

Evacuation and Resettlement Study,  
June 3, 1943. DST.

SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL RESETTLERS

Date of interview 8/17/43 Interviewer Shibutani

1. Name Omachi, Akira 2. Sex, M F 3. Married stat. M S D W O

4. Present address 1026 N. Dearborn

5. Later addresses Mercy Hospital Date June, 1943  
2537 Prairie " "

6. Birthplace Sacramento 7. Birthdate Sept. 9, 1922

8. Alien or citizen citizen 9. Nisei, Kibei or Issei nisei

10. Addresses between Dec.1, 1941 and evacuation

(a) 1820 - 3rd St. Date Dec. 1, 1941  
 (b) Tracy farm " Feb. 1942  
 (c) same as (a) " April, 1942  
 (d) " "  
 (e) " "

11. Assembly Center Walerga Date May, 1942  
 " "

12. Relocation Center Tule Lake Date July, 1942  
 " "

13. Addresses between time of leaving Relocation Center and present

(a) Baker U., Baldwin City, Kansas Date Oct., 1942  
 (b) 1026 N. Dearborn, Chicago " May, 1943  
 (c) " "

14. Persons living in household on Dec.1, 1941. Relationship to Re-settler

(a) Masao Father  
 (b) Tsuku Step-mother  
 (c) Tomoko Step-sister  
 (d) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (e) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (f) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (g) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (h) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (i) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (j) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (k) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (l) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (m) \_\_\_\_\_

15. Persons living in household on evac. day (If same as 14, enter symbol, e.g. 14(a).) Relationship to Re-settler

(a) (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) (b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) (c) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (d) Henry brother  
 (e) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (f) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (g) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (h) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (i) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (j) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (k) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (l) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (m) \_\_\_\_\_



SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL RESETTLERS, page 2.

15. continued	Age	Sex	M.S.	Birthplace	Grade compl. Amer.school	Educ.in Japan	Occupation Dec. 1, 1941	Relig. Affil.
(a)	64	M	M	Japan		12 yr.	bkkeeper	Methodist
(b)	35	F	M	Japan		9 yr.	hsewife	"
(c)	10	F	S	U.S.	4th		student	"
(d)	23	M	S	U.S.	B.S.		student	"
(e)								
(f)								
(g)								
(h)								
(i)								
(j)								
(k)								
(l)								
(m)								

16. If immediate family (parents, siblings, children or spouse) were not included in household group in 15, because of different residence or because deceased, give details regarding them)

	Name	Relationship to resettler	Residence (if deceased write "dec.")	Age (if dec. age at death)	Sex	Mar. Stat.
(a)	Tomiko	real mother	dec.	33	F	M
(b)	-----	brother	dec.	1 day	M	S
(c)						
(d)						
(e)						
(f)						

16, continued -

	Birthplace	Grade compl. Amer.school	Educ. in Japan	Occupation Dec. 1, 1941 (for dec. last occupation)	Religion
(a)	Japan		9 yr.	housewife	Meth.
(b)					
(c)					
(d)					
(e)					
(f)					

17. What members of household and immediate family evacuated together to Assembly Center or Free Zone (give symbols used in 15 and 16). a, b, c, d

18. Composition of household in Assembly Center or Free Zone (Give symbols from 15 and 16; if others, give sex, age, relationship) Upon arrival: a, b, c, d



SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL RESETTLERS, page 3.

18. continued -

Just before departure to Assembly Center or Free Zone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

19. Composition of household in Relocation Project (Give symbols; if others, give sex, age, relationship).

Upon arrival: \_\_\_\_\_ a, b, c, d \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Just before leaving Project: \_\_\_\_\_ same \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

20. Composition of household in Chicago at date of interview:  
 (Give symbols; if others, give details)

Name	Relationship to resettler	Residence (if deceased write "dec."	Age (if dec. age at death	Sex	Mar. Stat.
(a)					
(b)					
(c)					
(d)					
(e)					
(f)					

20. continued -

Birthplace	Grade completed American school	Educ. in Japan	Occupation Dec.1, 1941 (for dec.last occupation)	Religion
(a)				
(b)				
(c)				
(d)				
(e)				
(f)				

21. Changes in composition of Household in Chicago: Note departures by symbol and dates. Give details for new households or entries:

Date	Name	Relation- ship to resettler	Residence (if deceased write "dec."	Age (if dec. age at death)	Sex	Mar. Stat.
(a)						
(b)						
(c)						
(d)						
(e)						
(f)						



SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL RESETTLERS, page 4.

21. continued -

Date	Name	Relation- ship to resettler	Residence (if deceased write "dec.")	Age (if dec. age at death)	Sex	Mar. Stat.
(g)						
(h)						
(i)						
(j)						
(k)						
(l)						
(m)						

21. continued -

Birthplace	Grade compl. Amer.school	Educ. in Japan	Occupation Dec. 1, 1941 (for dec. last occupation)	Religion
(a)				
(b)				
(c)				
(d)				
(e)				
(f)				
(g)				
(h)				
(i)				
(j)				
(k)				
(l)				
(m)				

22. Educational history of resettler

Elementary schools (name and location)		Dates	Grade completed	
Lincoln, Sacramento		9/26-6/37	9th	
Grammar schools (name and location)		Dates	Grade completed	
High schools (name and location)		Dates	Grade completed	
Sacramento High, Sacramento		9/37-2/40	12th	
Colleges, universities and vocational schools (name and location)		Dates	Grade completed	Degree
Sacramento J.C.		2/40-2/42	14th	A.A.
Baker U., Baldwin City, Kan.		10/42-5/43	15th	
Attendance at Japanese language school, location		Dates		
Sacramento Sakura Gakuen		9/26-1/40		



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22. Occupational history (begin with first job). Note periods of unemployment by entering dates continuously and writing "unemp" in Job column to cover such periods. Include employment in Assembly Center and Relocation Project and continue with employment since resettling.

Dates		Nature of job	Type of industry	Location	Av. mo. wages	Reason
From	To					for termination
1934	1936	Grocery help	Grocery	Sac'to	20-25	Co. broke
1936	1939	Farm hand	Fruit farm	Lodi	\$90	summer job
1938	1940	Handy man	Contractor	Sac'to	30/hr.	Sat. job
1940	1942	Lab. Ass't.	N.Y.A.	"	40/hr.	finish school
1941	1941	Eng. aid	Calif. State	Marysville	\$100	summer
1942	1942	Packing	Asparagus	Tracy		evacuation
1942	1942	Timekeeper	W.C.C.A.	Walerga	\$16	
1942	1942	Lab. Tech.	Tule Hospital	Tule	\$16	
1942	1943	House boy	Domestic	Kansas	R & B	
1942	1942	Laundry	Wilson Meat Pack	Kansas	65/hr.	Xmas work
1943	1943	Orderly	Mercy Hospital	Chicago	\$80 RB	

23. Religious connections (begin with first, include assembly center and Relocation project and status after resettlement)

Dates	Attended what church	Where attended	What Sunday sch.
Childhood	Jap. M.E. Church	Sacramento	same
	Walerga		
	Tule Lake		

24. Political activities

Dates	Voted in what elections	For what party



Initial Interview

Document CH-106  
August 17, 1943  
Shibutani

Yoshio Onishi (pseud.)  
Student

"Before I begin I want to tell you about something that I've never told anyone before. I have two sisters in Japan, one 19, and one, 25, who are now living with relatives. When the war started my father decided to keep this a secret because he thought that it might get the rest of us into trouble, and I haven't told anyone since. A few months ago I was interviewed by the F.B.I. and I had to tell them about it so I think I may as well tell you.

"I came out here in October when student relocation got me into Baker University. My first day there was kind of funny. You see, Baker is in a small town called Baldwin and there is no railroad near by. I had to get off the train at Kansas City and then I took a bus to Lawrence. I didn't know how to get to Baldwin so I asked around a little and finally got disgusted and took a taxi to Baldwin. The first thing I did was to go to the President. He was very nice and he made arrangements for me to stay at the dorm. I think he was much too cordial. He introduced me to everyone and the whole thing was unexpected. I don't know, I didn't expect such a small school and I didn't expect people to be so nice. I really didn't mind though because I was out. Everyone is very friendly, and I just started right in. I was five weeks behind, but caught up right away. I think the kids were more friendly at Baker than they were in Sacramento. I joined the Independent Society there, which was open to everybody except the Greeks. I don't know, I didn't consider the frats. I guess I figured there was no chance anyway.

"My daily routine was not too regular but I generally got up



at seven and went to school. I had classes most of the day and if I didn't I went to the lib to study or stayed at the dorm. I ate lunch at the dorm dining hall. I didn't have much of a chance to mingle too much because we were assigned to tables. There were six people to a table and the assignments were changed every couple of weeks. I guess my closest friends were those with whom I had common interests. Some of them were church people. There were five or six people, two fellows and four girls, who were my best friends. I still write to them and they write to me too. We're all in different fields but I guess we just have things in common that we like.

"During the second semester two more nisei came to the campus. They were Reiko Mano and Mitsuo Yamada. I don't think I saw them any more than anyone else. We went to a show together once. We went on speaking tours too. I gave seven speeches. I didn't have to, but I felt that it was the best thing to do.

"After about a month I got a job working in the dorm. It didn't cut into my school time too much then it wasn't such tough work. I worked as a house-boy in Baldwin City later on for my room and board. During Christmas I worked in the laundry section with a meat company in Kansas City. In that way I picked up some extra money to help pay my way through school.

"I left Baker because it was too easy. I really wish I got to go to Cal. I had my heart set on going to Cal. I didn't study too hard but got all A's and I figured I wasn't learning enough to get into a good Med school. It was nice though and if it's impossible to go anywhere else I guess I'll go back. But if I can, I'd like to take a chance somewhere else. I left Baker when the semester ended because I didn't want to hurt anybody's feelings.



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"I came to Chicago alone. I left Baker and went to Kansas  
ty and then stopped over at St. Louis to see some of my friends.  
While I was there I went to the WRA and the man there suggested that  
I come to Chicago to look for a school and for work. It was about  
May 26 or so that I arrived here. The first thing I did was to go to  
the WRA. I left my baggage at the bus depot and went down to find  
out the phone number of George Okumura, a Sacramento fellow. I  
wasn't sure what the number was so I went to the WRA to find out.  
I got the phone number but he wasn't home. The WRA man told me to  
call him up at night because George was probably working. He told me  
if I couldn't get a hold of George and George couldn't put me up for  
the night, that I should call him and he would see that I got fixed  
up all right. I phoned George that night and got him. I spent the  
first night in Chicago with him, and stayed for two or three weeks.  
On the afternoon that I came here, while I was waiting for George, I  
went over to the Brethren's hostel to see Helen Nakagawa. I guess I  
was lucky because she was there.

"I guess it was about May 28th when I started working. The  
WRA sent me to Lexin Brothers hospital for a job. I was supposed to  
work 40 hours but when I got there I found out that they wanted me  
to work 60 hours a week for \$25.00 and one meal. I was a night  
orderly. I thought that was pretty dishonest, advertising 40 hours  
and then making me work 60 hours. After the first night I laid off.  
I didn't go back to work for three or four days and then phoned up  
the guy to tell him that I was going to quit. He didn't get sore or  
anything and said that it was okay with him and told me to come get  
my pay check. I haven't gone yet. I guess I won't miss a few  
dollars anyway.



"On about the 31st of May I got a job at the Mercy Hospital. I moved over there in June to live at the hospital. I worked at night at the hospital and during the day I worked for two or three weeks as a stock clerk at McClurg's. I got 55 cents an hour. I worked at McClurg's from 5 to 7 and then worked at the hospital all night. I quit the job at McClurg's at the end of June to register at the Central "Y" college. I took a course in General Histology. The school ain't so bad. I'm paying \$30.00 for a four unit course and \$8.00 in lab fee.

"Nowadays I get up about 2:30 in the afternoon and go to school. My class begins at 3:30. About 5:30 I eat at the Loop. Oh, I don't know, I go to any restaurant to eat. I feel sort of funny because I got used to nice food and nice company at Baker and now I have to eat in slop houses and taste greasy food. I'm home about three or four nights a week. Sometimes I go to shows and sometimes I visit my friends. When I go to shows after school I generally go alone. Most of the week-ends I spend with Yoshio Maruyama, a fellow I met in Tule Lake. I guess I have no special friends here. All the people I know, except the ones I work with, are nisei fellows. I don't see them much. Most of the girls I know are older than I am, and I see them about once a month.

"I generally work about eight hours as a night orderly. I work from 11 at night to 7 in the morning. I handle the oxygen and other services and when there's an emergency I help in the wards with the patients. I can't say that I like the work but it gives me good experience and lots of time to study. When there's nothing to do I could just sit around and read. I wouldn't take another job unless the pay was a lot bigger, because this job is good for me.



I guess I came at the wrong time because after I got this job I heard that there were some openings for lab technicians. That's the kind of work I really want but this is okay.

"I write home about once a week or so. I write in English to my father and in Japanese to my mother. My mother writes me about every two weeks. My brother, Henry, writes about once a week and I write to him about that often. I write my sister about once a week too and she always writes to me.

"I'm planning to leave Chicago in about a week and a half. I'm going to school somewhere but I'm not exactly sure where. I'll try to work my way through if I can, because once I get my B.S., then Henry is going to pay my way through Med school. I don't know yet whether I'm going to St. Louis or Buffalo. A lot depends on what my friends write. Frank Hijikada is in Buffalo now and he told me to just come up and register. But when I made an application there, they told me that the civilian quota for the medical school is filled up for couple of years. I'm thinking of going to the med school at St. Louis U. but I don't know how I'll come out there either. It's all very indefinite and I'll just take the best thing I can find.

"My parents, my older brother and my two sisters, one older and one younger, lived together until December, 1928, when my mother died. We got along swell in Sacramento, but when my mother died everything sort of broke up. In April, 1929, my father took us all to Japan and in September my father, Henry and I came back to this country. I don't remember what happened but the rest of the family told me that they were planning to leave me in Japan with my two sisters but that I cried so much that they decided to bring me back.



"My brother, my father and I lived together after we got back. We all batched together and all three of us helped to do the house work and the cooking and managed to get along pretty well. In 1932 my father married again. He went to Japan to get my mother's younger sister and brought her back with him. He was a treaty merchant so he was able to get an alien wife into the country. Both my brother and I got along very well with our step-mother. She fitted into the family nicely and we had no trouble accepting her. She took good care of us and everything was swell. I miss my real mother a lot but I think my stepmother has taken her place as well as anyone could possibly have done. I have a little step-sister now but we have always gotten along well with her.

"I went to the Lincoln grammar school in Sacramento. Practically everybody there were nisei or Mexican. I couldn't help but associate with other nisei because there were so many of them. I played basketball and baseball for the school team and also played basketball for the Japanese Baptist Church "B" team.

"After I graduated from Lincoln Junior high school I went to Sacramento high. I didn't mix too much with the nisei because there weren't so many in my classes. All the students were divided into X, Y and Z sections and most of the nisei were in the Y section. In English I was the only nisei in the X section and even in other courses, most of my classmates were Caucasians. I met a lot of hakujin while I was there. I was a member of the California Scholarship Federation, the Mathematics Club, and the Nanamoma, a biology club. I didn't join the Japanese Students Club because I didn't like the idea. I think they have too many socials and it seemed that it was all they every did. Oh, I liked the socials, but



I didn't want to be connected with them in any other way. I used to go to a lot of them and had a lot of fun. I spent most of my time in high school studying.

"When I went to Sacramento J.C., I was even more isolated from the nisei. For one thing, I had to work to pay part of my expenses. And that took a lot of my time. Then I had several laboratory courses and they took so much time that it was almost impossible for me to horse around. My schedule was pretty well filled up with work. I still went to socials, in fact, I attended more dances while I was in J.C. but I didn't have much time for anything else. I didn't have any particular girl friend that appealed to me. I had a few dates but generally went stag to all the dances because that's what everybody did. That was the custom in Sacramento anyway and I liked it better because there's not much responsibility involved. Heck, I was too busy. I didn't have any steady until I went to Tule Lake.

"I went to the Sakura Gakuen, the Buddhist Japanese school in Sacramento. I don't know why I went to this Buddhist school since I'm a Christian, but I did learn enough Japanese to be able to write letters to my mother.

"I've been working for a long time, because I started when I was quite young. From about 1934 I worked for my father in his grocery store in Sacramento. I worked there after school and over the week-ends until the company went broke in 1936. In the summers from about 1936 to 1939 I worked in a fruit farm in Lodi as a farm hand. I generally earned about \$90.00 a month but spent most of it. In 1938 and 1939 I worked on Saturdays as a handyman for a contractor in Sacramento for 30 cents an hour. When I went to J.C. I worked as



a lab assistant at the college under the N.Y.A. In the summer of 1941 I worked as an engineering aide for the State of California in Marysville. I got \$100.00 a month for that. After the war broke out I was a packer in Tracy in an asparagus field.

"I've always gone to church, in fact, I don't remember any time when I didn't go. We lived right next door to the Methodist church and went there ever since I can remember. I kept on going even after I got in the centers.

"I'd finished most of my required work at Sacramento J.C. and was planning to attend Cal in the coming year when the war broke out.

"On December 7th I heard of the war for the first time right after I came home from church. I turned on my radio to hear a symphony program that I used to listen to all the time while I studied on Sunday. Then I heard the news. I was just shocked and the first thing that I thought of was the possible consequences of this thing to my future and the future of the Japanese people in America. I couldn't help but think of the consequences. My dad came home an hour later and I told him, but he wouldn't believe me. He was just taken aback when he heard the news over the radio himself. It was awfully glum that morning. We were all very gloomy and just sat around and talked about what might happen to us.

"That afternoon there was a meeting of the basketball gang to draw up a schedule for our league. We all got together as we agreed to do, but we didn't do anything but talk about the war. We drew up a schedule all right, and then talked about not having a league. I don't think we got much work done, because everything was so uncertain. And nobody knew what was going to happen.



"That night I went to the young people's meeting at the church just like I had always done. Our minister didn't give his prepared sermon. He talked about the war and told us to be prepared for the future with faith. The secretary of the Church Council, a hakujin, came down to our meeting and spoke to us with tears in his eyes and told us that they were going to back us up.

"On Monday I went to school as usual and I don't know whether there was any difference or not. There was a difference, but it was mostly in our mind. There was one Caucasian fellow who was my pal for about a year and a half and he came up to me and told me that I was his pal just the same as before. We talked about the war a little, but on the whole there wasn't much difference. My folks were worried about Henry, who was in Berkeley. He couldn't come home because they wouldn't let him travel, so I had to go the health office to get his birth certificate. He came home after the finals at Cal.

"We had some Filipino trouble but it didn't have much effect on our family. Oh, I guess everybody got scared for a while but that was about all. I had graduated already so I went to work in Tracy. Henry went back to school to finish his last semester in Berkeley.

"I first heard of the evacuation when I was in Tracy, and as soon as the news came I went back home. We heard lots of rumors and I didn't know what to believe. But when I saw the official announcement in the newspapers I quit my job. We didn't have much, but we sold everything that we couldn't take. We didn't have any property so it wasn't so bad for us. We bought some extra blankets and clothes that we thought we might be able to use in the centers.



"Walerga wasn't so bad. I didn't expect anything good so I wasn't too shocked by the lousy place. I had worked in farms before so I was able to tolerate the outhouses. I started working right away as a timekeeper. There weren't so many socials in Walerga so I spent my time doing other things. I played on the softball team and sometimes played poker with the fellows. Most of the time we got together for bull sessions. I talked to girls too and had a couple of dates. This is where I got to know the girl I was going around with in Tule Lake.

"Tule Lake seemed like an awfully big camp. It seemed a lot better than Walerga. I went to work after waiting a couple of weeks and had a tough time getting a job. I went to the hospital lab and they told me they were taking five more lab technicians. There were some med and pre-med students around so I just barely got in, as the fifth person. I liked my work there though. I think I learned something.

"In my spare time I went around with a girl I met in Walerga. I started going with her about a week after I got to Tule. We weren't going too strong but we did go to a lot of dances together. We lived in the same Ward so I could see her quite a bit. I wrote to her even after I left camp but stopped writing about February. I guess going with her changed my plans a little bit because I wanted to hurry to get through school. My ambitions didn't change, but I wanted to get through school faster. Now that I think back over it, I guess I was acting just like an adolescent. There really wasn't much to it. If you don't mind, I'd rather that you skipped this subject.



"I want to be a doctor. I had thought of being a doctor before but decided definitely when I was in the first year of J.C. At first my father didn't approve. He wanted me to get out of school and go to work and thought that studying medicine would take too much money. He told me that there would be too many hardships that I would have to go through. I don't know why I ever decided on this career, but I remember once when my sister had convulsions and my mother and I had to stand around and couldn't do anything. I felt so helpless and I wanted to do so much. I didn't decide there that I wanted to be a doctor but I think that thinking about that thing might have had a lot to do with it. I used to read about Dr. Noguchi and all the things that he did for humanity. Lincoln was my hero too. I used to like to read the things he used to say.

"I wasn't definite for a long time but when I was in the first year at J.C. I had a long talk with our family doctor. He wasn't too encouraging but he did give me some pointers. I read Magnificent Obsession. Maybe that had some influence on me. I'm not quite sure as to what kind of doctor I want to be, but I want to be a successful one. Maybe I'll be a general practitioner at first but I want to do something else. I know that it will be impossible for me to practice among the Japanese because we'll probably never see a Japanese community again. My plans now are, after internship, to be a resident physician and then either teach and practice or do some research in medicine. You might think that I'm crazy for thinking this and I realize that my chances of doing this are pretty slim, but if everything turns out all right and if the impossible happens, there is one thing I'd like to do more than anything else. I want to do research and to eventually establish my own hospital. You can't tell nowadays



though so you have to be practically minded. I prefer research or teaching because I think I fit there better. I think a general practitioner does some good but his work doesn't reach as far as the work of others.

"I'm not too worried about race discrimination. I think that a man with ability can, in the long run, get through because I think that in the medical profession a man who has what it takes will be recognized regardless of his race. I want to be better than the hakujin doctors, not because of race, but because I want to do better work. I would be willing to work and go back to school later, but I am not considering quitting school now earn money because I'm not looking at the gloomy side. I always ~~look~~ for the good because when you look for the good things you can usually find some.

"I don't think the evacuation has changed my ambitions at all. I had planned to go to Cal and was quite confident that I was going to make the Med school. I didn't think about it enough because I assumed that I was going to get in. I guess I wanted to go to Cal because of its name. I may have tried to get a staff job or go into a different community after graduation. But I wasn't sure. I realize now that there will be no Japanese community and there would be too many doctors in the few communities that may form. I guess my only alternative is to be a resident physician and if I'm good enough I can get recommendations and gradually build up a clientele. I suppose I'll specialize eventually but I've made no decisions as yet. I'm more interested in medical work than surgical work. I don't think that I would like research in bacteriology because although I don't crave crowds I don't want to be isolated like Noguchi. I should like to<sup>do</sup> collaborating work like Gorgas.



"I'm not going to worry about marriage until after I get my M.D. While I was in Tule Lake, I thought I might get married and work my way through school with my wife's help. But after leaving the camp I changed my mind. I expect to depend on Henry for financial support for at least two years of my Med school training and I just can't afford to get married.

"I think that the war has hampered the plans of many nisei. Sometimes I get suspicious of the medical school authorities when they shut down the schools. I learned a lot shifting for myself and I think that coming out here on my own was of great advantage to me. I think that the thing that I miss more than anything else is a home life. I don't mean the house in Sacramento or the place where my parents are. I mean that there is no place that I can call home, no place where I can go home for Christmas. That's what I miss more than anything else."

Try to Get in Next Interview;

1. More details on reactions to the war and the effect of war on personal organization and social structure.
2. More details on family life, upon conflicts of values and upon major crises in the life history.
3. More details on work and upon associations.
4. More details on religious feeling, upon center life and upon activities in Chicago.
5. Get general outlook on life (Weltanschauung).



Second Interview

Document CH-106  
August 21, 1943  
Shibutani

Yoshio Onishi (pseud.)  
Student

"I never did think of the possibility of war seriously and didn't consider it before December 7th. I had heard of what the Germans had to take in the last war and after Pearl Harbor I thought of this quite a bit. It came so suddenly that I really didn't know what was going on. After reading all the stuff in the newspapers I thought that it might be true, but there had been so much talk like that for so long that I didn't take it seriously.

"After the war started there were no dances. When I was working in Tracy I used to go home every weekend to see my folks. I heard all sorts of rumors about families being separated and so I went home quite often. It was lousy in Tracy. We only worked a few hours a day. There wasn't much to do and I spent my time reading and loafing. I had a State job long enough but that fizzled out and that's why I went to Tracy. I knew a fellow who ran the camp and asked him for a job. He had no objections so he took me on. There was a Filipino camp about 10 miles from this place and I heard that a family had to move. I planned to earn enough money to go to Cal but the evacuation changed my plans. I went back to Sacramento and went over to J.C. to visit and heard about Student Relocation Committee. I filled out an application before going out to camp and another after I got there. I guess that's why I got out so quickly.

"I think the JACL bitched everything. I think the Sacramento JACL worked for its own interest and didn't care what happened to the people. There were lots of rumors in Sacramento even before the evacuation about beating up the leaders. They had a lot of guts charging for their services.



"I naturally associated with nisei more after I got into camp. I guess the big difference was that I was working instead of going to school. My hakujin friends stood by me though. One fellow sent up all my books when I got to camp.

"My experience in the farm plants wasn't as bad as those of some of the fellows. My folks knew a family and I used to go to their farm every summer. I knew the kid in the family and his mother treated me good. I hear some of the other camps were pretty bad but this kid and I were school-mates so it wasn't so bad. For a while the work was awfully hard for me. At night we used to go to town every two weeks or so but we generally just cleaned up, read and listened to the radio. Sometimes we played cards. I used to read Time, Reader's Digest and I think I read "Madame Curie" when I was working on the farm. The nisei stuck pretty well among themselves and didn't mix so much with the issei old-timers. I learned a lot of things about living that you don't <sup>learn</sup> live at home. I think of all the jobs that I had, lab technician was the best and the farm was worst. It's just the monotony and physical exertion and it doesn't get you anywhere.

"I'm not sure about religion any more. For a long time I believed all the explanations in terms of God. But lately my idea of God has changed. I think that studying philosophy and science changed my mind. I still think that religion is the citadel for the principles of all the fine things in life. It teaches men to understand and respect each other. There may be something to it and I go to church for a moral uplifting. Sure, I go to church and socials too.



I think people go to church for a common purpose and you feel different when you're inside of a church. I don't feel God anymore, but I feel that there maybe something to it. I still pray occasionally, especially when I'm in a pinch, when I'm up against something over which I haven't any control, when I feel desperate. Now that I have studied biology, I think ignorance accounts for God and I don't believe all this stuff about ~~be~~ man being created in the image of God. God might possibly be the universal spirit but I'm not too sure. I think religion has some value though. For instance, a man who is dying gets something out of religion. I think beliefs build up a man's life. I like medicine more because you can do something tangible. For a while I thought I would be a psychiatrist, but when I studied philosophy I changed my mind.

"We had some conflicts in our family but they weren't serious. My brother had to take the brunt of all disagreements. And I guess I sort of took over when he left off. He used to have a lot of beefs with my father. They used to argue and argue and I just listened because they ignored me if I said anything. When he left to go to Cal then I took his place and started arguing on my own.

"I guess the biggest argument came because of my father's objection to my going into medicine. He was not too well off financially and he thought that it might be too hard for me. He was always behind all of us though and encouraged us a lot. When I became valedictorian, he mentioned my going into teaching or law, but left the final decision up to me. I thought of aeronautics for a while, but when my Brother went into engineering, I decided one engineer was enough in the family.



"I guess one of the biggest troubles we had was money trouble. We always had to get along on the minimum. The bankruptcy was a shock to me. My Father became very touchy and we had a big argument when I told him I wanted an overcoat. I used to work and used my own money, and my father used to send savings to Japan for my two sisters. I wanted an overcoat because all the other fellows had one. But my father thought it wasn't necessary right yet. We had a big argument, when my mother stepped in and I had my own way.

"I got to go to dances in sort of a funny way. I started to learn when some girls started teaching me at parties. My dad told me that I shouldn't go because my older brother didn't. I went anyway though and I always got my mother's permission. Everything got straightened out when I went to the Senior Ball. I told dad that after all, I was the valedictorian so I should go and he agreed with me. After that, everything was okay.

"Oh, we had a lot of arguments. I guess I was smart alecky. I would bring up the scientific facts when my father said anything. He didn't like the contradiction and told me that I should learn to respect my elders. Sometimes I got so mad that I went to my room without eating. We stayed mad for about a week or so and then everything was the same. I thought of running away from home sometimes but each time I wasn't confident of myself and changed my mind.

"My mother's death changed a lot of things but I think I was too young to know the difference. I remember there seemed to be something lacking. My stepmother was very young and I was in my teens when she came. Sometimes she couldn't understand us, especially when we had our problems during adolescence. I'm sure my mother would have understood. She always was kind of bold. I was



told that when she was young, she learned to play the piano against her parents' wishes.

"The bankruptcy was awfully hard on my brother, but it didn't affect me too much. Henry went through a lot. He <sup>was</sup> just in J.C. at that time and he had to go through school without buying a single book. I think he worried a lot. Dad was getting old and he was wondering whether he ought to drop out of school and go to work.

"The first time I was away from home alone was when I was looking for a job in Marysville. When I left home before that, I was always with some fellows or staying with a family that I knew. When I went to work in Marysville, I was all alone and had to go around looking for a room. I didn't know what to do with my spare time and I didn't know anyone. I finally found an apartment. It wasn't such a good place, but I went there because my brother was there previously. The first few nights I stayed home and then I went over to see a friend who was referred to me. One of the fellows <sup>family</sup> in the ~~fellows~~ had stayed in our house in Sacramento during a Christian conference. A friend of my brother's introduced me to the Nakagawas. I went over there quite often after about a month. About that time some of the fellows working in the fruit orchards came and I wasn't so lonely. Lot of times I went to the library. I don't think I missed home but I did miss my friends. I wrote a lot of letters.

"When I first went to school in Kansas, I had to eat with a lot of people I didn't know. I didn't know anything about the kind of things they were talking about. Somehow I felt uncomfortable and the meals were not satisfying. Gradually I got used to it and I just ate and made a few remarks here and there.



"My first dance was a sort of a shock I guess. I had gone to parties before where they had dancing but I generally stood around and talked with fellows who didn't dance. I went to some class parties and the girls taught me a little bit. The Senior Ball was really the first dance I went to. I did feel out of place. I danced only with other nisei who were there but had a swell time.

"Being a valedictorian was a big moment in my life. I think speaking ability, rather than a good record, counted. We had a class of about 300 and about 25 of them,--the were members of the C.S.F. The topic was "Education for Democracy and American Investment." We had open competition. Three fellows were competing for the men's part. There was one fellow who went out often to make speeches and I thought that he had it in the bag. But the judges who came from J.C. selected me as the boy and one haku~~jin~~ girl. The whole thing was written up in a Japanese newspaper quite a bit. All my friends went to the commencement. I think George Inagaki was the only other valedictorian among the nisei at Sacramento high and he spoke about 10 or 12 years ago. There was a nice public speaking teacher who had long been interested in problems of the nisei and she helped me a lot. She was a young, nice teacher. You know, the kind you fall in love with. She made records and revised my speech. I guess it was a great honor for me. The nisei are immature. After I became valedictorian, some people starting associating with me who never did before. I think all the older people recognized me more too. In my first year at J.C., I got all A's and have been right on.

"I guess our family was pretty democratic. When decisions had to be made on anything my dad, Henry and myself would get together and talk the thing over. The others would saysomething too. But the



three of us made decisions. Nowadays, before I do anything I consult my brother, but he usually tells me to do as I see fit. About medicine, I've talked to doctors and deans and students like Harvey Itano.

"I used to play around with nisei gangs quite a bit. We used to play cowboys and Indians and rubber guns. I used to go to shows with my brother a lot, especially when my father was in Japan. I used to hate my brother sometimes, when we were young, but we are very close now. I never did fight anybody in my life. I got into a lot of arguments but they were most verbal. I couldn't fight because I was always small, always being skinny and underweight. I used to wish that I were as big as the other guys, then I would have taken them on.

"As far as racial discrimination is concerned, I don't think that anything ever happened to me that I could definitely call race discrimination. I heard a lot about it. I heard of group discrimination. For example, there were some skating rinks where we couldn't go in. We just never tried. There was one place where my minister told me no nisei could go in. But one night I went there with one of the fellows and everything was okay. We generally didn't go places that were supposed to be discriminatory. I go anywhere in Chicago. I think the trouble with the nisei is that they are over-sensitive.

"I've held a lot of offices before. In junior high school I was president of the student body, and I also held a lot of offices in



the young people's groups. I had some positions in Christian conferences and also took an active part in Christian Youth Conferences. I always got good grades and was generally at the top of my class.

"I have a lot of hobbies. The main ones are music and reading. I like symphonies, especially Greig and Chopin. At one time I wanted to take piano but didn't have enough money. I generally read Time, Reader's Digest and Current fiction. I don't go to church any more, but I used to go quite regularly.

"It's hard to tell what's going to happen to the nisei now, but I think they will scatter. Assimilation is very slow, but I think it will come. I don't see why the nisei are so pessimistic. I think they will get as much a break after the war as they did before the war. We look back now to something good in the past but when you stop to think, the nisei didn't have much to lose anyway. The evacuation gave us an abnormal life. To some I guess it was a big loss, but I think there are some people who got more things that are constructive out of it than out of anything else."

He can always be reached c/o Henry Omachi, 10921 Wade Place, Cleveland, Ohio.



Field Notes : Free Association

Document GH-106  
August 14, 1943  
Shibutani

Yoshio Onishi (psuen.)

Yoshio Onishi came to the office this afternoon to get some advice about Student Relocation. He realized that his chances of getting into the University of Chicago are very poor but he wanted to take one more chance before he left town for either Buffalo or St. Louis.

Yoshio wants to be a doctor very badly. He left Tule Lake in October through the aid of the Student Relocation Committee and went to Baker University. He finished his year there, but was dissatisfied because the work was so easy. He did very little studying and got almost all "A's". At the end of the spring quarter he left for St. Louis and then came here to Chicago in the hopes of getting into a harder school where he could finish his work for his B.S. and then enter a medical school. He feels that unless he gets out of a good undergraduate college he will have a hard time getting into a good medical school. He has one year to go and wants to do it either at the University of Buffalo or Washington University. Frank Higikata, also of Tule Lake, is now attending Buffalo and has written him that all he has to do is to go down and register. He wrote to the registrar, however, and received a polite note saying that the Army had sent so many medical students that the school could not take any civilians, regardless of race. He has applied to several schools, but has not indicated that he was of Japanese ancestry because he feels that civilians have a hard enough time as it is without giving the school an additional reason for turning him down.

Yoshio is attending school here in Chicago during the day. He goes to the Central Y.M.C.A. college during the day and works as a night orderly in a hospital at night. The Central Y. college is all right but he feels that graduation from there would not ensure his chances of



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being accepted in a medical school. He is not quite sure of what to do and is still "scouting around". He may go to Washington U. or Buffalo but even then he will have to take chances because he had heard that both schools had been closed by the Navy.

A few months ago he was questioned by the F.B.I. He felt that it was the most thorough questioning that he had gotten anywhere. He didn't know exactly what he had to be selected for questioning, but he thought that his quitting a job after one night may have had something to do with it. Another thing that bothered him was that he had two sisters in Japan, about whom his father had said nothing during the registration. The family decided that they would keep the matter quiet and did not bother to register them. He thought that possibly this might have something to do with it and he confessed everything to the F.B.I. man. He felt that the F.B.I. man was like a "typical sheriff" at first and asked him all sorts of questions about his past connections and loyalties, but by the time he had finished he was quite sympathetic and agreed that the evacuation was a "dirty deal".

Yoshio says that he misses his family much. He is very much attached to the others and says that he would like to be home sometimes although at present he is set on getting his education and finishing his work. He had always been very close to the other members of his family and had always gotten along with them very well.

He does not worry much about the future except that he does take into consideration such factors as going into the Army. He always expects the better thing to happen, but he is prepared for any eventuality. He would like to get into the A.S.P.T. program of the Army to study medicine, but states that he has heard that the Nisei who



are not in Shelby and Savage are discriminated against and that they are given only the dirty menial tasks to do. For that reason he is not too anxious to get into the Army although he feels that if he is drafted there is nothing that he can do about it.

He has also thought that maybe it might be a good idea to save as much money as possible now and then use it after the war to go through school. He is counting on his brother Henry to pay at least a couple of years of medical school for him. Naturally, he thinks, he will have a hard time after the war, but he feels that he will be able to make the grade. If he cannot make the grade, he feels that there is nothing left for him to do but to readjust himself and to decide once for all that he wasn't meant to be a doctor and do something else.

He has always gone to church but since working at the hospital where there are many nuns working he has begun to have some doubts about religion. He states that he thought at one time that the nuns were very noble individuals, but now he is of the opinion that they are nothing but old women without a sex life. He thinks that they are just as mean as anyone else and that they are maladjusted.

In a discussion of the situations of the Nisei he stated that he thought it was a good thing to know about all the political forces that were operating to put us "on the spot", but felt that a knowledge of the forces merely made one aggrry because there was no much that could be done about it. "It's good to know the facts, but what can we do?" He has been interested in human behavior too (from a biological point of view) and he confesses that he doesn't quite know why people have to behave as "stupidly" as they do. This statement was made with reference to the Nisei and to Martin Dies.



(COPY)

CH-106

August 30, 1943

Hello Tom,

Went to St. Louis and got a pretty nice report from the St. Louis Med. School. Slim possibility for Nov. '43 class and I hadn't even expected to make that class! Washington U. - not too favorable for Oct. '44; too much competition for a few places. In Cleveland now, over at brother's, expecting to go to Boston or Ann Arbor. Nisei people better situated here it seems. Write you from Boston.

/s/ Yoshio Onishi (pseud.)



(COPY)

CH-106

Sept. 18, 1943

Hello Tom,

After going all the way to Boston to see if I could see any schools of hi repute that would prove worth transferring to, I had to fall upon my first lead, the U. of Buffalo. As the situation stands, it is just about the best situation for me. Haven't heard anything definite from St. Louis and am afraid the situation there is hopeless. However, the delay may prove advantageous (and then again not) in paving a possible way to schools out here in western N.Y. Very few niseis here. Best regards to Tomi and your staff.

/s/ Yoshio Onishi (psued.)



War.

8/21

Did you expect it?

What activities were curtailed? What rumors heard?

Daily routine in Tracy? Why there? Fears? Long. of plans.

Evacuation - feelings about civil liberties - JACL  
sold what & whom.

Any changes in assns.?

Family life

Any conflict in values? What kind of marriage best?

ever have arguments? - Over what?

What major crises? Who made decisions?  
Unexpected things

Childhood - playmates - gangs - games  
ever had discrimination?

Work -

describe life in farm camps - what learned?  
what jobs did & why - other cause?

Religion -

real feelings now? When first feel that way?

Associations -

what groups belong to? Cliqués? Offices held  
what interests & activities? Who were good friends?  
hobbies - changes

Center life

making home in barracks - educ. - work -  
recreation - rel. act. -  
why come out?

Chicago.

attend church? Belong to group?

Attitudes (welltranslating)

the future, Am. citizenship, J. Comm., relief from govt.  
future of nisei