

NAKAI, HARRY

3 LETTERS, 1943

RE ANTI-JAPANESE EXPERIENCES OF  
A RELOCATION CENTER EVALUATE  
WHILE WORKING IN DALLAS.

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6H-6F

Amache, Colorado

April 12, 1945

Dear Mr. Kingman:

Thank you very much for your kind letter of inquiry. It was such a pleasure to hear from you and to hear about the fine work that you are carrying on and the work that Mrs. Kingman is doing for the restitution of our rights and status. I appreciate very deeply this solicitude and sense of Christian justice which motivates men of your type and it is the one thing that gives we evacuees a sense of security and faith in the American Destiny.

I experienced a very unpleasant stay in Dallas, Texas. I received a position there as shipping manager for the firm of R.G. Hamilton, cotton merchants, for whom I worked in Fresno prior to evacuation. Mr. Cecil F. White, the manager, is a very close friend of mine and he offered me the position as his means of alleviating my present status. Upon reaching Dallas, I reported to the local FBI and the US District Attorney and they found nothing out of order. Furthermore, my leave clearance was granted by the FBI and the Military and Navy Intelligence. After a two week's stay during which I found the public and my business associates both pleasant and friendly, I was picked up by the Dallas Police on a suspicion charge. The Inspector of Detectives, one Will Fritz, of Dallas, gave me a gruelling and unmerciful grilling. I was finger printed, photographed and locked up in jail. Every conceivable third degree method of grilling was tried on me trying to make me confess that I was a spy of the Japanese Government. I held my ground and stood upon my rights as a citizen. I was questioned for eight hours and then released, only to be picked up on five successive days and held for further grilling. My case was featured in the papers and the whole Gestapo methods were a travesty on American justice or justice of any other country. Fritz seemed to derive a sadistic pleasure from persecuting me because of my race and as empty as his charges were, he would persist in having his detectives pick me up and hold me for questioning. When I would not consent to leaving Dallas, he called in the Dallas manager of the firm and questioned him for hours at a time, working on the theory that by disrupting office routine, the firm would have to release me from its employment. He leveled threats against the firm to charge them with un-American activities by their hiring me at a time when Japan was our enemy. I tried and tried to convey to him the idea that I too was an American citizen and entitled to the protection of the police instead of being persecuted by them but he poohpooed the idea and told me I was just a Jap to him. Finally, he picked up every person with whom I had made contact with in Dallas and held them for questioning. Then too, the YMCA where I was staying asked me to vacate their premises because of the bad publicity my residence there created for them.



I looked about for some agency to help me but failed, only my employers remained loyal towards me to the end but with the way I was being picked up daily, I foresaw that my value to the company was nil and that I was a deterrent to their commercial status and finally left Dallas, sad and disillusioned.

The gist of the tale is that Will Fritz, a responsible official cared nothing for my rights, he could see in me only a person he could sadistically persecute. Some of the detectives who questioned me felt foolish but Fritz was the boss and he was adamant that he kicked me out. I conveyed my experiences to the WRA officials in camp here but they have done nothing to correct the situation except to say that henceforth, Texas would be closed to resettlement. The few friends that I had in Dallas were the Hayashis (Dentist Bros. of Berkeley and the Koike's and Domoto's and they are being subjected to merciless attacks from Fritz also).

As time goes on, I have begun to see that this is only an isolated case and the trouble lays with the race baiting Fritz for the public at large in Texas were okay in every sense of the word. I have not become embittered because I know that individuals of Fritz's type are few and far between. Still, I hope someday that I can meet Fritz again face to face and let him know that Democracy and Americanism are the things he destroys by his phoney patriotism.

I enjoyed your marvelous article, the things you express so eloquently are surely to the point and I hope that you and men of your type will continue the good fight to preserve democracy at home.

I have no immediate plans, I hope that I can make some contact in another region to find employment soon for this life as a camp school teacher is not too conducive to learning nor advancement.

I am teaching in the Jr. High School here and it is gratifying to see the generally high type of Caucasian teachers with whom I come in contact. The officials in this camp are a high minded type who are trying their best to carry out the WRA program as fairly and as humanely as possible. This camp is the smallest one of the ten centers and it has been free from trouble of any sort and my life as a Councilman is a safe and sane one compared to that experienced in some of the other centers. It is composed of people from the Merced and a portion of the Sta Anita group. George Morey is here and is the manager of the Community Enterprises and he is doing an excellent job as a business executive. Not too many Cal kids here.

When you have the time, I wish that you and your wife's Committee might contact Mr. Cecil F. White, P.O. Box 1428, Fresno, California. He is a very high type of individual who represents all the high ideals for which you stand and a person whom I hope that you will be able to count amongst your friends. Perhaps you recall Gregory Hamilton, brother-in-law of Harry Scott and who was in the Japan Society, Mr. White is a business associate of Gregory's.



Larry Collins was in camp a few months ago and I enjoyed a pleasant chat with him. He is connected with the WRA in Washington and it seemed good to see another of the Stiles Hall group. Perhaps you know Caleb Foote of the FOR in Berkeley, also had the pleasure of meeting him. Kirby Page spoke to us two weeks ago and left us a very inspirational message. It's men like him that gives us a great "lift" and restores and strengthens the "will to win" in all of us. We are always cheered to hear about groups such as the Committee on Fair Play which Mrs. Kingman heads and it helps to counteract the adverse news which reaches us concerning the policies of the Legion and the NSDGW in California.

Thank you again for your letter, and for all the hard efforts made by you and men like you against the current tide of race persecution, this takes real guts and I am proud to be able count you as a real and true friend. Please remember me to Mrs. Kingman, and with best personal wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

*Larry Waka*



6H-6F  
Amache, Colorado  
April 21, 1943

Dear Mr. Kingman:

Have just received your letter of the 19th. Passes to the nearest town have been cancelled today pending clarification of a rumor about what happened to some of Doolittle's aviators in Japan a year ago so am unable to wire as requested.

You are free to use my letter for whatever purpose you like but I ask that you delete names and places in order to safeguard whatever possibilities I may have to find employment in Dallas after the War. The facts and events are yours to use.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Yours truly,

*Harry Haka*



Amache, Colorado

6H-6F  
Amache, Colorado  
April 23, 1943

Dear Mr. Kingman:

I am enclosing herewith an excerpt of the report that was given to Mr. Jas. Lindley, Project Director, in re my experience in Dallas. Thought you might like to have this further information. Please return it to me whenever you are through with it.

Things look pretty bad as a result of the recent execution news. Hope that the public will be able to differentiate between the acts of the Japanese Government and our position as American citizens. But I believe that the resettlement problem and the whole picture of evacuation has received a very bad set-back from which it will take many months to recover if at all during the duration.

Passes are still withheld for visits to the nearest town so that we are isolated more than ever. But this is a measure taken for our own self protection and the morale is good. Morale has gone down a bit since the recent news for the hatred that has come up as a consequence will linger for a long time. We're in a pretty sad sort of position but let's hope that public enlightenment will make the present situation temporary.

Best wishes and thank you for the courageous lead you and Mrs. Kingman are taking.

Sincerely,

*Harry Naka*



GRANADA RELOCATION PROJECT  
Amache, Colorado  
Granada Relocation Project  
Amache, Colorado

December 12, 1942

MEMO TO: James G. Lindley, Project Director, Granada Relocation Project

FROM: Walter J. Knodel, Placement Officer

SUBJECT: Statement of facts given to me by HARRY NAKA, evacuee of the Granada Relocation Center, on December 10, 1942, relative to conditions he experienced while on temporary employment leave in Dallas, Texas, awaiting action on indefinite leave.

On November 16, 1942, based on your permission, I authorized a temporary employment leave for Mr. Harry Naka to participate in an offer of employment in Dallas, Texas. The employer was the R. G. Hamilton Company, Cotton Merchants. Mr. Cecil F. White, Vice-President and Manager of the company concerned, was a former employer of Mr. Naka in Fresno, California.

After coming from the Merced Assembly Center to the Granada Relocation Center, Mr. Naka contacted Mr. White for the purpose of obtaining a letter of recommendation which might lead to an employment offer. Upon learning of Mr. Naka's whereabouts, Mr. White immediately wired him and offered him employment in Dallas, with the above-mentioned firm.

The position offered was that of a clerk in the offices of this company, the rate of pay being \$40.00 a month. Upon receipt of this offer of employment, Mr. Naka contacted the Employment Division within the Center in an effort to obtain permission to go to Dallas to accept this offer.

The matter was referred to you, and permission was given for this man to be allowed to accept this offer on a temporary leave pending clearance of an indefinite leave. The necessary forms for indefinite leave were completed, and forwarded to Washington prior to Mr. Naka's departure for Dallas. This departure was on November 16, 1942.

Mr. Naka arrived in Dallas, Texas on November 17, 1942 and started to work for the above-named company on November 18, 1942 in the capacity of clerk.

Prior to Mr. Naka's arrival in Dallas, Mr. Walter Cryer, of the above-mentioned company contacted the United States Attorney, local agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the local police. Both the United States Attorney and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the local police. Both the United States Attorney and the Federal Bureau of Investigation indicated to Mr. Cryer that they had no objections to Mr. Naka's coming to Dallas to accept employment, provided he was in possession of the proper credentials.



The Dallas local police, and especially Will Fritz of that department, however, objected very vigorously to this arrangement on the grounds that they did not desire persons of Japanese ancestry in Dallas. No other apparent reason was given. Mr. Cryer informed the Dallas local police that he had approached the United States Attorney and the Federal Bureau of Investigation on the matter, and inasmuch as he had found no objections on their part, he intended to employ Mr. Naka in spite of their objections.

On November 17, the day Mr. Naka arrived in Dallas, he, in person, contacted the United States Attorney and the local representatives of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and showed them his credentials signed by you. None of the above had any objections after examining Mr. Naka's credentials. Mr. Naka inquired of the United States Attorney whether it would be advisable or necessary to contact Mr. Fritz, the Chief of Detectives of the Dallas Police Force. He was informed that this would not be necessary.

Mr. Naka commenced his employment with the above-named firm on November 18, 1942, and continued to work for them without interruption until December 1. He found that, without exception, all of his fellow workers in the company and acquaintances he made on the outside treated him well, and, all in all, he found conditions to be quite normal and his day-to-day regular life quite pleasant.

On December 1, a detective from the Dallas Police Force, by the name of George Butler, called on Mr. Naka's employer and ordered the employer to tell Mr. Naka to report at Police Headquarters that same evening at 7:30. Mr. Naka reported at the time requested and was questioned at some length by Mr. Butler relative to his background and reasons for being in Dallas. After this, about 9:30 P.M., Mr. Naka was released.

The following day, December 2, at about 9:30 A.M., while at his place of employment, Mr. Naka was picked up by two Dallas Police Force detectives and taken to Police Headquarters, and escorted to the office of Inspector Will Fritz.

Mr. Fritz interrogated Mr. Naka at some length. The principal point was that it was obvious that he had come for some reason of espionage. Mr. Fritz's general theme of lecture and conversation to Mr. Naka was principally expressed by the following factors and expressions of thought such as: That if Mr. Naka were a loyal American citizen, as he contended to be, that he would have remained at the Granada Relocation Center and not have attempted to venture out into employment opportunities in Dallas; and why had he ventured into a military defense area when there were numerous other places not in that category where other employment opportunities were available.



Mr. Naka attempted to explain the War Relocation Authority's policy as he knew it relative to relocation objectives. Mr. Fritz stated that the War Relocation Authority knew nothing of relocation and were totally unqualified to do any relocation work for the people of Japanese ancestry.

Mr. Fritz compared Mr. Naka's situation in Dallas in the light that if he (Mr. Fritz) were to move into some barrack within the Granada Relocation Center, he would be regarded as a spy of some sort, and in the same token, Mr. Naka's moving into Dallas among a great majority of Caucasian peoples could be regarded as a move with the same intention.

At the conclusion of this conversation between Mr. Fritz and Mr. Naka, Mr. Fritz then inquired of Mr. Naka on what date he intended to leave Dallas. Mr. Naka demurred and requested some time to think the matter over. When asked how much time it would require to give this matter the proper thought, Mr. Naka requested one week. Mr. Fritz contended that this was entirely too long and that he could not grant such a request, and that, furthermore, his office was not in a position to bargain in any way with Mr. Naka.

Mr. Naka then told Mr. Fritz that he was an American citizen and appealed for recognition of his constitutional rights. Mr. Fritz ignored this gesture and stated that if Mr. Naka did not leave, it was his intention to make life so unpleasant for him that he would have no desire to stay. He stated that this would be accomplished by his continually being trailed by detectives and repeatedly called in for questioning.

At this point, Mr. Fritz somewhat changed his approach and told Mr. Naka that he wanted him to realize that his actions were entirely for Mr. Naka's protection and acquainted him with the dangerous temper of the average Texas citizen, which Mr. Naka had failed to notice up until this time, or at any time during his stay in Texas or in Dallas.

He was then led into another room for further questioning by George Butler, and there was grilled for approximately three hours, again on general background and on what he claimed Mr. Naka allegedly knew of Japan and its spy system in this country. The entire interview was quite farcical.

Some of the typical questions asked were as follows:

1. What citizenship do you possess?
2. How many times have you been approached by Japanese agents who worked for the Japanese government?
3. When did you change your religion from Buddhist to Christianity?
4. Whom would you rather fight? The Nazis or the Japs?



5. How many Japanese consuls do you know?
6. Who are the leaders of the subversive pro-Axis block in the camp from which you came?
7. Have you ever been contacted by any person in camp to head a subversive element?
8. How many members of the Black Dragon society do you know?
9. How long would the war last with Japan, because he certainly should know the military and economic resources of Japan.

After this questioning, Mr. Naka was taken to the Bureau of Identification where he was finger-printed and photographed, and then put in jail for approximately two hours. After this, Mr. Butler again interviewed Mr. Naka, again along general lines. Mr. Naka observed the notation on the police docket and under the item of "Charges", he noted the comment, "See Mr. Butler and Holloway". Mr. Naka's impression of all events up to this point was that it was purely a case of intimidation. He was released about 4:30 on the afternoon of December 2, 1942. He noticed that in the evening edition of the Dallas Time Herald of that same day, an item regarding his case appeared.

The following day, Mr. Naka returned to see Mr. Fritz at which time he informed him that he had decided to leave Dallas because of all the difficulties he had encountered, not only for himself but for all his friends in Dallas. Mr. Fritz asked him when he expected to leave, and Mr. Naka replied Tuesday, December 8. Mr. Fritz then advised Mr. Naka that he thought he was doing the wisest thing, but also warned him that he would be watching him.

Another accusation brought out during the questioning of Mr. Naka was the supposition that Mr. Naka was employed by the R.G. Hamilton Company solely for the purpose of laying the groundwork for future trade with Japan after the war was over!

On December 5, a city detective, accompanied by an agent of the F.B.I. called on Mr. Cryer of the R.G. Hamilton Company and questioned him for approximately two hours on the complete background of his life, company activities, and reasons for Mr. Naka's being employed in Dallas. The general supposition seemed to be that Mr. Cryer and Mr. White and the Hamilton concern were under suspicion for un-American activities because of hiring a person of Japanese ancestry at a time when this country was at war with Japan. They stated that they would investigate Mr. White and attempt to find grounds for prosecution.

On Sunday, December 6, three other persons of Japanese ancestry from Dallas were brought into Dallas Police Headquarters along with Mr. Naka. These persons were people with whom he had made acquaintance and had visited in Dallas during his stay there. They were questioned at some length about Mr. Naka, his presence in Dallas, and also their presence in Dallas.



Mr. Naka was held from about 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. before being questioned. The detective questioning Mr. Naka seemed to be at a loss as to what to question him about and repeated most of the former questions that had formerly been asked of him, and about 4:00 P.M. Mr. Naka was released.

On departing, he informed the Dallas police that he had lost all interest in staying in Dallas because it was involving so much difficulty for his friends and employers, especially his employers, and left at 10:00 P.M. that evening via A.T.S.F. Railroad and arrived in Granada, December 8, at 2:00 A.M.

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Walter J. Knodel  
Placement Officer