



Committee on Resettlement of  
Japanese Americans. Minneapolis  
Chapter records, 1942-1944.

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2808 West River Road  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
February 10, 1944

Dean Malcolm Willey  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Malcolm,

Miss Punderson has told me that you are concerned lest there has been a departure from accepted practices in the appointment of several Nisei employees at the University of Minnesota, since joint clearance reports have not yet been received.

At the time these people were referred to the University Miss Punderson consulted me and I referred her to Mr. Harold Mann, War Relocation Officer for the State of Minnesota, and to Mr. Max Davidson Local Office Manager of the United States Employment Service office in Minneapolis. All were agreed that provided the individuals were cleared through the office of Major West, the practice being currently followed by restricted industries would be being observed in this case.

I enclose the copy of the instructions issued as long ago as August 31st, 1943 to all concerned with Nisei placement. You will note paragraph three. On the basis of this there seems not doubt that this practice is general.

Last August these instructions resulted from the dropping of several employees who were Nisei by War Plants who, at that time received instructions from Omaha to the effect that Joint Board Clearances would be required on all employees. At that time there was a follow through to Washington by the War Relocation Authority and by Major West. The result was the reinstatement of every worker involved pending the reception of the clearance.

Major West is acting, locally, on this authority. He states that Nisei employees may be kept on the University of Minnesota payrolls pending these clearances provided their names are not on his list of persons to be excluded. All present employees, and all others referred by the Volunteer at the War Relocation Desk at the United States Employment Service, have been cleared with Major West and found not to be on his forbidden list, and to be eligible for employment.

If there is any further way in which I can help clear up this apparent irregularity I am eager to do so. I refer Nisei workers to jobs constantly and this clearance with Major West is the generally accepted authority for doing so.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs Lawrence D. Steefel

Volunteer Placement Secretary, Minneapolis Committee  
for the Resettlement of Japanese-Americans

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION

MINNEAPOLIS 14

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

February 11, 1944

Mrs. Lawrence D. Steefel  
Volunteer Placement Secretary  
Mpls. Committee for Resettlement  
of Japanese-Americans  
2808 West River Road  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

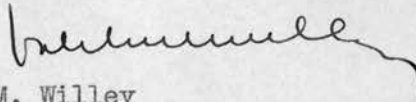
Dear Mrs. Steefel

I appreciated your letter concerning Nisei students and employees. The general procedures in effect apparently are not operative so far as the University is concerned. We are governed by a joint Army-Navy policy, the details of which have been transmitted to us through the head of the Security Division of the Seventh Service Command. The basic point is that no student of Japanese American ancestry may be admitted, nor any employee hired, if he has not filed a personnel security questionnaire. This questionnaire must have been returned cleared by the Office of the Provost Marshal General.

Our instructions on this point are most specific and I confirmed them by telephone with the Seventh Service Command only day before yesterday.

Some day I should like to tell you the long story of our correspondence with both the Army and the Navy.

Cordially yours



Malcolm M. Willey  
Vice President  
Academic Administration



2808 West River Road  
Minneapolis 6, Minnesota  
February 11, 1944

Dear Mr. Robinson:

I regret very much that my hours on duty at the Volunteer Desk, plus a request from Mr. Davidson, Minneapolis Office manager, to attend a staff meeting Friday at 4.30 to 5.30 prevents my accepting Mr Stranahan's invitation to meet with the Executive Committee.

There are two matters on which I wish to give you a report so that you may have the details to take to the meeting. First of all is the situation at the United States Employment Service Minneapolis Office, secondly that at the University of Minnesota.

Last Monday there was a combination of circumstances which called a tense situation at the USES. A returned veteran, still suffering from lameness as a result of wounds came in to look for a job. Among several thousand applicants, his lameness was missed at the intake desk. He took his place in one of the very long lines before the counter for placement. He should, according to common practice have been sent to the rear of the room to be seated and to wait for one of the interviewers who handle disabled veterans. He waited for over an hour, as most applicants at the counter must do, on Mondays at least, during the busiest hours. There is no provision for seating applicants without their losing their place in the lines.

The arrangement of the office is such that those waiting before the counter face those seated behind the desks doing the job-analysis and employer contact work, and the interviewing and registration of special cases. The room is clearly open to view. It has been the custom for the office to have Nisei wait for the Volunteer inside the counter barrier, just as the other specially referred individuals do. There is a line of chairs where Nisei and Caucasians are usually mixed together. Nisei often wait as much as four hours for an interview with the Volunteer, but when the Desk is first opened each day, the first is served immediately.

On Monday the first boy to be interviewed was a cocky youngster who thinks pretty well of himself. He had already taken it on himself to apply for a job in a case where the employer had said he could not use Nisei, wanting to argue the matter. He was seated at the desk while Volunteer went to consult files on the other side of the room out of sight. To avoid interrupting other workers, or burdening the switchboard, Volunteer has usually asked that Nisei waiting at the desk take the numbers of persons calling, so she can call back when she returns to the desk. A call came in, and the boy took it. He then seated himself at the desk, put his feet up on it, and went through elaborate gestures of "the world is mine" for the benefit of some amused companions in the Nisei groups. The department head immediately came over and sent him back to his place in the line, ~~sitting there for an hour, and for going through the drawers of the~~ ~~making him~~ ~~and for going through the drawers of the~~

rebuking him for answering the phone,, and for going through the drawers of the desk. (The desk is not reserved for the Volunteer, but is loaned by one of the regular staff members.) The boy argued, but went. When worker returned he came back, as department head came to report incident, and argued some more. When worker gently asked if he thought he had shown good judgement, he was completely deflated, and seemed, for the first time to realize that it was not all just fun.

All this was pantomime to the wounded veteran on the other side of the counter. By this time he was in pain and angry, and he made some comment. It spread through the neighboring lines. It was to the effect that these \*\*\*\*\* Japs could walk in, get immediate service, and act like the masters of the world while returned soldiers were treated like dirt. Things were getting somewhat warm, and the Office feared an incident or reports to the papers, which might misrepresent their part in the work.

When worker returned on Wednesday she was told that the work must henceforth be done upstairs in a separate room. This involves many trips over a long flight of stairs every session if Volunteer is still to use the files. There was a hurried conference as to make-shift substitutes. It then became clear that the work covers three different departments of the Office: registration, employer contact, and placement. Isolation would make smooth use of the facilities of each of these departments difficult. A staff meeting of heads of departments with the Manager was called, and Volunteer was asked to attend.

My evaluation of the situation is about this: It was ~~carried~~ to have let the working out of arrangements at the USES drift along so many months. The whole situation should have been studied with these eventualities in mind. Volunteer has proposed this repeatedly, but was not in a position to insist on it. It is now possible for the worker to present an analysis of the functions she performs to the staff and to work out with them the safest and best way to insure the performance of the functions without the appearance of special preference.

The Nisei refused, on Wednesday, in many cases, to accept the service of the Desk when they were segregated. Three boys walked past a desk where the manager was seated, and not recognizable, and the manager reported to worker later, that they had said they would not be treated as segregated people by being shut off from the regular services of the agency.

The fact is, that the staff at the USES knows that the set-up at the counters does not permit calling employers by the placement interviewers. Without this, placement is a gesture, it results in an enormous amount of referrals and only a very small percentage of placements. They cannot assign a paid worker to the contact work. They cannot resist the charge of "propoganda" by having the staff argue for the Nisei. They want the work to continue. They think it humane, and for the long-time assimilation of these people, extremely important. Therefore, it will probably be possible to find a working arrangement which will be casual in appearance, call for as much if not more waiting in line, but achieve the same ends. That we shall try to do in conference.

The Committee may well consider however, as to whether, fundamentally, it considers it wise to continue this special service in the light of the over-all picture. If it serves to stir up feeling against the Nisei, it may do more harm than good.

No as to the University: Dean Willey called Omaha after receiving calls from the Committee and from faculty members concerning the dropping of Nisei now



the answer was that those now employed may be kept, but no new additions made until clearances are granted. No time is promised on the clearances.

Apparently the same attitude will be taken on students. However, the Board of Regents is meeting today, and something in the way of provisions for this group may be planned. The pressure on the administration is known, now, to have come from George Lawson of St Paul. He is a regent, and a labor leader. He feels strongly against the Japanese-Americans. He lunched last week with the President and the Vice-Presidents of the University. Later, the unease about the employment of the Nisei was expressed. Faculty members on committees where the matter was discussed state that Mr Willey has fought against a quota for Japanese as undemocratic and unworthy of a great university. The backing he has had on the continued employment of Japanese-Americans has strengthened his position. The faculty members who have protested the dropping of employees in their offices state that he has been sympathetic to their suggestion that the University set an example for the rest of the community in fairness and tolerance, and that not only the present gains be held, but future gains be made. Miss Punderson, head of employment and personnel work is from Seattle. She has worked on behalf of the Nisei for a long time where feeling was traditionally high. She is not unable to handle the problem and is willing to give up her job rather than reverse her position. Other faculty and administrative officers have taken a like stand.

They need, however, the backing of the community. It is necessary that a broadminded, practical plan be presented to the policy makers at the University which, even if it cannot be realized will serve as a deterrent to a narrow policy. The regents opposed to Nisei have been expressing what they believe to be the community's feeling. It is usually the feeling of that little group in which they move as individuals. Unless the voice of another viewpoint is heard, they may honestly believe that rejection is what the community wants.

I wish the committee might express a desire for residence fees. This could even be on a selective basis: granting residence fees to the limited number qualifying as outstanding promising material. This would effect a limitation, and result in selection of the choicest. It would, in a sense, however, mean that those paying non-residence fees could be inferior provided they were rich enough.

If the local community takes responsibility for carrying out the national resettlement program by making the best possible conditions here for resettlement, the assimilation of the group will better by that much.

I enclose my report to the USES which is to form the basis of the discussion of adjustment of the service at the Desk.

If this letter can be given the share of time my part in the discussion would have taken, it may be more effective than my presence would have been.

I enclose a copy of a case history on Frank Ishikawa. Would you be so kind as to turn it over, for the files, to the Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Social Welfare. The original goes to Mrs Davney, at her request.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Lawrence Steefel  
Volunteer Placement Secretary

[Jan. 1, 1947]



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Seasons Greetings

may the coming year  
bring you many joys and

7814

happiness for you  
deserve the most.

Sincerely,  
Emiko Watanabe



407 South 4th Street  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
January 2, 1944

Mr. Sam Watahara  
27-9-F Topaz, Utah

Dear Mr. Watahara:

I have received your work record on the card you returned last week. You did not mention the amount of pay you had had in other jobs. But for similar work here, stock work with Tires, batteries, auto accessories, or in a wholesale firm where clothing, hardware etc are handled and distributes, the pay is \$120.00 a month for forty hour weeks, five days.

It is possible to take such a job and attend a trade or machine shop school on a Government Scholarship. That would lead to higher pay. If you work five days a week you can often get work in a grocery or meat market on Saturdays and earn something additional.

Some of the men are earning two hundred a month, they tell me, at the hotels. This includes tips where they are bus boys. I imagine it also means a good deal of overtime.

Other types of work open are stock work jobs in the National Tea stores. There are some retail clerk jobs there, too. We might find a similar chance at Gamble Stores.

Housing here is not easy to find, especially if there are young children. My suggestion if you have a family would be to come and stay at the Twin City Relocation Hostel, 127 Clifton Ave. That would take care of things while you locate a job and find your apartment or house.

Please let me know if you plan to come on. It is always best to pick your own job after you get here, but we try to have several open for you to apply for.

Wage scales here are not high, but neither are rents, and the city is very hospitable to Nisei.

Please let me know if I can expect you, or give further information.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Lawrence D. Steefel  
Volunteer Placement Secretary

784

407 South 4th Street  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
January 2, 1944

Mrs. William Kato  
c/o Dr. Wilder  
Rochester Minnesota

Dear Mrs Kato:

Thank you for your letter of the twenty-seventh. I am very glad things are going well with you and Mr. Kato, and I hope very much that this job will prove the solution for the time being at least.

Helen and Denny are both well. They have been celebrating the holidays. Denny was adorable with his Christmas stocking. He has loved his airplane and his boat. He and his mother went to a party at Camp Savage the other night. It was arranged, Christmas eve for the men who had to remain at the camp. Buses took people down and called for them a little after midnight.

When they got back to town all the street cars were crowded. They waited two whole hours for a cab, and then seven people shared it with them! They had a good time there, though.

Our son has just left today after a visit of about eleven days at home. He will complete his freshman year late this month, and will then volunteer for the Army Specialized Training Reserve Corps.

This brings you both every good wish for the New Year. Please let me know if there is anything I can do for you at any time. I should appreciate your giving my greetings to Mrs. Wilder.

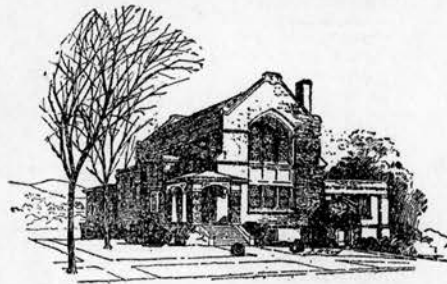
Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Lawrence D. Steefel  
Volunteer Placement Secretary

cto J. W. A.

7814

47 Fourth Street



Cloquet, Minnesota

• REVEREND FRANK CLEVELAND MARTICK, MINISTER •

• 45 FOURTH STREET •

• TELEPHONE 118 •

## The Presbyterian Church of Cloquet

January 5, 1944

Rev. Morris Robinson  
1430 West 28th Street  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Morris:

Several of us young couples who have small children are looking for full or part time help in the home. We are wondering if there might not be some Japanese-American girls who would be interested in such positions. They could be either full time, or, even better, go to High School, get board and room and work parttime. The details of such arrangement could be worked out later of course. None of us could pay top wages but we would offer no less than above the prevailing local standard.

If you no longer have direct concern with this work would you forward this with your recommendation to the Relocation Office in Minneapolis?

With best wishes for the New Year, I am

Most sincerely yours,

FCM/hc

Rev. Frank C. Martick

*If is possible I could give such a girl a little office experience also.*

*Mrs. J.  
Can we  
do anything  
for this? Give  
regarding  
that - there  
is little  
hope  
of help*

7814



Mrs. Lawrence Steefel,  
U. S. Employment Service,  
City



GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1430 West Twenty-eighth Street  
Minneapolis, Minn.

7814  
Popag, Utah  
Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> 44

Mrs. L. D. Steefel  
407 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Minneapolis, Minn.

Madam:-

Received your letter of Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> 1944  
and wish to thank you for all your  
efforts. We, just my wife and myself plan  
to relocate to your city sometime in February.

We plan to stay at the hotel until  
we can locate an apartment or a house.

Will notify your office upon  
arrival in Minneapolis

I remain  
Very truly  
Sam Watahara

THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

ELEVEN THIRTY NICOLLET  
MINNEAPOLIS - MINNESOTA  
TELEPHONE: MAIN 0501

January 15, 1944

Mrs. Lawrence Steefel  
U. S. Employment Service  
407 South 4th Street  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Mrs. Steefel:

7814  
This will introduce Miss Toy Yoshida and Miss Yoshia Doi who have had a somewhat difficult employment experience and who now need to find new jobs. They will give you all the particulars of the present situation.

I tried to reach you this morning when the girls were in the office but was not able to do so and thought perhaps a note from me to you would help them find you more quickly.

Sincerely yours,

*Edna H. Porter*  
Edna H. Porter

EHP:MC

January 26, 1944

Dear Mrs. Steyer,

H18L  
Since my talk to you quite a while ago about a caretaker job for my father, I have been anxiously waiting for some word from you. I know that you are very busy, but I have become quite anxious and would like to know if there has been any progress made. Is there any possibility at all for an opening?

It is impossible to get an apartment or a house here in Northfield, and my father & mother have been staying at the Hedley's. They have been very kind, but we feel we can't infringe on their generosity any longer.

If a caretaker job is impossible, are there any other openings?

May I hear from you soon?

Sincerely yours,  
Hirotaka Sato



HARRY B. ZIMMERMANN, M.D.  
1530 EDGCUMBE ROAD  
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

January 26, 1944.

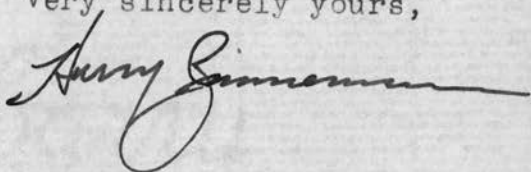
Mrs. Lawrence D. Steefel  
Volunteer Placement Secretary  
Minneapolis War Relocation Committee  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

My dear Mrs. Steefel:

Your letter regarding  
Doctor George S. Iki was mislaid, and  
has just come to my attention.

I am very sorry, but  
I know of no place for him at this time.  
Should I hear of any opportunities for  
Relocation applicants I shall call you up.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Harry B. Zimmermann", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

HARRY B. ZIMMERMANN


HBZ/m

very happy to be working  
there.

Just a little note to  
thank you from the  
bottom of my heart  
for your very valuable  
time and trouble.

Thanking you once  
again, I am,

Very truly yours,  
Fumio Shinoda



March 5, 1944

Dear Mrs. Steefel:

May I express my very belated but most sincere thanks to you for your very kind assistance in securing employment for me. Words are but inadequate in expressing my gratitude and appreciation.

Ever since I started working at my present place of employment two weeks ago, I have found the surroundings very pleasant and people very congenial, so I am enjoying my work immensely. I am really

but he will be back with me  
in two more weeks.

I have made many friends  
here in Minneapolis. But the  
friends I cherish most are my  
Caucasian girlfriends at Miss Woods.

Ever sincerely  
Julia Sakai

March 23, 1944

julia

Dear Mrs. Steepul,

Just a short note to tell  
you how much I am en-  
joying school at Miss Woods.

In the mornings I do  
practice teaching at the school.  
I enjoy being with the little  
children.

I don't believe I have  
thanked you for the car



your money I received way  
back in <sup>Jan.</sup> February. It has been  
so helpful.

Mrs. Steepul, now that I  
am doing practice teaching at  
the school and it is getting  
warmer, I think I can  
walk to school - in that  
way I will be free of  
car fare expense.

Thank you so much for all  
you've done for me. I have  
not been working. My brother  
sends me money enough for  
room and board at my sister-in-laws  
and a little allowance money.

However, if there is any work  
during day Saturday - I would be  
glad to hear of it.

The nice here in Minneapolis  
are certainly grateful to you  
Mrs. Steepul. You have  
certainly been wonderful to us.

The baby is as cute as ever.  
He is five months old now.  
Such a good adorable baby.  
My brother is taking basic  
training in Camp Blanding Florida.

2716 Hennepin Ave  
Mpls, Minn.



Mrs. G. Steyer  
War Relocation Desk  
407 S. 4th St.  
Mpls, Minn.