

PSEUDONYMS FOR
CASE HISTORIES
(Chicago)

200-399

Box #

RESTRICTED

Real Name

Doc. No.

Alias (in quotes)

Address

Phone

Remarks.

Document No.

Real Name

Sato, Shig Jeff

CH - 201

SJS

YMCA Hotel

826 S. Wabash, Chicago, Ill. WAB 3183

Remarks:

CH-201

SATO, SHIG JEFF

Code: CH. 201

CASE HISTORIES -- Chicago Relocation

6/4/43
Tanaka

^{CH}
CASE NO. 201

Summary description: SJS, 27, male, single, unskilled laborer, U.S. citizen, 5' 7", 140 lbs., has been in Chicago since March 28, 1943.

Pre-evacuation: SJS, according to his application for employment form, was born Nov. 3, 1915, in Glendale, California. He attended John Marshall Grammar school and Glendale high school, leaving the latter after two years' attendance in 1934. He majored in wood shop, according to his own information. Upon leaving school, he worked as a janitor, earning \$100 monthly, for one year. In 1935, he secured a job as a truck driver for a Japanese-owned produce firm at the Seventh Street Wholesale Terminal in Los Angeles; his application form states he earned an average of \$120 monthly, from 1935 to 1942 in this work. There is an interim, 1939-1940, during which he did gardening work, receiving \$100 ~~j~~ monthly. SJS lived in a hotel on East First street in the heart of Los Angeles' "Little Tokio" before war; his life was centered largely among persons of the Japanese race; he ate almost all of his meals 'out' in cafes located in the Japanese district. SJS has visited Japan three times, in 1925, 1932, and in 1935. Both his father and mother are in Japan, apparently have been since his last visit overseas eight years ago.

Evacuation: SJS, according to a Caucasian reference, made the best of the situation when evacuation overtook him. This same reference, who had business dealings with SJS, des-

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cribes SJS as having a pleasing personality, good character and moral standards, as being speedy and efficient in work, a good team worker, with a good rating in his job as truck driver. He is also described as just average in the impression of appearance he creates, average in intelligence, initiative, originality, sense of humor, responsibility, health, and in his adaptability to unforeseen tasks. A fellow evacuee reference, a person of Japanese parentage, rated him somewhat higher in most of the foregoing points, adding in his letter that SJS was "ambitious and industrious, capable of almost any kind of manual labor, courteous and honest." This same reference added, however, that SJS had a "weakness--his weakness is restlessness; he is the type of fellow that abhors idleness which causes his restlessness."

R e s e t t l e m e n t : On January 7, 1943, SJS wrote the following letter to the American Friends Service Committee--

"January 7th

"Dear sir:

"Will you please send me a work application blank?

"I am an American citizen. I'm 27 years old and I'm single.

"I am willing to work as janitor, dishwasher and any kind of warehouse work. Past ten years I have been a truck driver. I am willing to take what others refused. I also been a produce buyer before evacuation.

"I certainly appreciate any information you could give me.

Yours truly
SJS

There appears to have been some delay in his receiving an application blank. On January 27, he wrote again.

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Two days later he received his form which he filled out at once. He secured his clearance from the Leave Office at Manzanar in the next few weeks, and on March 25, left the Center for Chicago, arriving in the Windy City on or about March 28. His record from that point on, as pieced together from the files of the Brethren Service Committee, Friends Service Committee, War Relocation Authority, follows:

March 30: SJS called at the Friends Service Committee for aid in locating quarters; was referred to the YMCA hotel. He said he had come to Chicago under auspices of both the Friends Service Committee and Brethren Hostel.

April 5: Through War Relocation Authority and the United States Employment Service, he got a job at Mc Clurg's stationery & printers, unskilled labor, at .55 per hour; he was able to earn an average of \$24 weekly.

April 17: He quit Mc Clurg's; "can't earn enough to make ends meet; the work's too monotonous and I don't like it anyway", he said to an interviewer at the Friends Service Committee office.

April 21: He asked for assistance from the Friends Service Committee in finding another job. "Hours were too long at McClurg's," he added to his previous reasons for leaving his job. He was furnished with two leads: Burry Bisquit Corporation, and Agar's Corrugated Carton Manufacturing Co. On this day he expressed discouragement over having had to "walk all over the damned city looking for a decent apartment. Everywhere I'm turned down. You know I've walked to at least 75 different places in the last three weeks. Even where they

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had a sign saying 'vacancy' I was turned down every time."

April 28: Through assistance of the Brethren Service Committee, he found employment as a stock room clerk at the Congress Y.M.C.A.

April 30: He quit his job at the Congress Y.M.C.A.

May 1: He went to work with the Agar Manufacturing Company, was assigned to unskilled labor in the factory feeding folded carton parts into a machine.

May 3: He quit Agar's.

May 10: He found a job at Wrap-in-Wax Corporation on the South side, earning .65 per hour for an average weekly wage between \$25 and \$30. He had moved from the downtown Y.M.C.A. Hotel at 826 South Wabash to the Aladdin Apartment-Hotel, 5559 West 63rd Street to be nearer his place of employment.

May 29: He quit Aladdin's Wrap-in-Wax corporation, moved from Aladdin back to the downtown Y.M.C.A.

On Wednesday, June 2, he visited the Friends Service Committee office to "borrow some money. I need it bad. If I can't get it, I'm going back to camp."

H i s s t o r y : "I been going into a hole every week. I need money for my room rent right away. I just got my stuff moved to the Y.M.C.A. hotel. I been in Chicago nearly two and a half months. I owe \$123 to three friends. To one of them I owe \$93. I've earned about \$150 in six weeks when I was on a job. The rest of the time I've had no income. My expenses have run up to about \$273." He did not indicate

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any feeling of obligation to repay his friends the money owed them. He appeared to be in emotional strait jackets, smoked cigarettes incessantly, was nervous. He did not readily volunteer information. He was reticent, evasive, occasionally contradicted himself. He did not give a true account of his employment record, according to a later check with various agencies concerned in his application. He said at the time:

"I've just had two jobs since coming to Chicago. I worked three weeks at Mc Clurg's; then I was unemployed for three weeks. I looked for an apartment and other jobs during that time. I got a job at Wrap-in-wax, and it was good all right, paid sixty-five cents an hour; but it was too far. Besides, the manager of the Aladdin apartment didn't seem to want permanent guests around; he could make more money with the overnight business so I moved back to the downtown Y.M.C.A."

Money--rather the lack of it--was his chief problem. He kept no account of his expenses, could only approximate expenditures.

The interviewer wrote down SJS's itemized expenditures to determine why he had been going steadily into debt. The "budget" follows:

Rent (average) ...	\$32.00 (mo.)
Food (ate meals out)	37.50
Transportation....	5.00
Laundry	8.00
Recreation	12.00
Cigarettes	8.10
Miscellaneous	15.00
	<hr/>
	117.60

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Actually, SJS did not know, exactly, where his money had gone. "I needed clothes too, and quite a bit went for that." This was listed in the miscellaneous column.

What he did know for fact was that he couldn't make ends meet; he was going into debt.

"Before war, I was making \$35 a week," he said. "I got \$30 week pay, plus a bonus which the boss gave me at the end of the year; this made it \$35. I lived in Nihonmachi (Little Tokio district in Los Angeles. My rent cost me just \$10 a month; I could eat all I wanted for \$1.50 a day. I saved \$20 every month. I can't eat in Chicago for less than \$2.25 a day."

SJS was undoubtedly bitter about his experiences.

The race prejudice he said he had encountered in trying to secure a room had deepened his race consciousness. "We Japanese" was a common expression in his limited vocabulary.

Part of the interview of June 2 follows:

Interviewer: "We want to be of help, but you know this agency is limited in both finances and personnel. As a matter of fact, we did have a loan fund, but it would not be available in a case such as yours."

SJS: "I'm going back to camp if this doesn't go through."

Interviewer: "Would it help you at all to get another job lead? Why is it that you quit your last job, if you were satisfied with the pay and say it was a pretty good job?"

SJS: "It was too far."

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Interviewer: "But you've just told me that you lived at the Aladdin Hotel right near the place."

SJS: "It wasn't such a hot job anyway; I got tired of it."

Interviewer: "Now your budget, rather that itemized list of expenses you've given me, shows you spend \$12 for recreation and \$8.10 for cigarettes. Couldn't you cut down on both to keep from running into debt?"

SJS: "Naw, I just got to have them."

Interviewer: "You're spending quite a bit more than average for food also. I presume you must have a healthy appetite, but we have figures of fellows who eat an awful lot on just as half as much as you are spending. Can't you cook your own meals and pack your lunches?"

SJS: "Sure, sure, I'd do it first thing if you could find me an apartment house. That's the first thing I want. That's what I've looked for more than anything else. I ain't got anywhere. I've looked at over 300 places. Why one day on Drexel I went up and down asking at every apartment house on the street. Most of the places had "Vacancy" signs. Yeah, every one of them had a "vacancy sign" but when I went in, every one of them said it was filled up or 'just rented' or something like that. Why one place, just as I left, a Japanese couple came in and they got the place rented."

Interviewer: "Do you feel that you have been discriminated against because of your race?"

SJS: "Sure, I have. If you're a Japanese, you haven't got much of a chance to get a decent place."

Interviewer: "But you just mentioned that a Japanese

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couple followed you and got a place."

SJS: "Yeah, they discriminate against bachelors."

Interviewer: "Do you plan to look for another job? Have you given it any thought? Don't you think, rather than trying to borrow more and go into debt more, if you got a job and stuck to it, you'd do better?"

SJS: "My mind's pretty much made up. I need the money, and if I don't get it, I'm going to thumb my way back to camp."

Interviewer: "All the way across the country to Manzanar?"

SJS: "No, I've got a married sister at Colorado (Amache Relocation Center). I'll go there."

Interviewer: "Before you do that, though, let's review your job situation. Your card here shows that we gave you two references and job leads on April 21 right after you had quit Mc Clurg's. Now your quitting Mc Clurg's was not completely approved by either W.R.A. or this office, but we felt you should be given the benefit of any doubt and should be helped. What did you do in following up the two leads we furnished you?"

SJS: "I only went to the one: Agar's. It was a pretty good offer, but the job was hard. You got to work pretty hard."

Interviewer: "Don't you like to work hard?"

SJS: "It looked like too hard work."

Interviewer: "Did you have any other job leads at that time?"

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SJS: "Yeah. Ever Wax Polish. They offered sixty cents ^{hour} ~~an week~~ on a 40-hour week. Trouble was you had to mix powder and I don't think it was so good for health. I never took it."

Interviewer: "You came back after a few days, I believe, and we sent you out to the Galler Drug Company on a lead for a stockroom and order filler clerk. It was a fairly good job and met your request for something where you could use your head. How did you come out on it?"

SJS: "The guy didn't seem to want Japanese."

Interviewer: "What makes you say that?"

SJS: "He just gave me the run around."

Interviewer: "The personnel manager of the firm who interviewed you has no race prejudice, as far as we can determine. He has expressed a desire to employ any evacuee providing he qualifies. He did say, however, that he did not feel your qualifications would fill the particular job. You should differentiate between your inability to get a job because ~~your~~ your individual qualifications are not up to par and your inability to get a job because of the race prejudice of a prospective employer. Don't you think you are inclined to exaggerate race discrimination against you because you are so race conscious yourself?"

SJS: "Well, I don't know. But it sure has been lousy for me."

Interviewer: "You've not made up your mind completely about going back? You'd rather be outside where you're free than back in camp behind barbed wires."

SJS: "Sure, I like being out in a city. I'd rather be

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out, naturally. But it's a matter of making a living. I can't make a go of it."

Interviewer: "If you go back to camp. though, that's not meeting the problem. You'll have to come out again some day, won't you?"

SJS: "Yeah, but maybe things will be better for us Japanese then."

Interviewer: "If they charge you for room and board when you go back, have you thought of that at all?"

SJS: (grinning for the first time) "Sure, they can charge me me for room and board all they want. Just try to collect. You can't squeeze blood out of a turnip."

Later that same day, SJS appears to have been lectured by Ralph Merritt, project director of the Manzanar Relocation Center, then visiting in Chicago with Elmer Shirrell, head of the Chicago W.R.A. office. According to report, Merritt reprimanded SJS for his extravagant living, his failure to make a go of things in general, for his plans to go back to a camp. He is said to hav threatened that if "you go back to a camp, we'll throw you in the camp for incorrigibles and misfits, and you won't be able to come out for the duration." Merritt advised SJS to "keep away from the Chicago W.R.A., keep away from the Brethrens, keep away from the Friends Service Committee, keep away from all these do-gooders. Stand on your own feet. You're old enough to take care of yourself. Now go get a job and stick to it." Merritt is then reported to have lent SJS ten dollars for his room rent.

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Shortly after this episode, SJS visited the Friends office again. He told a staff member that he was going out to find work.

The next morning, however, he was back again, this time to be interviewed by the head of the midwest branch office of the Friends Service Committee. He left the impression that he was bitter, disillusioned, ready to go back to camp. He departed in an angry huff.

The record of Case No. 1 is an account to be continued.