

JAMES V. BENNETT
DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
BUREAU OF PRISONS
WASHINGTON

August 7, 1943

Mr. Homer L. Morris
Secretary, Social-Industrial Section
American Friends Service Committee
20 South Twelfth Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

AUG 10 1943

Dear Sir:

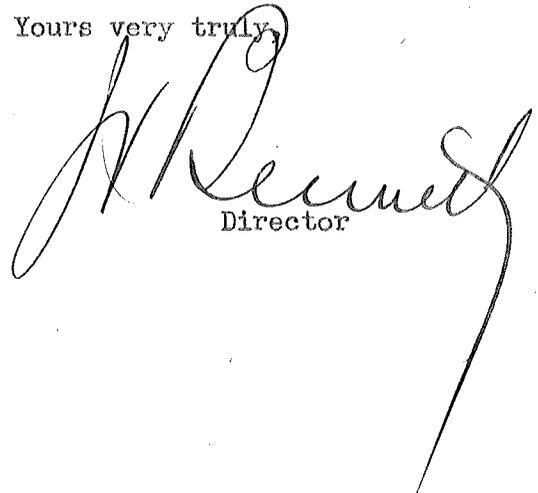
Re: Gordon Kiyoshi Hirabayashi

This will acknowledge your letter of August 3 on behalf of Gordon Hirabayashi, inquiring whether it would be possible for him to continue his present work at the Spokane Relocation Center while serving the sentence imposed upon him.

While we appreciate your interest in this case, I regret that there is no way by which a sentence can be served in this manner. It will be necessary for him to be committed to an appropriate federal prison camp for service of the sentence imposed.

I am sorry that my reply cannot be consistent with your wishes.

Yours very truly,



Director



Sent 8/12/43
Copy to Waller - Seattle
" " Gordon Hirabayashi

American Friends Service Committee

SEATTLE OFFICE
3959 15th N. E.
Seattle, Washington
TELEPHONE MEIrose 7450

AUG 24 1943

General Office, Philadelphia
RUFUS M. JONES, *Chairman*
WILLIAM R. FOGG, *Treasurer*
CLARENCE E. PICKETT, *Exec. Sec'y*

Seattle Office
ARTHUR G. BARNETT, *Chairman*
MARGARET E. TERRELL, *Treasurer*
FLOYD W. SCHMOE, *Exec. Sec'y*

August 21, 1943

Homer L. Morris
20 South Twelfth St.
Philadelphia 7, Pa.

Dear Homer Morris,

I appreciate your efforts to keep me on the job here in Spokane. It seems nothing can erase my status as a "convict" except my serving my time. And then I shall be an "ex-convict". Seriously, I am looking forward to the next three months. While prison life may not be an ideal life, there is life there. And some of the experiences behind bars are certainly rare privileges.

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter to Floyd re group resettlement. I think you have brought out many practical problems which were not considered by those like myself. However, in principle, I believe Floyd's plan is a sound one. It will take time, of course, to educate the participants toward cooperative living, and also, the finding of enough suitable sites to take care of the people in camps. Another difficulty which I have thought about was the kind of people who remained in camps. In many cases they are those who were unable to relocate for one or more reasons. Those who are best suited for cooperative living have already gone out. The old, the young, the lazy, the conservatives - these form the bulk of the campers today. Education will have to precede outside settlement.

Thinking realistically, perhaps on the pessimistic side, forces me to admit that there will be several thousands who will die in camp, and many thousand youths will spend the most formative and impressionable years of their lives getting a warped view on life. And I can't seem to offer anything constructive, except to move along as well as possible on an individual basis. War has its casualties, and I guess we have our list to turn in.

Sincerely,


Gordon Hirabayashi

enc.

AUG 21 1943

August 21, 1943

Floyd W. Schmoee
3959 15th N.E.
Seattle 5, Wash.

Dear Floyd,

Finally, after three weeks of financial negotiations with banks, etc., Mrs. Suzuki completed arrangements to become the house owner. (Mrs. Klein, the seller, had changed the downpayment plan to cash.) Mrs. Suzuki has gone back to Hunt and expects to return here about the first of the month.

Today, while I was mowing her lawn, I encountered something which may cause some unpleasantness for awhile. A man stopped and wanted to know if Japs had purchased the house. Then he informed me that they won't be allowed to stay, so tell them to move out if they wanted to remain healthy. Boy, oh boy! Was I near being a non-pacifist! This fellow, named Burk, said that a committee had gotten together that morning and decided that they weren't going to allow any Japs. "Lower the property value." I suggested to Burk that he wait until the owners arrived, and then discuss it with them; I didn't feel it my responsibility to carry such a message. "There's nothing to discuss. They're moving, that's all; if they want to stay healthy."

Mrs. Klein informed me that Burk is a real estate man who wanted to sell the house for her, but she had turned him down because of personal distaste for his approach. She also told me of an old nosey woman living near there who had come the night before to ask a lot of questions. We think maybe these two are the instigators, and who may cause some trouble. Other neighbors had told Mrs. Klein that they had no objections to a Japanese moving in. Another reason may be that Mrs. Suzuki's house is definitely the best in that mediocre district. It must hurt the pride of some lofty old-timers to see a dirty Jap living in the best house. There is ground for this feeling because there are Negroes right in the same block. And a few blocks away there is a Japanese couple in residence.

Arthur D. Jones Real Estate had assured Mrs. Klein that there would be no trouble on race issue, that everything was on the up and up. Monday, I'll know more. Mrs. Klein is moving out Wednesday, and I'm moving in until the Suzukis arrive.

That is definitely not an exclusive or restricted zone. There is very little reason but Burk's personal vindictiveness to warrant his threat. I am of the feeling that this sudden protest will die down in time, and hope that the Suzukis are willing to take a little and overcome it.

APR 24 1943

The Spokane University Building is still a question mark. Mr. Thomas said that court procedures have begun on legal definitions on whether the government can lease for seven years without being liable for the mortgage. The court argument will continue for two or three weeks.

I followed up about six houses for rent this month. No luck on any. Most of them said the house was just rented; quite a few of them were honest statements. One came out flatly and said he wouldn't rent to Japanese. Reason: Opposition to miscegenation. A dentist from Hunt, Dr. Nakamura, is looking for a house for rent or purchase. Maybe I can help. Couple of others are looking for good buys.

The local FOR is seriously considering a Fellowship House of our own. We are looking over likely looking run-down church (building). The members are anxious to work on it; Mrs. Wogman had a lead for a church on the south side. As you know, this^s a result of the Yakima conf.

I am still working on the placement of the Japanese kids at the Wash. children home. Most of the older boys (high school age) prefer placement in caucasian homes. They think they will be more at ease; I think I can understand their feelings. I don't think there are very many Japanese families who can or are in a position to take on a boarder. Three of the oldest boys wanted to batch together, and Miss Boone felt that may be permissible under the circumstance if an older person like myself would be willing to move in with them. I want to do something like that very much, but had to tell her I would be leaving town very soon. Maybe there is someone else who could be considered.

Since there is absolutely no inter-race or international groups, that is, groups with wider fellowship, I have been trying to plant a few seeds here and there. The FOR is definitely interested in expanding their membership. I think they need to sponsor some group that is not necessarily pacifist to attract a larger group. We are not quite sure what sort of purpose we should have, what basis for meeting regularly. We certainly do not want such mixed groups to meet simply because they are of different races. We are thinking on the matter. Rev. Cobb is not so enthusiastic about mixing. If these Japanese clubs ^{encourage members} to participate in other organizations in the city, they would be playing a positive role. But usually, they function merely as an escape group, and try to become self sufficient. Perhaps, right now, they cannot do much more.

Have you any definite word concerning when Fumi will be arriving? The WRA office is expecting her, but don't know when. And they don't know how long they can expect to keep her. Mrs. Wogman would like to take Fumi in if Fumi is willing. At least Fumi can stay there until she is better situated.

Tom Bodine writes of visiting Weiser. He also drove down to Nysaa with Jim to meet with the College of Idaho group with Miss Peet. He says that you and I were the only outside visitors those students had last year.

Did you visit Tule Lake? Have not heard from Mrs. Van Buskirk for quite sometime. Heard from Howie Scott.

cc to Homer Morris

Sincerely,

Gordon Hirabayashi

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August 2, 1943

AUG - 6 1943

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Homer L. Morris
20 S. Twelfth St.
Philadelphia 7, Pa.

Dear Homer Morris,

I am still on the job. By that, I mean that I am still here in Spokane. Sometimes I begin to wonder about the job part - things move so slowly. I have been able to give a few house leads to those who wanted to buy, one which resulted in a purchase. Otherwise, most of my work has been in the nature of research and contacts. I am going further and further from the city of Spokane in looking for areas suitable for resettlement. The housing facilities limit the capacity of the city to take in families.

You have probably read Floyd Schmoeb's article, "Is Group Resettlement A Necessary Second Step", by now. I think his article merits careful study because we are faced with the problem of the second mile. It seems to me that a group of people amounting to approximately a 100,000 in population ought to settle into a country of 130,000,000 quite easily. But in times like these it is not an easy problem, as you well know. I do not like to see an all-Japanese group settlement; it seems like a step away from the assimilation we are seeking. However, I would prefer that to the now existing all-Japanese relocation centers. For one thing the atmosphere would be much freer, and personal development rather than deterioration would be evidenced. Also, it is suggested that caucasian families participate in the living experiences of the community. Knowing to some extent the situation as it exists today, I do realize that something must be done or planned. Floyd's suggestions are the most promising ones I have heard yet.

Harold Evans informs me that my entire case will be completed when I serve my curfew sentence. We did not get to test our main issue, but the best was done. I appreciate very deeply and sincerely your constant efforts to share with us our endeavor to establish a better place in which to live. We live in a very complicated world.

Sincerely,

Gordon Hirabayashi

Encl.