

Early in the summer of 1942 after the preliminary steps of the evacuation

After several weeks of work

Early

In the spring of 1942 even before the preliminary steps of the evacuation from the West Coast of persons of Japanese ancestry had been completed, a Student Relocation Council with headquarters in San Francisco was set up to aid the relocation of ~~and approved~~ nisei students into colleges and universities in unrestricted areas of the country. In May, this ~~same~~ organization, ^{voluntarily organized} started by a handful of ^{students and} public spirited citizens, was expanded into the National Relocation Student Relocation Council with headquarters in Philadelphia and regional offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles and later in other sections of the country.

The ~~various~~ tasks of the Council were of a Herculean nature. They ranged all the way from interviewing ^{prospective} students to ^{arranging} the opening of schools to Nisei. The tremendous Council role they played in reestablishing the rights of citizenship to a great number of nisei cannot be sufficiently evaluated ~~at this time~~ here, but ~~it is~~ there isn't the slightest doubt that the pattern set by the National Student Relocation Council paved the way for the successful ~~total~~ relocation program ~~that followed~~.

The variety and scope of the tasks the Council shouldered were Herculean. They ranged all the way from interviewing ^{prospective} students to ^{arranging} the opening of schools to Nisei. The tremendous Council role they played in reestablishing the rights of citizenship to a great number of nisei cannot be sufficiently evaluated ~~at this time~~ here, but ~~it is~~ there isn't the slightest doubt that the pattern set by the National Student Relocation Council paved the way for the successful ~~total~~ relocation program ~~that followed~~.

Having been assured that I would be granted my A.B. ~~in~~ in June, 1942, by the University of California at Los Angeles, I thought of taking work for an advanced degree elsewhere and accordingly made application with the representatives of the Student Relocation Council when they visited the Santa Anita Assembly Center where I happened

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to be incarcerated at the time.

The procedure in that early stage of the game was for the evacuee to obtain an acceptance from some school approved by the proper governmental agencies including the War and Navy Departments after which the Council set about obtaining the clearance of the individual student with the proper authorities. I had been in correspondence with the University of Colorado from the first of the year when the until-then-remote threat of evacuation became imminent. Hopes of going to Colorado, however, were squelched with the receipt of the following letter:

The University of Colorado
~~Boulder, Colorado~~
Boulder, Colorado

August 5, 1942

My dear Mr. Ishikawa:

We have sent permits to register to as many Japanese-American Students as can be taken into the University of Colorado for the fall quarter. For this reason your application for admission must be refused.

We received and acknowledged to you the transcript of your credits from the University of California at Los Angeles on June 23. This transcript, of course, does not include the statement of your degree nor the date of its award. If you wish to send it to some other college that can consider you for admission, we shall be very glad to accommodate you. Please do not hesitate to write to us to send the transcript elsewhere.

Very truly yours,

Helen G. Duggan
Examiner

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This was ~~an~~ ~~unexpected~~ ~~blow~~. ~~It~~ ~~had~~ ~~one~~ ~~very~~ ~~marked~~ ~~effect~~ on me; I, ~~who~~ had found the atmosphere of the camp ~~to~~ ~~enervating~~ to write letters to friends, all of a sudden went on a writing spree. The following letter ~~is~~ or one very similar to ⁽⁶⁾ it went to the deans of the graduate schools of ~~the~~ State University of Iowa, the University of Nebraska, Cornell University, ~~and~~ the University of Minnesota, and the University of Chicago:

Santa Anita Assembly Center
Arcadia, California
August 10
1942

~~Dear Sir:~~

Dear Sir:

Would you be so kind as to tell me what measures your university has taken regarding ~~the~~ admission of students of Japanese ancestry.

I received my Bachelor of Arts degree ^{in English literature} from the University of California at Los Angeles this June and am anxious to work for an advanced degree in English. If you would kindly send me information as to fees and courses available, I should appreciate it very much.

Thanking you for your trouble, I am

Very truly yours,

Joseph Ishikawa

Colorado had been my first choice because of its fine English department and ~~the~~ ~~its~~ reputed beauty of its campus. Iowa was second on my list for the excellence of its creative writing courses, while Nebraska followed it because of the recommendation of ^{my} U. C. L. A. wrestling coach, Ray Richards, a Nebraska alumnus. Cornell had been ~~an~~ ^{little} early dream of high school days; ⁽⁷⁾ which had

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Chicago attracted me through ~~Robert Morss Lovett~~ the reputation of Robert Morss Lovett, ~~which~~ and Minnesota was on the list just in case ~~my application was~~ I was turned down by the other schools. That letter reaped the following harvest:

The University of Nebraska
The Graduate College
Lincoln

August, ~~x~~ 1942

My dear Mr. Ishikawa:

Our requirements for the admission of students of Japanese descent are as follows:

- (1) presents proof of citizenship;
- (2) has satisfactory academic qualifications;
- (3) has sufficient financial resources;
- (4) is recommended by one or more responsible citizens as to character and loyalty.

We are enclosing an application blank which you should fill out along with the ~~following~~ above information.

We are forwarding to you a bulletin of the Graduate College.

I should also point out that Nebraska charges non-resident tuition on a reciprocal basis which ~~was~~ would amount to \$75 ~~per~~ semester for students from California.

Very ~~x~~ truly yours,

R. W. Goss, Dean

The State University of Iowa
Iowa City
The Graduate College

August 14, 1942

Dear Mr. Ishikawa:

Replying to your letter of August 11, I regret to say that on account of the Naval Training Unit at this University, we are not allowed to register any

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Japanese students for the duration.

Very truly yours,

Carl E. Seashore
Dean

The Graduate School of Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

August 17, 1942

Dear Mr. Ishikawa:

In accordance with the request in your letter, I am sending you the Announcement of the Graduate School.

Cornell University has no general policy whatever regarding the admission of American citizens of Japanese ancestry. We are quite prepared to receive your application if you care to file it, and to consider it in the usual manner. We should wish also that an applicant would submit evidence of American citizenship and a statement of the amount of time that the applicant has lived in Japan, if any.

Yours very sincerely,

George H. Sabine
Dean

The Universities of Chicago and Minnesota both sent replies that no plans for the acceptance of Japanese students had yet been formulated, but that they were being worked on.

That left me with two alternatives. It was the recommendation of a friend versus an old ~~cherished sentiment~~ dream. ~~In the end, not being a sentimentalist, I felt that~~ In the end, not being a sentimentalist, I chose Nebraska, partly also because I felt that my shaky financial state made Nebraska more feasible than the Eastern school. It is a decision I have never regretted although I'm ^{am} sure I would have ^{gotten much from} enjoyed Cornell too.

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~~suming that there is no need to submit proof of citizenship~~

suming that there is no need to submit proof of citizenship until I arrive there.

2. Academic qualifications: I am having my transcript forwarded to you; I'm sure that they meet your requirements.
3. Financial resources: I have about \$400 available immediately and am assured of a small monthly income.
4. Recommendations by responsible citizens as to character and loyalty: All of the persons I have listed on my application will probably give me a character and loyalty recommendation.

Applying for entrance into a university meant more than filling out an application and writing to the dean; other letters had to be written too:

(To Dr. Longueil and Dr. Rolfe, favorite professors at the University of California at Los Angeles)

Dear Dr. Longueil (Dr. Rolfe):

*Santa Anita Assembly Center
August 28, 1945*

I am seeking admission to the University of Nebraska Graduate School and ~~whozka~~ have taken the liberty of submitting you and Dr. Rolfe's (Longueil's) names as "persons who have knowlege of your training and ability for graduate work." ~~izshax~~ It would be greatly appreciated if you would write to Dr. R. W. Goss, Dean of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, and recommend me for entrance.

Any advice you can give me will be gratefully received, and any further recommendations you can make will be welcomed.

Thanking you for your kindness, of the past as well as now, I am

Very truly yours,
Joseph Ishikawa

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whom I never had as a teacher, but with whom I developed a very ~~xxxx~~ close bond) x

Dear Mr. Gardner:

*Santa Anita Assembly Center
August 20, 1945*

I've been meaning to write to you ever since ~~xxxxxxx~~ I came here, but I've been mentally lethargic from the very first.

I hope you will forgive me, but the main purpose in my finally writing you is to ask a favor. I am seeking admission to the University of ~~Ne~~braska Graduate School and have taken the liberty of submitting your name as one who has "knowledge of your training and ability for graduate work." Of course, as I was never in any of your classes you know almost nothing of my academic ability (frankly, my record at U. C. L. A. was only mediocre), but I should appreciate it very much if you would write to Dr. R. W. Goss...

* * * * *

...We are being well-treated and there's no doubt that there is a maximum of physical security assured us in camps such as this that would be lacking outside during these uncertain war years, but at the same time, psychologically it's a very depressing situation we are in...I suppose it's selfish of me to want to escape this, but I'm certainly not indispensable around here and may be able to at least keep myself from retreating mentally if I were at school outside.

* * * * *

Very truly yours,

Joseph ~~x~~ Ishikawa

Within a few days, several letters ~~xxxxxxx~~ were received from those to whom I'd written ~~xxxxxxx~~ wishing me luck and assuring me that they had written to Dr. Goss. I'm sure that they could not find too much to recommend, but their letters must have

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said some undeservedly nice things.

In the meantime, the warmest and most friendly multigraphed form letter I've ever seen was received under Joseph Conard's signature. It was given in an encouraging key, but ~~xxxxxxx~~ thought it fair to warn~~xx~~ us that the lateness of the year would mean that ~~only~~ only ⁽²²⁾ a relatively small number could expect transfers, ~~xx~~ but that the Council would not slacken ~~xx~~ its work "as long as the service is needed."

For some time I had been worried about my status with the several agencies that had to approve all people who were released from the centers as I had been in Japan from September, 1939, to December, 1940. Finally, I wrote to Mr. Conard in an effort to check on rumors that I had heard:

Santa Anita Assembly Center
August 21, 1945

Dear Mr. Conard:

Thank you for your letter of ~~xxx~~ the (August) 19th. I am seeking entrance to the University of Nebraska, ⁽²³⁾ ~~xxxxxxx~~ and as I have an individual problem that you might help solve, I am taking advantage of your invitation to write...

It has come to my attention that it is exceedingly difficult for persons who have lived or studied in Japan to leave assembly or relocation centers to take jobs or attend schools in areas outside of the vital defense zone...

My contention is that residence in Japan is no evidence of disloyalty to America; on the contrary, it seems to me that anyone reared under democratic principles would, upon going to Japan, lose any illusions he may have had about Japan's "new order." ⁽²⁴⁾ Having been there, I am probably more aware than the average what we are in for if we are defeated; I have seen Japan's military government in action and want no part of it. Had I found Japan more congenial, I would not have returned

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when I did. I suppose there are many others in the same position who feel the same way.

* * * * *

I cannot help but feel that any decision barring nisei who have been to Japan from being released from centers in order to attend school is comparable to barring other American citizens ⁽²⁴⁾ who have studied in Germany or Italy from schools here.

* * * * *

If you have no authority to judge this case, I should be grateful if you would forward this to the proper person...

Very truly yours,

Joseph Ishikawa

National Student Relocation Council
Pacific Coast Headquarters
Berkeley, California
August 27, 1942

Dear Mr. Ishikawa:

* * * * *

As you know it is necessary to postpone consideration of the group of students known as "Kibei²⁶". At present there is no definitive definition of time and study spent abroad which is necessary to bring one within that class. We believe that it probably means that the student has had a substantial proportion of his education abroad. Since you stated that you were in Japan for about sixteen months, it seems probably that no objections will be raised in your case.

* * * * *

Sincerely yours,

Joseph Conard

*Literally one who "comes home to America;" ~~actually~~

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Having received that reassuring letter, another snag developed:

The University of Nebraska
The Graduate College
Lincoln

September 9, 1945

Dear Mr. Ishikawa:

We have received a transcript from the University of California at Los Angeles and we find no evidence on it that you have received your bachelor's degree. It states that you were ~~gr~~ granted honorable dismissal in May of this year.

If you will have the University of California notify us that you were granted the bachelor's degree you will have met our ~~graduatexzxi~~ requirements for full admission to our graduate college, providing you present your birth certificate as proof of citizenship at the time you register.

Very truly yours,

R. W. Goss, Dean

It being the middle of September, time was getting to be an important element. Immediately upon receipt of that letter, I phoned ~~to~~ the registrar's office at U. C. L. A. and requested that ~~they~~ a verification of my having been granted a degree be sent to ~~the University of~~ Nebraska. I also wrote to the long suffering Dr. Goss:

*Santa Anita Assembly Center
Arcadia,*

September 14, 1945

~~Dear Dr.~~

Dear Dr. Goss:

Your letter of the 9th is at hand informing me that I shall have met your requirements for full admission if I

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have the University of California notify you that I have been granted ~~xxxxxx~~ my A. B. and providing I present my birth ~~xxxxxx~~ certificate when I register.

Upon receipt of your letter, I contacted the registrar's office at U. C. L. A. and requested their sending you a memo stating the fact that I have ⁽²⁹⁾ ~~received~~ my degree.

I am also writing to the National Student Relocation Council asking them to obtain my release. If you would write to them notifying them that I have been granted admission, ^{it will facilitate this} ~~I should appreciate it.~~

I should ~~xx~~ also like to know what rooming and boarding facilities are available. I am enclosing a self-addressed stamped airmail envelope and shall be grateful for that information.

Very truly yours,

Joseph Ishikawa

And as if the equally long-suffering Joseph Conard did not have enough worries on his mind, I continued my bombardment of him:

Santa Anita Assembly Center,
Arcadia, Sept. 15

Dear Mr. Conard:

Thank you very much for your letter of August 27. I have delayed answering you pending further news from Nebraska...
~~xxxxxx~~

...Dr. Goss has informed me that I shall have met requirements for full admission...if I have the University of California notify them that I have been granted my bachelor's degree. ~~xxxxxx~~...

As registration for the fall semester begins on September 24, I should like to obtain my release as soon as possible. I am scheduled to leave for the Granada Relocation Center in Colo-

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rado on the morning of September 19; I don't suppose any
release can be effected before that date, but would it be
at all possible for me to be released from the Relocation
Center before the opening of the semester? I may register
as late as October 14, but should prefer ^{leaving} ~~registering~~ in
time to attend the opening classes...

VTY

Joseph Ishikawa

In retrospect, I have come to wonder why the National
Student Council wasted time answering my tiresome letters, but at
that time, back came the patient reply this time signed by Trudy
King of the permit department which meant that machinery for my
release was being set in motion.

National Student Relocation Council

West Coast Committee

September 23, 1942

Dear Joe:

Thanks for the verified statement of your finances.

~~Wax~~ Would you please send us immediately WRA Form 26
which is required of all students in Relocation Centers.
You may obtain this from the Project Director, a member of
his staff or from the placement office. And, could you
also send us your official letter of acceptance from the
University of Nebraska.

As soon as we receive these two documents, we shall
apply for your travel permit.

Cordially yours,

Trudy King, Permit Department

³³ That was received at Granada, Colorado, our family having
been removed to the relocation center in the meantime, Santa Anita
having been only a temporary assembly center. The dust-laden wind

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of Southeastern Colorado hardly made the camp seem like my idea of a permanent home, and I became more and more impatient to get back to civilization. Taking no chances, I wrote to Dr. Goss and Mr. Conard notifying them of my new address and bringing them as much up to date as possible.

Formal acceptance by the University of Nebraska was ~~xxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ received in Santa Anita ~~xxx~~ by my ³⁴ oldest brother ~~xxx~~ the same day we left. He ~~xxx~~ forwarded the original to the Granada project director and a copy to me. Apparently the project director never received it, but in a few days I ~~got~~ ^{received} a copy from Dr. Goss. ~~xxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~

Late arrivals from Santa Anita brought the rumor that I had received clearance at Santa Anita; so on September 26 I wrote again to Mr. Conard asking for verification of this story; ~~and~~ in addition, I found a new target to pester in the ~~xxxxxxx~~ student leave officer at Granada. ~~xxxxxx~~

~~xxx~~ There was more than just tedious/waiting, however; ⁵⁵ forms had to be filled and sent, clothes had to be packed.

~~xxxxxxx~~ Two more encouraging letters came from the San Francisco office, and, finally, on ^{October} ~~December~~ 5, a notice from the Student Leave Officer was received. Nervous ^{as a groom} and excited as a bride, I went to the administration building and found that my travel permit ~~hadzxxxxthrough~~ was ready at last. It read in part:

This is to certify that Joseph Ishikawa of Block No. ~~xxx~~ 12G-1-F within the Granada Relocation Area is allowed to leave said Area on October 5, 1942 to go to the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska for the following purpose: ³⁶ to attend school. He is required to return to such Area not later than June 15, 1943, ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xx~~ unless otherwise ordered by the War Relocation Authority.

There was much more to it ^{devoted to an outline of} ~~mostly~~ outlining ~~xx~~ conditions

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One other letter remains to be written. It is to the ~~elxxxfriandxxix~~ friends ~~ixhaxx~~ who encouraged ³⁹ me when things looked darkest; among them are people whom I've known for years; among them also are friends ~~whxxzJosephxxDward~~ like the ~~unixking~~ zealous workers on the NSRC staff whom I've never met and whom I've never adequately thanked. It is to be ~~written~~ ^{addressed} to the friends I've made since relocation who have eased the burden of the whole undertaking; I am very much aware of what they have done and at what cost to themselves. It is to be ~~written~~ ^{addressed}, too, to the countless number of ~~peoplexwhx~~ ^{unknown} friends who have done much ~~thaxixaxnaxnotaxaxaxax~~ of which I am not aware. It is to be ~~written~~ ^{addressed} ⁴⁰ to ~~everybody~~ ^{every interested person} in this land.

November, 1945

To ~~thaxxreaxdax~~ you, Dear Reader, whom I hope it vitally concerns:

It is with as much humility as gratitude that I sit down to write this letter of ~~thanksgivingx~~--humility because I have not utilized ~~thx~~ to the fullest extent the opportunities that you, by your combined efforts, have tendered me. In ~~a way~~ ^{many ways}, I am a failure; but perhaps that does not matter because at least symbolically I am an emblem of what you have done to re-establish civil liberties to a group which in one hysterical moment had them revoked temporarily. ~~ixixxaxxixxaxnaxnaxnax~~ ⁴¹ I am a symbol, in a small way, of ~~what~~ the magnificent gestures that a democracy can make ^{to rectify its tragic errors}.

The restoration of my civil liberties is something that was very momentous in my life. It did not come ~~aboutixbyxanyxformax~~ ^{automatically} merely ~~by~~ ^{wid} the formal approval of the F. B. I. and the naval and military intelligence officers. It came about actually by the consideration and sympathy --not ~~tax~~ given condescendingly--by a few people I met on the train from Granada to Lincoln who helped me lose my initial self-consciousness. It was aided by the warm and sincere acceptance by the ~~people~~ ⁴² of the midwest and eventually by the whole nation. It

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~~xxxxxxx~~ It is undoubtedly a cliché to say that one doesn't miss his liberty until it is denied him, but that was so startlingly true in my case that I ~~am impelled~~ feel impelled to repeat it here.

However, ~~freedom~~ as I write this, there are still echoes in the air of ~~the~~ racial tensions in Gary, Los Angeles, Chicago, ^{Detroit} New York; ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{+ elsewhere} the establishment of a Permanent Fair Employment Practice Commission is still far from reality; ~~the world situation is extremely precarious~~ ~~xxxxxxx~~ the situation in China, Palestine, Indonesia, and elsewhere ~~is~~ is appalling. You are probably wondering ~~xxxxxxx~~ ⁽¹³⁾ if this is pertinent to the rest of my letter; I'm quite sure it is because what I'm trying to drive at is that ~~what we need~~ ~~the restoration of my civil rights~~ means nothing unless everyone ~~can~~ can enjoy those same rights. What I have been given can ^{+ must} also be given ~~the~~ Negro and ~~the~~ Jew and other ~~minorities~~. *who do not ~~have~~ always ~~have~~ have full & equal rights*

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~~xxxxxx~~ As the most powerful nation in the world, we are in a position to lead the world out of the darkness by the examples we set. Do we have anything to offer as an alternative to civil war in ⁽⁴⁴⁾ China? ~~R~~ Insurrection ~~in~~ and imperialism in Indonesia? ~~c~~ Chaos in Palestine? I think we do. In a sense I have ~~xxxx~~ been resurrected; I ~~xxxxxxx~~ would like to see downtrodden people all over the world resurrected, *starting with the oppressed in our land.*

Sincerely,

Joe

4400

Paul Kellogg

Bradley Buell