

Term Paper by Grace Yuhashi

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Grace Yuhashi
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Ever since I was old enough to think of the future, I had the remembrance of becoming a secretary. Other children had dreams of becoming a nurse or entering some other romantic field of profession, but I still stuck to the idea of someday becoming a secretary. They all laughed at me and said I had no sense of imagination. But I think I did. I used to dream of myself in an office plodding away at \$18 a week, and having to rush during my lunch hour, and riding on subways. But finally came the glorious feeling of someday making over \$50 a week and having all the clothes I want. I guess, even though how small one may be, a women's first thought is clothes.

Later on when I entered high school my thoughts turned to "How I would best prepare myself for my vocation." I consulted my teachers and parents, and they informed me that I should take the basic course – commercial. I took shorthand, book-keeping, typing, business practice, etc. to gain a thorough knowledge on my field of vocation. I even took algebra and geometry thinking that the more you knew of the intricacies of mathematics, the better you would get along in the business world. I can truly say that even though I may have forgotten a great deal of it, I have gained the ability of keen concentration. In all my years of secretarial training, I have learned that a secretary's duty include everything from paying household bills to ordering birthday presents for wives. Her work is largely executive and she must often stand proxy for her employer. Therefore she must have the ability not only to carry out orders but also to initiate them. Her value consists in being able to take work off her employer's shoulders, to act as buffer between him and outside annoyances, to facilitate the routine of his office, to suggest constructive measures for increasing his efficiency – in a word, to make his life easier and to increase his leisure.

Secretaries may, according to their temperament and their employer's wishes, take all the responsibilities of managing his office routine and many of his private affairs, or they may simply follow intelligently and accurately his express orders. To the unimaginative girl the latter job appeals, but the ambitious girl will look for an employer who will give her plenty of rope.

There are many qualifications which are desired in a good secretary, but in a recent poll, it was indicated that personality counts more than skill. Characteristics which add to the personality are:

1. Trustworthiness
2. Tactfulness
3. Sympathy

4. Being well poised
5. Being well bred and well groomed

The most important qualifications which are related to skill are:

1. Accuracy
2. Initiative
3. In addition to these two things a good secretary should be prompt, adaptable, cooperative, mindful, and responsible

Also there are two types of girls who go into secretarial work: first, the girl who sees a good opportunity to learn how to be an executive; second, the girl who is a born cooperater and whose forte will always be secondary responsibility. For her the secretarial job is not a wedge but a goal.

From the standpoint of the employer the latter girl is usually the best to hire, for there is less danger that she will perfect her technique and more on. The girl herself will probably be happiest if she sticks to the work in which she feels she belongs. But from the point of view of pecuniary advancement, there is no comparison between the salaries of a first-class secretary and a highly paid executive. Secretaries start usually at \$25 a week. Fifty dollars is a good salary, and \$85 to \$100 is not unheard of. Executives know no such salary limits. On the other hand, grateful employers often see that secretaries are pensioned or otherwise rewarded – perquisites which executives most rarely have.

A good secretary must not only study the business and her employer's needs, but also broaden her education in every possible way. Knowing this, I had planned to go to a business school – Metropolitan to be specific – after graduating from high school. There I would receive all the practical training I would need, and after that, the world was mine to slay. All high school students, I guess, more or less dream such dreams without knowing the hardship and poverty they would have to go through. Life isn't just a "merry-go-round" of enjoyment, but yet you must owe it to youth to think of all the bright sides. After all, our fathers and all of grandparents before us had their share of that same dream and they wouldn't have exchanged it for anything. Even now, though their faces may be lined with wrinkles and a wisdom about them which was acquired only through experience, they smile at the memory of how reckless and happy they were.

Well, I was sitting in a pool of contentment until war was declared between Japan and the United States. I was awoken with a start. Why this couldn't be happening to me. It was impossible, but there lay the bare facts. All my friends that were in civil service were getting fired right and left. And "pop" went my dreams of entering that field. A new problem had to be confronted. If I expected to make a living doing secretarial work, I had to out rank the others and gain recognition, for I was fighting against the old enemy – racial prejudice.

Then came the rumor that we were to be evacuated. Again this came as a blow. It seemed that everytime I made a new plan for the future, it was disrupted. But as the days went on, it seemed more and more likely that we were going to be put in a relocation center. Everything seemed to be happening

to me. I haven't even completed my education, but then everyone was in the same boat. The morning that we arrived in Manzanar, it was discouraging. We were met with our first dust storm.

Now after nearly a year has passed by, Manzanar has grown. Beauty shops and barbers were built, stores were opened, and even a school was started where I was able to finish my education. But now with the future looking dark and foreboding, many nissei youths are troubled. In fact many of them have no incentive to continue with their education, and those that do are met with obstacles stopping their path. But I still have hopes, and although I may have to wait a few years, in the meantime I am planning to go to Junior College. I am not going to plan my future as completely as before because I may be disappointed again. I will trust it to God and only the future will unfold the story.