp. 58-59.

3. Case History, p. 59.



own situation. Apparently the other Nisei in the building held a similar attitude.

"I get along well with everyone living in the building and I know them all. There are three Nisei sisters next door but I don't talk to them too often because they seem to want to be too exclusive. They don't seem to want to associate with any Nihonjin living here and I don't care because that is their privilege and there is no use for Nisei to bunch together.

"I think that the Nisei should spread out in housing because the landlord gets fussy when too many come in. The eight here are just enough and I would not want to see any more Nisei moving in. The trouble is that we have to go only where we will be taken and not all places are willing to have us because of the lingering suspicion. That's what causes all the congestions, especially in certain districts. There are a lot of Nisei who believe in spreading out but they can't do it because they can't find housing. It is easier to go where other Nisei have paved the way."<sup>4</sup>

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4. Case History, pp. 59-60.



## HOUSING

Since Mr. Sakamoto was in ill-health, his wife and son had the major responsibility for house hunting.

".....We came right to the hostel and rested up the first day we were here. Then we had to make plans for what we were going to do. We heard about how hard it was to get an apartment so we got ~~were~~ worried right away.

"After talking it over we decided that we should get an apartment before getting a job because after my wife and son started to work, it would be harder to look for a place. I would not be able to go out by myself to look for a place because of my health. At first we did not believe the people at the hostel when they told us how hard it was to find a house. But after a week of hunting we started to believe them. It was a great worry after that. My wife and son went out every day to look for a place. They would come home all tired out. They went all over. At first they went to the American Friends office and the WRA and Mr. Fort also gave them suggestions but none of them turned out so that we started to look at the Want-ad section and just taking a chance by walking around and looking for vacancy signs. There was no luck in this and we were discouraged. My son and wife would come home at night and tell me about their experiences during the day. After my wife started to work, Kenneth had to go look for an apartment by himself. He had a very difficult time for the next two weeks. It was hard to get a house because there were a lot of places which would not rent to orientals. That's the only reason why it was so hard because there are many vacancies.

"My son would go into an empty place and ask them if he could look at the room. They would look strange at him and tell him that the place was just rented. Some were more blunt and they would say that they would not rent to Filipinos, Chinese or Japanese. This happened many times and I think that it was racial discrimination. My son looked all over the city. I know that it is hard to get housing here because of the great shortage but it is harder for the Japanese because many places do discriminate. Mr. Forte said that there was not much discrimination, but my son can tell you different because he was the one that went out and talked to these people and was refused."1



After a month of "discouragement and hard luck, Mr. Sakamoto's son finally found a 4-room furnished apartment for \$63 a month rent (2 bedrooms, small living room, kitchenette and a private bath).

"The house is located on the upper end of the Near North Side, on Dearborn St. It was formerly a medium middle class residential area but in the past few years more and more transients had moved into this area. Directly below and above this particular location, the areas are composed of cheap boarding houses which have a large transient population which moves in and out. There has been a trend towards war-workers' families coming into this district in recent months. There appears to be a preponderance of single men and women in the immediate locality, however, the immediate district where Mr. Sakamoto lives, there appears to be a greater degree of stability and a larger number of individual families. There are quite a number of other evacuees living in this neighborhood. In the particular house where Mr. Sakamoto lives, there are 8 or 10 other Japanese. The landlady is of German extraction and apparently kindly disposed to the evacuees. Mr. Sakamoto stated that his son had applied in the next block for a vacancy and had been refused because of racial discrimination."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Sakamoto was not satisfied with the apartment because "it was too gloomy" so that the family started to look for another apartment only in the fall of 1943.

"1....The reason that we wanted to move was not because we did not like the people in the building but because we wanted a sunnier place on account of my health. We also felt that after my wife got her operation she would need a sunny place in order to regain her strength. There was a woman married to a Japanese (Mr. Arita) living in this building. She was an elderly woman and I heard she was a gypsy from Australia. We first met her at the hostel when she stayed there and she used to tell our fortunes for fun. Anyway Mr. and Mrs. Arita moved up to Sheridan Rd. just about the beginning of this month. She told my wife that there was a 3-room apartment near her so last Sunday, September 5, my wife and boy went up there to look at the apartment. They liked the place right away so decided to take it after putting down a



deposit.

"Our new apartment is in a nice location near the lake and it is quiet and in a good district..... The apartment is located only one block away from the Edgewater Beach Hotel and you have to take a bus to get there. It is rented to us for \$11 a week and we will have a large bedroom and a big living room with a studio couch where my boy can sleep. There is also a very big kitchen and a tile toilet and wash basin. We have to share a bathroom with another party that lives on the same floor."3

(needs follow-up)



## HOUSING

In May, 1943, Junji came to Chicago to join his wife. They moved to a small 2-room apartment on the South Side, but Junji felt that he was too cramped and that it was not better than the camp barracks since it also had bedbugs.

Junji lived on a fairly high standard prior to evacuation and he now feels that a temporary cramping like the camp apartments is not necessary. A large double bed takes up most of the room. The kitchen is rather narrow. For an extra dollar a week, the landlord put in another bed in the kitchen so that we can take in friends overnight. A bathroom is shared with other roomers on the third floor where Junji is living. The thing which causes Junji the greatest discomfort is the bedbugs. The landlord told him that most of the apartments in Chicago have them but he can't resign himself to all that biting at night and he plans to either get out or get rid of the bedbugs. Back in California having bedbugs was an unmentionable subject, but the people around here talk quite freely about it. A refrigerator, a small radio, several trunks, and some pieces of furniture complete the furnishings of the apartment. Junji feels that it is no different from the crowded camp and he stated that he was looking for a more homelike place. "I would hunt harder, but I don't know when I will be called for the Army and I may go off to school so that we can't plan on getting too settled." (p. 40)xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Early in 1944 Junji's parents relocated to Chicago and purchased two large buildings, one on the north side and another on



the south side which he reconverted into Japanese hotels. Junji and his wife immediately moved into one of them.

(needs follow-up)



HOUSING

James arrived in Chicago in the summer of 1943 with a very pessimistic attitude towards housing. He believed that this viewpoint was justified when he recalled his housing experiences.

"Times are hard for all of us and we have to expect a lot of discriminations. When I got here, I had a tough time finding a house. I would walk around and when I saw a vacancy sign I would go in and ask for it. The landlord would look at me funny and say that it was just rented five minutes ago. I would go outside but when I came back next day the sign was still up. In other places they would tell me that they did not want Japanese and other orientals in the building. They think that we are going to lower the rent. I reported some of these cases to the WRA but they can't do anything about it. They said that it was none of their business. They know that it is hard for us and they don't want to get involved if they can help it. The damn lady down there told me all about the other Nisei who got apartments and she actually tried to tell me that there was no housing discrimination. I just told her to come out with me once and see for herself but she said that she was too busy. That disgusted me. Finally I lied about my nationality. I told them that I was a Hawaiian. I finally got this place from the Jewish landlord and he don't care if we are Chinamen as long as we behave ourselves and pay the rent on time."<sup>1</sup>

At first James was very grateful to the Jewish landlord who took him in.

"You know, we have 28 Nisei in this building. They were allowed to come in here because of the kindness of the owners. They don't cause any trouble and they pay their rent promptly and they never make a lot of noise so that the landlord likes them. The landlord is a Jew. That's why he's taken pity on the Nisei. This is not like many Jews who cheated the clothes off of our backs in California just before evacuation. Some of the Jews are all right, especially those out here. They are not such money grabbers like the California ones."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Case History, pp. 13-14.

2. Case History, p. 10.



By the spring of 1944, James became very dissatisfied with his apartment because of a growing dissatisfaction with the landlady, but he was discouraged because of the discrimination obstacles. His comments at that time:

"I've been looking around for a new apartment, but it's pretty damn hard to find. You go up and down the streets, and then go up to an apartment building where they got a sign out, and they slam the door in your face. Or they tell you the apartments filled, and you know damn well it's a lie because the signs still out the next day when you come around. I'm getting so I don't like to ask about apartments. Maybe those atrocity stories had something to do with it.

"I got to get a new place. Our landlady raised the rent on us two dollars a week. I told her she couldn't do that because it's against OPA regulations and I refused to pay. She says the rent was lower than the OPA ceiling to begin with. So I went down to the OPA to ask them about it, and they said she couldn't do that to us, and promised to send somebody out to check on it. I went down a couple of times, but they haven't sent anybody out yet, so I've given up. This landlady is an Italian, name's Scarla. She's just like a gangster the way she acts. The first time she came up to raise the rent, I refused to pay, and she told us to get out. I wouldn't do either. Then one Sunday when we're at home, she came up with eight big Italians--just like gangsters. I had to pay up. Scarla's a famous gangster's name, you know.

"There are 27 Japanese living in our building. This Scarla doesn't own the building; she's just the manager for a Jewish fellow who owns the place. After she raised the rent on us, I noticed that she didn't include the extra two dollars on the receipt so I griped to her about it. She said it wouldn't matter because it was understood anyway. She said though, I notice she puts down the extra two dollars on the rent nowadays. I don't know what happened. (I suggested that this woman might be hi-jacking part of the rent without the knowledge of the owner.) You know what she did? She hasn't been providing the toilet paper, so my wife gets her own. But the other day, this Scarla want around demanding 10¢ from every tenant for toilet paper. She said the rent doesn't include toilet paper. She didn't come around to us because we got our own, but my wife heard about it



from one of her friends in the apartment. She raised the rent on everybody in the apartment too, and her proposition is that if they won't pay, they can get out. She's a bitch; a real gangster."<sup>3</sup>

For a while James believed that the only solution to the housing problem would be for Japanese to buy buildings to rent out to resettlers' families.

"I got a friend who is thinking of starting an apartment. Yeah, a Japanese guy. He's been looking around for some time now, but he hasn't decided on anything yet. I've been helping him look around, and the other day he saw a place that he thought was pretty good. They told him it would cost \$20,000, and he says, 'That's cheap,' so I figure he's got a lot of money. Any guy that says \$20,000 is cheap must have a lot of jack stowed away. I advised him to look for something on the South Side. The North Side is no good. Besides, I don't want to go way out to the North Side; it's too far from my place of work, here.

"I'm going to get an apartment from him if he opens up. I told him he ought to spend plenty of money getting good furniture and making things look good. He doesn't want to get anything dumpy, he wants a good place. If he charges \$45 or \$50 a month say for three rooms, that'd be plenty good. You know, some of these landlords demand a hell of a price, and they don't give you anything. But this guy could make plenty of dough if he just charged a reasonable amount, and brought in all Japanese. That's what he is planning to do. I'll get the best apartment in the building because I know the guy. I want something on the first floor. It's too much trouble climbing up the stairs. I'll let you know if he opens up. It'd be a damn good set-up."<sup>4</sup>

Around the first of March, 1944, James moved to another apartment on 61st St. It had six rooms, including three bedrooms, a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, and a bathroom. One of the bedrooms was for the mother-in-law, another for James' sister-in-law; and the third one for James, his wife and daughter. They paid \$60 a month rent, plus \$10-15 for gas and

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3. Case History, p. 35.

4. Case History, p. 36.



light. The furnishings are not new but they are comfortable and adequate so that James was quite pleased with this set-up. In describing how he got that apartment and why he moved from his previous apartment, James commented:

"This apartment is all right, isn't it? Of course, the janitor gets lazy now and then and we don't get hot water late at night. But the place is all right. You know how I got this place? There's a real estate agent around the corner called Seltz and Southman. They helped me out. There's a guy there in the front whom I talked to and right away he said he'd find a place for me. He says to me, 'I don't want to hurt your feelings but I'll tell you frankly that there are some places for which we're the agents that I can't get an apartment for you. Either the management or the people living in the building would object to having Japanese living there. It wouldn't be very pleasant for you either. But personally I like the Japanese. I go to the First Baptist Church and I've met some very fine Japanese Americans there. I've found too that they make very good tenants. They keep their places up and they pay their rent right on time. I'll find you a place and I'll find you a good one.' Well, he got me this place. That fellow's a Christian and by golly, he's square. ~~What~~ Of course, you know how the Nihonjin are, they're good tenants. That's why he likes to have us whenever he can. He said that if he could have his own way he'd have Japanese in all the best apartments that he could get.

"This place we're in now was occupied by an Armenian family. The old lady lived with her sons before they went into the Army. But now that they are gone into the Army she decided to rent the place out. The first week we were here, this old lady kept coming upstairs to see what we were doing to her apartment and her furniture. She'd come up half a dozen times a day and it got so that she was a real bother. I went over to this agent and told him about it and he said just lock the door on her and don't mind her. He said we were paying the rent and they were looking after the apartment and she had no business coming around. We haven't had any trouble at all though. It's not like at that other apartment where we had so much trouble with the Italian landlady. Jesus, we were paying \$16.50 a week for that apartment and didn't have half as good a place as we have now. After we moved out five or six of the other Nisei families moved out too. They couldn't



stand the place any more than we could. I heard that the OPA got after the landlady and the owner after we left. That Italian landlady was as sore as hell from what I hear. She wanted to know who told the OPA all about it. Well, I was the one who went down and crabbed to the OPA about the landlady jacking up the rent on us. They didn't do anything about it for a couple of months and that's why we moved out. I guess they finally got around to see about it. They're really putting the pressure on her now. I heard that she refuses to go down although the OPA has ordered her to appear at their office. She's gonna get into trouble yet. The funny part of it is, that we threatened to go down see the OPA and the boss are just like this (giving the sign of crossed fingers). Just like a gangster, huh? Boy, the laughs on her now. We didn't get the benefit of my kicking about it but she and the owner will find out that they can't fool around with their tenants.

"We were having trouble getting heat and hot water in the evening so I went over to the agent to see about it. The fireman who takes care of our furnace also takes care of several buildings along this block. I guess he tries to get out early in the evening and he doesn't take care of the fire late at night. I brought a cake and some other things to this agent when I went to see him. And boy, was he pleased. That's the thing about Americans, you can bribe them to do anything. He said for me not to worry about anything and I guess he told the janitor because for a couple of days we have plenty of hot water in the evenings. He's gone back to the old habits again but we're not kicking because we don't want to make any trouble. It's all right as it is."<sup>5</sup>

However, James was not completely satisfied with the living conditions in Chicago.

".....What I want is a home in a small town, a nice little place, with a job. I don't care for the big city anymore. Chicago is too big and dirty and crowded. Man, youggo up on 63rd St. about the time everybody quits work, and you get shoved into the gutter, the streets are so crowded. I don't care for that. I wouldn't even care to go back to Los Angeles. I want a small town to live in. That's the way I figure."<sup>6</sup>

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5. Case History, pp. 46-49.

6. Case History, p. 60.



James was resentful of his present situation because of his loss of security through the evacuation when he suffered a large economic loss and the suffering caused by crowding in the centers.

"Just after the war broke out I bought \$900 worth of furniture to fix up our house. We had a new refrigerator, nice davenport, new bedroom set. We had everything. I got it cheap from a wholesaler so it was good stuff. Man, we were happy. I was on top of the world. My wife was pleased as anything to have all that new furniture and all our friends used to come over and admire what we had. I'm a sociable guy and I like to invite guests over. And we used to have friends dropping in at our place all the time. When I tried to sell that furniture though I could only get \$450 for it. Gee, that made me sad. I had to sell my car too. I just got it all fixed up and then I had to sell the thing and I took a big loss on that too. I didn't mind losing money on the deal so much but the trouble was, that I didn't want to sell any of it because we just got it and been so happy in our home.

"What a contrast when we went to Santa Anita. They stuck us in stables and there was horse manure all over the place. It stunk something terrible. My wife was so discouraged when she saw the place that she and another girl sat on their suit cases and cried. Gee, I wanted to cry too, but I figured that someone had to be manly so I told them, 'Hey, there's no use crying, because you got to make the best of it.' We got a lot of lysol, swept out the room clean and scrubbed the walls and floors so that there wouldn't be any germs around. I didn't want to have my little girl playing around there in a contaminated place."

Late in 1944, James was inducted into the Army but his family continued to live in the same apartment. The expenses were managed through the Army allotment and contribution from his working sister-in-law.



HOUSING

During his first few weeks in Chicago, Eiji lived in a hotel on the West Side because it was close to his job, but,

"After staying at the hotel for a week, I got mighty lonesome so I thought I would rather move back to my brother-in-law's and make the long trip each day for the sake of the family life."<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the winter of 1943-1944, Eiji continued his search for housing without any success.

".....I walked the streets both before and after work and I watched all of the classified Ads. I didn't have any success at all even though I was willing to pay \$75. The WRA could not help me at all and they told me that a place like what I wanted would be impossible to find. I was quite discouraged as I had been looking around for many days. I had to take into consideration the location since I wanted it to be near my work and also a school for my children. I didn't find anything to my liking although I ran against no direct discrimination."<sup>2</sup>

In April, 1945, Eiji's family came out of the center to join him. A month later Eiji found a fairly comfortable unfurnished apartment and his family moved in. At the present time, July, 1945, Eiji is fairly satisfied with his housing although he would like a larger place. (see CH-49 for further details on housing)

".....I'd like to have a bigger apartment out in the suburbs but I can't afford the right rent and there isn't any openings anyway.

"I guess we are pretty well-off compared to a large majority of those Nisei who are crying for

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1. Case History, p. 48.

2. Case History, pp. 50-51.



any sort of housing now that the families have to leave the centers. Most of them do not have the income to take care of a family group because they weren't established out here."<sup>3</sup>

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3. Case History, p. 73.



## HOUSING

The chief difficulty for Ben and his family in getting out of domestic work was the lack of available housing. After one year in Chicago, Ben finally moved in with a friend temporarily in order to devote his full time to house hunting, but this arrangement did not work out so well.

"Quoting CH-4: I don't know how long Ben and his wife will be staying with us. They are supposed to stay for only a few days, but it has been a week already. I suppose it will be for another week at least. Ben doesn't do anything about house hunting but Masako buys the paper every day and she goes out to hunt in the afternoon and leaves the kids with me. It's not too much trouble, but it may prove inconvenient in other ways. It's not good for friends to live together because you find out all about their worst faults.

"Masako is a nice, quiet girl, but Ben can be awfully obnoxious at times. He is always full of big plans. He was making \$165 a month doing that domestic work. It spoiled him in a lot of ways because he is too fussy about apartments. And the food that they have been used to eating makes it hard for me. They are paying for half of the expenses for food while they are here, but my budget is really running up. The reason for that is Masako is used to cooking for 32¢ cans of mushrooms and all those things.

"It's much too expensive for us to develop tastes like that. Masako does not realize because she has been cooking for rich people for the past year. That's why I do all of the cooking around here now as she will run up our bill. When she has to budget on Ben's income, she will learn from experience."<sup>1</sup>

When the atmosphere became tense, Ben's wife and children moved to Cleveland temporarily to be with the grandmother, while Ben moved into a hotel. A month later, he called his family

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1. Case History, p. 16.



back to Chicago because he was able to find a small 3-room apartment over a garage on North LaSalle St. His wife could not stand the place so that in early winter, 1944, the family moved to a \$52 a month 3-room apartment further on the North Side. After Ben was inducted in the Army in the spring of 1945, his wife continued to live in the apartment, using half of her allotment to pay for the rent. (See housing adjustments described more fully in his wife's section, CH-42)



HOUSING

Mike had a great deal of difficulty in finding housing for his family. He came out of the center ahead of them in order to get a place, but he was not able to locate a suitable apartment.

".....I had to stay in a hotel at first. After work I would look around most of the evening for a suitable apartment. I tramped around all Saturday afternoon and Sundays. I never walked so much in all my life. Lucky for me, my boss got a good impression of me in my work so that he was kind enough to loan me a car while I was looking around. I found one place through a friend. He told me of an opening up on Clifton St. on the North Side so I went up there right away and I got the apartment. The owner had a better apartment later on so we moved after my wife and baby came out around August. The second place was much cleaner and there were less bedbugs around.

"However, we were still cramped and we wanted to get a flat as it was roomier. A friend of mine had a flat and he told me that it would be less expensive to furnish up a place in the long run. (CH-34) My wife and I figured that we would be able to swing it in a year and have all the furniture paid off without paying any additional rent. Flats were a little cheaper than furnished apartments and we figured that we could put the extra money into furniture and have a roomier place besides. I started to look around for a flat.

"That was when I ran into my first discrimination in housing. There were some flats open but the landlords just didn't want me in there. A few places told me that they could not take in any Japanese. It was not any use arguing with them so I just left. It made me feel funny and I didn't like it at all but you can't force them to take us in and they don't understand us. Other landlords told me that the vacant flats were already taken, but I noticed that the signs were still up when I passed by a few days later. Other landlords told us that there were not openings in a very awkward way and we just felt that they didn't want us around. I was pretty discouraged about the whole thing and I didn't feel good when I saw this discrimination, but I had to keep on trying



because we needed a larger place."<sup>1</sup>

It was November, 1944 before Mike found a suitable vacancy for his family.

".....My boss said that there was a vacant flat about a half a block from the garage. I thought that it was going to be another refusal but there was no harm in trying. I went over right away and talked to the landlady. I told her that I was in the garage and the boss would give me a reference. I looked the flat over and it was just what I wanted. The landlady seemed agreeable and she let me rent the flat right away. I ran back to the garage and borrowed some money so I could put a down payment on it. That night I went home and told my wife and she was really surprised.

"The flat rented for only \$25 a month unfurnished. I spent about \$400 to \$500 in furnishing it up and in buying all the other things to get started. I paid \$30 for our large refrigerator and fixed it up myself so it was quite a bargain. We had to buy a new stove and a lot of coal since it was winter time. We had to buy beds, and even blankets because we didn't have any. It took us quite a while to furnish the place because we went around second hand dealers. I had a car so I went down to Jew town on Maxwell St. and bargained with the Jews. If I don't get drafted for three or four months, then it would have paid me to invest all this money because we were paying over \$50 a month in rent at the other place."<sup>2</sup>

Mike was very pleased with his new flat as "this is the first real home that I have ever had in my life and it certainly made me feel proud." (p. 38)

".....I was living by myself in a rooming house before evacuation and I always longed to have a place of my own in a real home. I never got a chance to settle down after my marriage as we were evacuated right away and kept on the move. The camp quarters certainly did not make a home for us. This flat is much better than what I had hoped because I got so many discouragements in looking around. I

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1. Case History, p. 37-38.

2. Case History, p. 39.



like it swell and I think that we are located in a good neighborhood.

"The neighbors are not too friendly yet but they seem to mind their own business and we mind ours. The only thing is that I wish we had larger bedrooms now. The two bedrooms we have are pretty small and the one in the back is also dark. That is why we had to use the living room for our bedroom. However, when I see some of the other Nisei apartments I can't complain because they are really crowded."<sup>3</sup>

Mike did not feel that the infiltration of other resettlers into the area would make any difference because he enjoyed good relationship with his landlord.

"I'd like it if some more Japanese would move into this block. I don't think that the block people around here like it too much having us here but I don't care. The real estate agent for this area won't handle any more Japanese families as the hakujin people in this district protested against it. Our landlord told us one day that some of the neighbors told her to get us out of the place, but she won't do it.

"We get along fairly well with the landlord and she minds her own business. She understands our position and that is why she won't kick us out. Her husband is a German and during the last war he lost his job on account of all the prejudice so that they had a hard time to make ends meet. That is why our landlord sympathizes with us. I don't know if I will live here permanently but I will try to sublet the flat out to another Japanese family when I am drafted. My wife will go live in a smaller place or else she may go back to camp. We haven't made any immediate plans on that but I am a little worried that she will not be able to make out by herself out here. If I am drafted I plan to come back here and live after the war. I have all that money invested here in the furniture so I might as well hand on to it. It is a much better place than most of the Nisei have now and I don't want to go through all that house hunting again. In the other place we had, we only had three small rooms and we paid \$52 a month. It had too many bedbugs to suit us."<sup>4</sup>

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3. Case History, p. 39.

4. Case History, pp. 39-40.



On July 5, 1945, Mike was inducted into the Army, but his wife continued to live in the flat and she was able to manage with the Army allotment and by taking in three boarders who shared the household expenses. (See CH-36)



## HOUSING

In his initial temporary housing at the Brethren Hostel, John ran into conflict with the director after a few days.

"I didn't know Chicago very well so I called up the Brethren Hostel and asked them for a room. Mary Smeltzer told us to come right over and we would get fixed up. As soon as we got into the Brethren's Hostel, Mary Smeltzer began to inform us of all the rules and regulations. She said that there was to be no smoking or drinking since the hostel was located in a seminary. We were supposed to cooperate in keeping the place clean and other things like that. We agreed to all of these regulations so that Kim and I were given a room. Then another fellow from Manzanar, Lindy (CH-15) came in. He had been one of my roll call wardens at Manzanar. We started to smoke in our room but apparently non-smokers are hyper-sensitive to cigarettes as somebody informed on us. Mary Smeltzer was always trying to get after us but we would leave early and come back late in order to avoid her.

"One night we found a very polite but nasty note on our door which informed us that we were acting contrary to our agreement. Mary Smeltzer pointed out the fact that we should be more careful in our conduct or we would be requested to leave. I was fed up with these silly regulations anyway so I decided to move over to the YMCA while Kim went over to the Friends Hostel while Lindy found a room out on the South Side.

"The next day Ben Yoshioka of the WRA phoned me up and said that Mr. Shirrell wanted to see me. I went on down to the WRA office and had my interview. Shirrell said that he understood that I had gotten into trouble at the Brethren's Hostel and that our conduct was not becoming to a gentleman. I told him that smoking wasn't bad conduct so Shirrell didn't say anything more. He reminded me that the Brethren's Hostel was in a seminary and that the Brethrens were strict in their restrictions. What burnt me up was that I was the only one called on the carpet."<sup>1</sup>

For the next six weeks John left Chicago to tour the midwest cities in search of job opportunities, but he returned to Chicago to get married. He moved into a small furnished apartment

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1. Case History, pp. 108-109.



where he remained for the next two years. As other resettlers moved into the building and neighborhood, John became more dissatisfied with his housing, but he felt that it was too much of an effort to search for another location.

".....I was the first Nisei to be employed in the Merchandise Mart building and even living in this whole neighborhood, but now this whole building and area is becoming flooded with Nisei workers. I felt uncomfortable ever since they started drifting in.

"I feel the same way about the housing situation for the Nisei. I know that it may sound selfish for me to sit back in my apartment and feel that other Nisei should move elsewhere. However, I feel that limitations on housing have not set in and that there are many districts in Chicago which can be penetrated yet by individual Nisei. I feel that it is worthwhile for individual Nisei to suffer even unpleasant experiences if they can get located in new areas so that they will become more spread out and there will be less of a tension to press the Nisei group into a segregated area. I don't know what is worse as far as I am concerned; to move out of my present apartment and look for another place or to bear up and hope that the large migration of Nisei into this general area will not have an unpleasant repercussion. I think that the Nisei are nice people, but we have to think of the future and be careful that no distorted psychological attitudes are built up by the Caucasians who view us as an invading horde as more and more move into the neighborhood. Certain districts are much worse in this respect than others."<sup>2</sup>

John never made any attempt to become acquainted with the other Nisei tenants as he had his own circle of friends and he resented their curiosity.

"Some of the Nisei in this building are nice people but I just ignore them as I have a sufficient number of Caucasian contacts to satisfy my social feelings. There is one characteristic of the Nisei out here which I am at a loss to explain. Every time I pass one of them I notice that they ogle at you, especially if you walk down the street with Caucasians. I get the impression that they are shocked and they interpret it as some sort of a crime. They seem to have the wrong idea of any



Caucasian girl that I take out and that makes me uncomfortable. I began to wonder at the Nisei's lack of intelligence when this happens. I am concluding that they don't recognize democracy themselves so how in the hell can they expect to have it applied to them if they don't know what it is."3

In the spring of 1945, John left Chicago for a tour of California, but returned to Chicago within a month because his notice to report for induction arrived. Until he was called for the Army at the end of June, 1945, John lived with a Caucasian friend and all of his belongings were stored with a friend since he was planning to divorce his wife who had gone to Washington, D.C. in 1944.



# HOUSING

During his first four months in Chicago, Kimbo and his wife moved from one temporary housing location to another. Kimbo, who was very discouraged with the prospects said:

"They all give us the run around. They just say, 'Sorry, but it is taken.' We must have gone to at least 25 places. I'm willing to pay \$40 or more for a place. We pay \$7 each for a room here and it is screened off so that people walk through to get to the back. We are so darned discouraged about it that we may stay on here as we won't have time to look for a place after we go back to work. They kicked us out of the last place where my wife was working doing domestic work. In Cincinnati we had a good set-up because we lived in a Japanese boarding house and the expense for room and board for the two of us was only \$11 a week.

"I heard that Earl Iusa is running a rooming house which he leased so I might inquire about that place. I would like to get into a Co-op like the Concord House, but I guess they have too many Nisei there already. This housing problem is really tough. You can just tell that they don't want us but they tell us in a polite way. I got so mad in one place I looked that I tore the vacancy sign down after they said that the place had just been rented out. No wonder the Nisei are starting to live together; it's too hard to get a place when housing is scarce and the landlords don't want us too much anyway. One place said that they did not mind taking us but the other tenants would complain and move out and the value of the property would drop. As if we would be the cause of anything like that! It's going to be even tougher if I finally get called by the Army as my wife will be left all alone. Maybe we should get a flat and furnish it up as it would give us more of the feeling of settled down. All we have been doing since we got married last January is move from one place to another."

Kimbo first stayed at the 5110 Drexel Blvd. House after arriving ahead of his wife in July, 1944, but he was very dissatisfied with the set-up.



"I had to find a place to sleep so that the WRA man sent me out to 5110 Drexel and that was a lousy place to live in. None of the Nisei who live there acted friendly. I was disgusted when I went to bed and wondered whether I had made a mistake in leaving Cincinnati."2

When Kimbo's wife arrived in Chicago a week later, she had an equally difficult housing problem. The couple finally decided to take a domestic job out of desperation, but this arrangement did not work out and they were fired.

"By this time it was September and my induction notice to report came so that we thought of getting our own apartment in the short time we had left to be together. The employer overheard us talking of these plans so she told us to get out of her place immediately because she was so spiteful. We had a violent quarrel and I told her to mind her own business. I told her of all the complaints which we had accumulated and I had that she had not lived up to her bargain at all because she was trying to take advantage of us as she knew we were having a hard time finding an apartment of our own. Then she said she fired me before I quit just so that she could have the last word in the argument. I guess we made an enemy for the Nisei at that place. She was a real Jew and she was certainly stingy in the food she fed us. We were quite glad to get out of there."3

Since they did not have a place to move into, they returned to the 5110 rooming house temporarily. They paid \$28 a week for room and board and the couple spent \$220 in the first three weeks so that they renewed their efforts to find cheaper housing.

".....It's a very futile sort of thing to look for housing now and we were turned out of a lot of places on all kinds of dumb reasons. I think that it really was because the landlord was afraid to take in any Japanese. Several times we even rented a car

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2. Case History, p. 113.

3. Case History, p. 115.



to go apartment hunting but we didn't have any success. We spent many days looking around without getting a single possibility. We even went down to the WRA and asked for leads but they could not help us. We phoned places that were advertised in the papers but none of them turned out very good. The WRA leads were the most putrid places of all. The places tried to charge outrageous rents but we couldn't even consider the dirty places that we had been sent to by the WRA. I don't think they they know what some of the places that they sent Nisei to look like.

"After weeks of looking we got pretty desperate as it was too expensive to pay \$2 a night at 5020 Drexel. Finally on October 7 I met a friend out on the North Side. He happened to be moving out of his apartment in this building that very day. It was a strange coincidence. We asked him if we could take over and he said he didn't care. We came up here and looked over the apartment. At first we thought \$52 a month was rather high for this small apartment but we had to make up our minds quickly before somebody grabbed the place. After deliberating for one night we decided to move in as Sunny said she would come and share the expenses with us. The whole second floor here is occupied by Nisei but that is only including about six other persons that I know of. We just had to get out of the other building because \$14 a week was much too much for us. We decided that this was the cleanest of all apartments we had seen.

"We have a pretty large combination bed-room and living room here. The kitchen is rather inconvenient but we manage to get by. The good thing is that we have a private bath. There is a gas refrigerator here and the stove works well. After I get taken into the Army my wife plans to take in a third girl to live with them. I don't mind living in a building that has other Nisei in it because they won't bother me at all. It's too hard to break into new buildings that have no Nisei in them at all because they just don't understand us. Chicago sure has made me feel that I have a Japanese face. I just don't want to go house-hunting again because there is too much grief to it.

"We have only been in this apartment for a short time now but I am not entirely satisfied with it. There are cockroaches here and the rent is too high. We don't have enough furnishings or cooking utensils, however these things can be remedied. I



guess we will stay here as long as we can as we are tired of moving around."<sup>4</sup>

Kimbo believed that his housing problem was much simpler during the period that he lived in a Japanese cooperative house in Cincinnati when he was still single.

".....I was living in a Co-op house with 12 other Nisei boys. This was a very good arrangement because it cut our expenses down considerably. We paid \$13.50 a week for our room and board. The elected treasurer had charge of all the money and it was up to him to pay the rent for the building and then turn the rest of the money over to the Japanese cook. The cook was the mother of one of the fellows living with us. She was very economical in her management and she listed all the expenses and then turned back the balance of the money into the treasury at the end of the week. All of us worked during the day so that we had no trouble in the meal arrangements. At the end of the month we got rebates from the treasury so that our living costs were cut even lower.

"I got along very well with the fellows at the Co-op house as most of us worked together at the same battery company. We did practically everything together until we got girl friends and then we went our own way. We went to the same social activities so that we saw a great deal of each other. I guess it could be said we ate, worked and played together. The biggest gripe that these Nisei fellows had was that they were quite lonesome. They spent a great deal of time writing letters to girls in camp because there were not enough Nisei girls around Dayton. That's one of the reasons why those fellows left Dayton to go on to Chicago, Cleveland, New York or Detroit. Only about half of the original group are left there now and they are mostly the couples who find that they are able to integrate pretty well and they don't miss the Nisei society at all because they have found wives now."<sup>5</sup>

In December, 1944, Kimbo was drafted into the Army. His wife remained in the apartment until the end of June, 1945 when she went to Minneapolis in order to be nearer her husband. (See CH-54)

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4. Case History, pp. 121-123.

5. Case History, pp. 102-103.